

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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„Nagyob kú emelés is kell a Sion vára rakására”

Congregation founding, polemics and martyrdom in
István Czeglédi's life-work

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I. Academic context, topic and objectives

In the middle of the 16th century Košice joined the Lutheran branch of the Protestant Reformation, which was confirmed through signing *Ötvárosi Hitvallás* (*Confessio Pentapolitana*). This unity of denominations existed for nearly a hundred years, until, as a consequence of signing the Peace Treaty of Linz the representatives of both the Catholic and the Reformed denominations appeared in the town. Košice thus becoming a scene of several religions provided an ideal place for these churches to build up.

István Czeglédi, being the pastor of Košice between 1653 and 1671, was one of the central persons who played a fundamental role in this construction. The preacher was regarded already by his contemporaries as God's chosen man who was destined for founding the independent Reformed ecclesia of Košice, for building the church and the school as well as protecting the congregation, which had to face the Jesuits' proselytisation and the recatholising processes emerging in the town. The works created by the pastor of Košice between 1659 and 1675 were a reaction to these events. Also, they give an insight into the approach of a Hungarian Reformed preacher

together with the theological, apologetical and organisational questions of that period.

In addition, the era when Ceglédi's life work was born is determining, too as in the two decades between 1650 and 1670 the representatives of the different denominations were free to enounce their theses in many questions in the 'metropolis of Upper Hungary'. In order to give evidence of the vivid intellectual life in Košice that time one can recall the fact that in this period community life based on the denominations started to bloom, which was generated by building churches and schools. Furthermore, drama playing and polemics occurred in Košice. Czeglédi had a fundamental role in all these acts. He became head of the Reformed church with Zsuzsanna Lorántffy's support in 1653 and his most crucial tasks were to stabilitate the newly created ecclesia; to initiate polemics regarding the public practice of Catholic religion just as joining those already in progress as well as forming the urban and regional politics (as much as possible). Czeglédi's activity was lined up along these objectives and the preacher's tasks defined by himself and also, his undertaking in building the church, protecting the congregation and defining public life were getting outlined. Opting for this to be the topic of my

dissertation was motivated by the fact that the preacher's life work was last given a full study at the end of the last century.

II. Achievements, sources, methodology

My dissertation, which aims to analyse Czeglédi's life work, consists of five parts. In the first chapter I am introducing Košice in terms of its political and printing history as well as its denominational background. Besides, I am giving a short biography of István Czeglédi's and give an overview of the more important specialist literature about the preacher of Košice.

The second chapter of my work serves as an introduction to my analysis of Czeglédi's life work divided into four bigger parts. It includes a presentation of his work entitled *Csatázó lélek* written in 1659. The text represents his intention of founding a congregation, the self-interpretation of his role as a preacher and his way of seeing the church, which is based on a correspondence with the Old Testament (Noah's ark) and which also created the identity of Košice's congregation.

In the third chapter of my thesis I am giving a close review to a work of Czeglédi's (*Romlás könyv*), which demonstrates the preacher's involvement in political affairs and his utterance as a court pastor. This book can be interpreted in the political context of 1659, of the year which was a clearly determining one in Czeglédi's and his contemporaries' life. In my view, the preacher of Košice uses this work to give his reaction to the political acts of the prince of Transylvania in accordance with the traditions of the prince mirror. Also, he expresses his critical views about them; what's more, he even presents his political views through the narrative of the deterioration topos speaking to the whole country calling it on to penitence in a Biblical way of speaking. Czeglédi's book and his funeral preaches examined at the end of the chapter give an insight into the complicated, sometimes even ambivalent relationship between the preacher and the prince's family. The political aspects of this relation and the court preacher's voice determined by Czeglédi's role as a pastor are also conveyed by the Biblical language which I was aiming to reveal in this chapter as profoundly as possible.

