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ABSTRACTS

Mihály Balázs

István Agh reading Frederick the Great

István Agh (1709–1786), Unitarian bishop (1758–1786), translated into Latin a chapter of the *Memoires pour servir a l'histoire de la maison de Brandenbourg*, by the Prussian king Frederick the Great (1712–1786). Published in French in 1751, this work is an almost provocatively secular summary of Frederick's country and dynasty.

Agh and Frederick came from very different worlds. The monarch was a member of the Masonic community. He admired and corresponded with Voltaire (1694–1778), and invited Voltaire to be a member of his household.

The chapter Agh chose to translate covers the eras of paganism, catholicism, and the Reformation. Agh presented a clear and comprehensible Latin text to his readers. In a few cases he omitted partial sentences or substituted a paragraph. Two things might explain Agh's special interest in translating the text: Frederick's strong condemnation of medieval Catholicism, and his treatise on tolerance.

Keywords: Catholicism, Freemasonry, French, Latin, Masonic Community, *Memoires pour servir a l'histoire de la maison de Brandenbourg* (1751), medieval Catholicism, paganism Prussia, Reformation, tolerance, translation; Agh, István (1709–1786); Frederick the Great (1712–1786); Voltaire (1694–1778)

János Pál

Primary Education in the Unitarian Diocese of Székelyudvarhely (1919–1931) I.

This study explores the effectiveness of the Unitarian Church's school-organizing activities in preserving ethnic and denominational identity in the wake of the new state formation in Romania after the year 1918, specifically he reorganization of the denominational schools of the Unitarian Diocese of Székelyudvarhely. The study provides insights into individual parishes that

possessed the necessary financial, infrastructural, and spiritual resources to establish and sustain schools, even if only for a short period of time.

Despite the efforts of local communities and the church leadership to maintain their schools, archival documents reveal a disheartening trend. The state, through the requisitioning of classrooms and subsequent denial of public access, effectively brought even the strongest and most determined parishes to their knees within a relatively short time. This coercive action by the state rendered all local endeavors and church initiatives futile.

It became evident that the extent of sacrifice endured by these communities was primarily determined by their dismal economic situation rather than their denominational and ethnic consciousness. The state's intervention not only disrupted the Unitarian Church's efforts to protect its schools but also highlighted the socio-economic challenges faced by the faithful in maintaining educational institutions. This sheds light on the complex interplay between state policies, economic conditions, and the resilience of local communities in safeguarding their cultural and denominational heritage.

Keywords: 1918, archival documents, denominational school system, economic situation, ethnicity, Romania, state schools, state policy, Unitarian Church, Unitarian Diocese of Székelyudvarhely, Unitarian schools

László Somogyi *The Rival Congregation*

Not only Jesus of Nazareth but also John the Baptist had disciples. Despite the initial rivalry between the two groups, a certain degree of rapprochement can be detected. Some of John's disciples joined Christians, resulting in early Christian groups gradually adopting the fasting and prayer habits of John the Baptist's disciples. The legendary elements of John the Baptist's life were further linked with the tradition about Jesus. As a result, the role of the "Forerunner" attributed to John the Baptist was born. Jesus' response to the economic and social crisis of the age was modified among the circle of disciples in such a way that the apocalyptic message of the Baptist became dominant. This study reviews this process.

Keywords: apocalypse, Christianity, disciple, fasting, prayer; Jesus of Nazareth, John the Baptist

Szabolcs Czire

Social Science Criticism in the Service of Biblical Interpretation

Social scientific criticism refers to a sub-discipline of biblical interpretation which draws upon ideas and perspectives from social sciences such as sociology, anthropology, social psychology, economics etc. In the last decades great efforts were made to treat social-cultural contexts not simply as incidental background filler of the biblical text, but as significant foreground material central to their meaning. Upon opening the Bible, the reader encounters issues related to social groups behind it. The Word was not only made flesh, but lived among us (John 1:14).

This article discusses the landmarks in the evolution of this method beginning from the 1970s, explores its methodological/hermeneutical foundations, its limitations and its perspectives, and finally reflects on ways in which the social scientific approach may contribute to biblical studies.

Keywords: anthropology, Bible, biblical hermeneutics, biblical interpretation, culture, economics, psychology, social sciences, social scientific criticism, hermeneutics, social psychology, sociology