

CONTENTS

STUDIES

LÁSZLÓ SOMOGYI

How to Read Legends? | 119

NORBERT NAGY

The Future of Historical Jesus Research?

The “Next Quest” – Introduction and Critique | 137

GYÖRGY GAAL

István Bágyi Joo, Professor of Medicine and the First Botanical Garden
from in Kolozsvár/Cluj | 169

ELEK REZI

“Continue your love to those who know you ...” (Psalm 36,10/a).

The Newest Initiatives in Global Climate Protection | 197

WORKSHOP

CSABA BALOGH

False Prophecy | 207

VARIA

SÁNDOR KOVÁCS

Laudation of Mihály Balázs | 213

MIHÁLY BALÁZS

The János Zsigmond-Award Acceptance Speech | 216

BOOK REVIEW

PÉTER KOVÁCS ÚJSZÁSZY

Francis Dávid's Sermons – LOVAS Borbála, ed. (Budapest: The Research Group on the History of Early Modern Unitarian Sermon Literature in Transylvania and Hungary – Protestant Theological Institute of Cluj-Napoca, 2025), 518 pp. | 221

Abstracts | 225

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ABSTRACTS

LÁSZLÓ SOMOGYI

How to Read Legends?

The early Christian congregations not only had to give credible answers to the questions of who their master, Jesus of Nazareth, was, but also had to effectively refute the slanders directed against the person of Jesus. These slanders concerned his origins, including that he was a person born of adultery, unworthy to be a member of the religious community, and in fact a deceiver misleading the people. To refute the accusations, Christian communities gradually developed a specific interpretative framework, which was formulated in the so-called birth stories. They gave positive content to the stray news connected with the birth of Jesus and interpreted these as signs of a higher meaning. In this way, they created legends. Today's believers must answer based on their own interpretations consistent with their own religious experience.

Keywords: birth stories, early Christians, interpretation, Jesus, legends, religious experience, slander

NORBERT NAGY

The Future of Historical Jesus Research?

The “Next Quest” – Introduction and Critique

Over the past two decades, calls for a fundamental reconsideration of historical Jesus research have become increasingly prominent. This process assumed a more definite form in 2021 with the publication of a manifesto announcing the Next Quest for the Historical Jesus. This article offers a critical examination of the programme of this emerging research trajectory. Employing a critical historiographical approach, it explores its antecedents, principal claims, and methodological objectives. It also maps the possibilities opened up by the Next Quest for the Historical Jesus, while identifying its conceptual ambiguities and potential pitfalls. The emerging movement points towards the possibility of a broader, more diverse, and more critical form of historical Jesus research and challenges the field to reconsider its own future.

Keywords: historical Jesus, interpretations, manifesto, Next Quest for the Historical Jesus, research

GYÖRGY GAAL

István Bágyi Joo, Professor of Medicine and the First Botanical Garden from in Kolozsvár/Cluj

The article's first chapter presents a short history of Kolozsvár's Medical-Surgical Institute. It was founded in 1775 by empress Maria Theresa (1717–1780) to train scientifically educated surgeons and midwives. During its 97 years of activity it trained about one thousand medical surgeons and more than one thousand five hundred midwives. Its teaching staff included 32 professors, most of them medical doctors, including members of the Hungarian Academy. In 1872 the Institute merged with newly founded Royal Hungarian University's Faculty of Medicine.

The second chapter presents the life of István Bágyi Joo (1806–1881), the institute's only Unitarian professor. He was born in Kolozsvár, and studied at the Unitarian College. In 1825 he was a student of the Kolozsvár Surgical Institute. From 1828 to 1833 he studied Medicine in Vienna. In 1838 he was promoted professor of introductory studies at the institute. He taught Physics, Chemistry and Botany to the first year students. After 31 years he retired in 1870. But he remained deputy director until 1872. He died in 1881 in Kolozsvár. In his will he left significant sums of money to Unitarian schools and organizations. Most of his library was donated to the Unitarian College.

The third chapter presents Joo's scientific activities. He was a botanist, and two flowers bear his name. His library contained 486 volumes, most of them in the natural sciences.

The last chapter is about Kolozsvár's first Botanical Garden, which was opened in 1854 under professor Joo's direction. The garden was closed in 1872 when Sámuel Brassai founded the university's Botanical Garden on the grounds of Count Imre Mikó's (1805–1876) estate.

Keywords: botany, botanical garden, Cluj/Kolozsvár, library, Medical-Surgical Institute, medicine, Unitarian, university; Brassai, Sámuel (1797 or 1800–1897), Bágyi Joo, István (1806–1881), Maria Theresa (1717–1780), Mikó, Imre (1805–1876)

ELEK REZI

“Continue your love to those who know you ...” (Psalm 36,10/a). The Newest Initiatives in Global Climate Protection

This article presents two recent initiatives, which define the courses of action nowadays and in the future to protect our climate and achieve climate justice.

One of the initiatives represents a new change from a legal perspective. The Hague-based International Court of Justice on July 23, 2025, issued its advisory opinion on the legal obligations of states regarding climate change. The article presents these advisory opinions in detail.

Another very important initiative and event is the UN Climate Change Conference, COP30, held in the city of Belém, Brazil, from November 10 to 21, 2025. The article evaluates the results, successes, and failures of the Climate Conference. At the same time, The article also highlights the significance and role of the representatives of the World ‘s religions in the proceedings of the Conference.

Keywords: advisory opinion, biodiversity, climate change, climate justice, fossil fuel, International Court of Justice, joint action, legal, transition mechanism, UN Climate Change Conference (COP30), world religions

CSABA BALOGH

False Prophecy

On Trinity Sunday, one of the readings in the liturgical tradition is Isaiah 6. Using this as a starting point – though presumably not out of step with its spirit – this sermon emphasizes another aspect: the admittedly paradoxical nature of God’s self-revelation. Every aspect of Isaiah’s false prophecy is a familiar phenomenon in contemporary culture as well, both inside and outside the church. What is paradoxical – and at the same time painful – is that we engage in it without even realizing that what is happening is a false world, a world of blind visionaries and lost sages. Starting from this, the sermon focuses on the trap of information overload; on the deception of the mirror disguised as a window, or the trap of narcissism; and on the prostitution of language, or the trap of a culture of ambiguity and suspicion.

Keywords: false prophecy, God, Isaiah 6, paradox, prophecy, self-revelation, sermon, traps, Trinity Sunday

PÉTER KOVÁCS ÚJSZÁSZY

Francis Dávid's Sermons – Lovas Borbála, ed. (Budapest: The Research Group on the History of Early Modern Unitarian Sermon Literature in Transylvania and Hungary – Protestant Theological Institute of Cluj-Napoca, 2025), 518 pp.

The volume containing the Francis Dávid's sermons is an outstanding achievement in the field of Protestant church and religious history research: the sermons of the bishop who founded the Unitarian church have now been republished after the first edition in 1569. The book is a result of a collaboration between the Research Group on the History of Early Modern Unitarian Sermon Literature in Transylvania and Hungary and the Protestant Theological Institute in Cluj-Napoca.

Divided into five main sections, the publication contains the editor's foreword, followed by two introductory essays, then the texts of the sermons, followed by two recommendations, then the notes accompanying the sermons, and finally the critical analyses, which concludes the volume. Thanks to the careful editorial work, this volume serves as a resource for research in theology, literature, and the history of language, while also making the church founder's writings accessible to a broader readership interested in Unitarian heritage.

Keywords: Protestant Theological Institute (Cluj-Napoca), religious history, sermon, textual criticism, Transylvania, unitarianism; David, Francis (1520?–1579)