In the fourth chapter of my dissertation I am revealing Czeglédi's acts as a protector of belief reflected in his

polemical works. As a part of this, I am analysing the first polemic circle as well as the more notable so-called polemics of Košice also from 1659. Czeglédi's taking up the role of a polemist, his polemics in speech and in writing against the Jesuits who had appeared in Košice to convert the population is making up an important part of the pastor's getting involved as a preacher. In my view, Czeglédi, when forming his own preacher position – in accordance with his typological thinking – he is searching for a role model and while doing this he is turning back to the textual tradition of the Alvinczi-Pázmány polemics. His works, the texts of the polemics in Košice, his fictitious polemics with Pázmány may provide new data also for the Pázmány reception. Parallel to this – and this is determining for my analysis – these works also implement a basis to examine the preacher's Biblical-typological way of thinking and his becoming a protector of the congregation.

The most essential text of it is *Idős Noé becsületit oltalmazó Jáfetke*, in which the author uses the Biblical role model. It had been vital in founding and building up the congregation before and here he used it as a role model of his own role as a protector of his congregation.

My dissertation and the analysis of the preacher's life work are completed by introducing Czeglédi's martyr cult in the fifth chapter. In this part at several points I turn back to earlier interpretations and the reason for this is that the texts of Czeglédi's life work, the Biblical language that is constantly present and alive in them, the role models from the Old Testament, the parables and the types that forward his self-representation constitute the body of these texts, which could be used by Czeglédi's readers, contemporaries and devotees to articulate the preacher's martyrdom.

While studying Czeglédi's life work it was an essential analytical viewpoint of mine to reveal some of the essential elements of the Biblical perspective and the typological thinking, which characterises his work. Accordingly, in the analysing chapters of my dissertation I am submitting his way of writing which is to be observed in the preacher's works describing the historical events in Hungary as well as his own age using Biblical parables and is based on Biblical typology.

III. Achievements

In my dissertation my main objective was to overview the works of the pastor in Košice, reveal his life work focusing on his Biblical-typological perspective.

Having completed it, I believe that István Czeglédi's work appears as a coherent, consciously constructed unity formed by the Biblical-typological thinking and the historical approach, which were present in this entire life work. Through his works one can get an insight into the denominational relations of 17th century Košice, the struggles of the Reformed church and into his role as a protector of belief and a martyr. Studying the writings in the dissertation did not mean merely re-reading and re-interpreting Czeglédi's life work but it also contributed to introducing the polemical literary life in Hungarian language that was present in the Upper Hungary in the 17th century.

The printed texts created by the preacher of Košice are closely related to the polemics that arose at the beginning of the 17th century. Czeglédi consciously turned back to the theological polemics between Pázmány Péter and Alvinczi Péter in the 1620s. Consequently, the interpretation of his polemical works brought useful results for the Pázmány interpretation as well. As I see it,

the present work may be able to deliver a basis for my future researches as well as a monographical work that could give an extensive and close reading of all Czeglédi's texts.

IV. Relevant publications

- 1) GARADNAI Erika, MARTIS Zsombor, ***Országútikör és hitvita (Czeglédi István: Az országok romlásáról írott könyvnek első része)*** = *Bibliotheca et Universitas: Tanulmányok a hatvanéves Heltai János tiszteletére*, szerk. KECSKEMÉTI Gábor, TASI Réka, Miskolc, Miskolci Egyetem BTK Magyar Nyelv- és Irodalomtudományi Intézet, 2011, 57–70.
- 2) ***Czeglédi István kassai prédikátor társadalmi kapcsolatairól műveinek előszavai alapján*** = *Miskolci Egyetem Doktoranduszok Fóruma, Miskolc, 2011. november 8.: Bölcsészettudományi Kar szekciókiadványa*, szerk. GARADNAI Erika, PODLOVICS Éva Lívia, Miskolc, ME Tudományszervezési- és Nemzetközi Osztály, 2012, 13–20.
- 3) ***Protestáns mitizáció Czeglédi István Barátsági dorgálás című művében*** = *Miskolci Egyetem Doktoranduszok Fóruma, Miskolc, 2012. november 8.: Bölcsészettudományi Kar szekciókiadványa*, szerk. NAGY Ágoston, Miskolc, ME Tudományszervezési- és Nemzetközi Osztály, 2013, 12–19.

- 4) HELTAI János, MARTIS Zsombor, *A kassai hitvita = Docendo discimus: Doktoranduszhallgatók és témavezetőik közös tanulmányai a Miskolci Egyetem Irodalomtudományi Doktori Iskolájából*, szerk. HUSZTI Tímea, Miskolc, 2013, 15–29.
- 5) *Prófétai szerep Czeglédi István életművében = Miskolci Egyetem Doktoranduszok Fóruma, Miskolc, 2013. november 7.: Bölcsészettudományi Kar szekciókiadványa*, szerk. BARNA László, HUSZTI Tímea, Miskolc, ME Tudományszervezési és Nemzetközi Osztály, 2014, 18–23.
- 6) *Protestáns mitizáció Czeglédi István Barátsági dorgálás című művében = KoraiújkorÁSZ: Koraiújkortörténettel foglalkozó doktoranduszok tanulmányai*, szerk. KÁDÁR Zsófia, KÖKÉNYESI Zsolt, MITROPULOS Anna Diána, Bp., ELTE BTK Történelemtudományok Doktori Iskola, 2014 (KoraiújkorÁSZ tanulmánykötetek, 1), 89–105.
- 7) *A kassai magyar reformátusok identitásváltása az 1630–1660-as években Alvinczi Péter és Czeglédi István művei alapján = Metamorfóza identity v literatúre a jazyku: Az identitás metamorfózisa irodalomban és nyelvben*, szerk. Frantisek ALABÁN, Banská Bystrica, Belianum, 2013, 99–106.
- 8) *„Nagyobb kű emelés is kell a Sion vára rakására”: Prófétai szerepek mint a mártíromság előképei Czeglédi István 1659-es műveiben = Mártírium és emlékezet: Protestáns és katolikus narratívák a 15–19. században*, Debrecen, Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó, 2015, 79–89.

- 9) *Kirchenbild und Prophetenrolle im polemischen Werk von István Czeglédi aus dem Jahr 1659 = Themes of Polemical Theology Across Early Modern Literary Genres*, ed. Svorad ZAVARSKÝ, Lucy R NICHOLAS, Andrea RIEDL, Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016, 55–64.

Presentations

- 1) 2011. november 8. Miskolc: **Doktoranduszok Fóruma – Irodalomtudományi szekció.** Title of the presentation: Czeglédi István társadalmi kapcsolatairól.
- 2) 2012. november 7. Miskolc: **Almae Alumni Matris Tudományos Konferencia a Miskolci Egyetemen végzett történelem szakos hallgatóknak – Közép- és Koraújkori történelem szekció.** Title of the presentation: Régi kassai nyomtatványok nyomában: a hitvita mint történelmi forrás.
- 3) 2012. november 8. Miskolc: **Doktoranduszok Fóruma – Klasszikus és modern irodalomtudományi szekció.** Title of the presentation: A biblikus mitizáció eszközei Czeglédi István Barátsági dorgálás című művében.
- 4) 2013. február 7. Budapest: **I. KoraújkorÁSZ Doktorandusz Konferencia** Title of the presentation: A biblikus mitizáció eszközei Czeglédi István Barátsági dorgálás című művében.
- 5) 2013. május 22. Besztercebánya (Szlovákia): **Az identitás metamorfózisa irodalomban és nyelvben.**

Title of the presentation: A kassai magyar reformátusok identitásváltása az 1630–1660-as években.

- 6) 2013. november 7. Miskolc: **Doktoranduszok Fóruma – Klasszikus és modern irodalomtudományi szekció.** Title of the presentation: Prófétai szerep Czeglédi István műveiben.
- 7) 2014. november 7. Debrecen: **Katolikus és protestáns mártírártelmezések a koraújkorban.** Title of the presentation: Prófétai szerepek mint a mártíromság előképei Czeglédi István 1659-es műveiben.
- 8) 2014. december 3. Pozsony (Szlovákia): **Themes of Polemical Theology Across Early Modern Literary Genres.** Title of the presentation: Kirchenbild und Prophetenrolle im polemischen Werk von István Czeglédi aus dem Jahr 1659.