

**Antecedents and Consequences:
The Complanation of Dés and the Unitarian Works
in the 17th Century**

Ph.D. thesis

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Introduction

My research, concerned with the history of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church in the seventeenth century, required the study of little known Unitarian archival documents and unique Unitarian works from the age of Prince Gábor Bethlen and György Rákóczi (1613–1648). Arranged by archive and library, all of which are located in Cluj-Napoca (Romania), the material used are as follows.

1. From the Main Archive of the Hungarian Unitarian Church: archival documents from Regestrum A, Regestrum B, and the Archive of the Polish Bethren in Cluj-Napoca from 1613 to 1648.
2. From the Library of the Hungarian Unitarian Church: Unitarian prints from 1613 to 1648.
3. From the archive of the local church: archival documents from Regestrum I–XXXII from 1613 to 1648, and the unknown

Hungarian translation of the Valantin Radecke's *Formula administrandi*.

4. From the Direcția Județeană Cluj a Arhivelor Naționale: Colecția istoria unitarienilor (1616-1869).

5. From the Academy Library: Unitarian prints and manuscripts from 1613–1648.

6. From the Lucian Blaga Central University Library: Valentinus Radecke's *Illustris feminae Iudithiae Kornisiae [...] funebris laudatio*, János Varsolczi M.'s *Epicedium* and explication of Csanádi Pál.

Aims of the study

By interpreting these documents, an opportunity arises to create an alternative history of the Transylvanian Unitarians from 1613–1648. The main study of the period, still respected by the Transylvanian Unitarian community, is deeply flawed. In addition to having only limited access to the seventeenth century texts listed above, *The History of the Transylvanian*

Unitarian Church (2002) by János Kénosi Tőzsér (1708–1722) and István Uzoni Fosztó (1729–1778) adopted an apologetic stance to deal with contemporary issues effecting the eighteenth century Unitarian Church. As a consequence, the material they included is often superficial, unverifiable, and, at times, manipulated.

This research follows important antecedents. Studies of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church by Antal Pirnát, Bálint Keserű, Béla Varjas, Róbert Dán, Mihály Balázs, Gizella Keserű, Sándor Kovács, Lehel Molnár, Réka Újlaki-Nagy have been used in this Ph.D. Thesis.

Results

The Ph.D. thesis consists of two sections: on ecclesiastical history (1613–1648), and the history of literature (1613-1648).

The thesis begins by presenting the various Antitrinitarian trends of the early seventeenth century: Nonadorantism, Socinianism, Sabbatarianism, etc.

This reveals the instability of the perceived unity of the Transylvanian Antitrinitarians. The study, in stressing the plurality of Transylvanian Antitrinitarians at the time, reaches a judgment contrary to the claims of international scholarship. Unitarianism in Transylvania had not developed a unifying process as in Poland and, though no clear picture of power relations is known, the strength of the nonadorantists is visibly strong.

In 1619, during the reign of Gábor Bethlen (1619–1629), fearing the Reformed bishop, János Keserői Dajka would bring them under his rule, the Unitarians attempted to reduce antitrinitarian trends to a general common denominator. The Unitarian bishop, Bálint Radecke (Valentin Radecke, Walenty Radecke or Valentinus Radecius) (c. 1550–1632), of Polish origin and an ardent Socinian – though wanting to slowly introduce the worship of Christ amongst the worshippers – was suited for the task. Information on the developments of East-Central-European Unitarianism he knew from members of his own family: his father, Mateusz Radecke, until the early

1590s, represented a version of Unitarianism in Gdańsk that differed in nearly every respect to those developed in Greater or Little Poland (Wielkopolska/Małopolska) and Lithuania. Valentin, one of the promising young members of the Polish Brethren, was dispatched to Transylvania on 2 October 1605. He played an important role in revitalising the institutions in Kolozsvár (Klausenburg, Cluj) that had recently been returned during the rule of István Bocskai from the Jesuits who had required them during the one year of Habsburg rule. Soon after, he was elected preacher of the Saxon congregation in Kolozsvár, and became bishop of the Transylvanian Unitarians in 1615, holding the position until his death in 1632. He became the principal figure of the Unitarian community. Valentin, without doubt, believed that by embracing Fausto Sozzini's theology the survival and spread of Unitarianism was guaranteed. Unfortunately for him, the Nonadorantist and Sabbatarian factions could rebel against his attempts, because the Nonadorantists possessed the most important positions of the Unitarian church, and

the Sabbatarians benefited from the political power of Sabbatarian aristocrats.

Using previously unpublished archival documents, this thesis presents how this subtle fragile harmony was shattered in the mid-1630s. The Unitarian synod broke with its customary law during the 1636 bishop election: instead of electing the chief minister of Kolozsvár, they elected Dániel Szentgyörgyi Beke (1636–1661), a former Sabbatarian. The thesis examines the role of the preacher of the Saxon congregation, the radical Socinian Matthias Rhaw, the rival of Szentgyörgyi Beke. As their dispute persisted into 1638, a diet was called at Dés. The conflicting parties reached an agreement, the *Complanatio Désiana*, that gave the Unitarian belief a clearer statement, setting narrow standards for Unitarian teaching and public worship of Christ. Any one found innovating was to be beheaded and his estates confiscated. The Diet also suppressed completely the Unitarian printing. Beside this misfortune, the Unitarians lost many churches in Szeklerland. When the Transylvanian Diet of 1630

had recognized the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Unitarian religious minorities in Szeklerland, an increase in debates concerning local churches occurred. Peace between the denominations in the area of the Szekler and Saxon dioceses was fragile. Such debates spread to the other counties, too. The Calvinist-Unitarian church debates are known almost exclusively from Unitarian sources; this Ph.D. uses documents from the Main Archive of the Hungarian Unitarian Church to reveal the Unitarian perspective and clarify the Unitarian stances taken in particular debates.

Finding the forgotten documents of this revolutionary event inspired a re-evaluation of Unitarian literature. One significant issue is questioning the authorship of the catechism attributed to János Várfalvi Kósa (bishop 1597–1601). As this research shows, the 1654 edition of the catechism was the creation of the editor compiling different versions of the text. One version shows intermittent verbatim correspondence with a sermon from 1642. Another is that the printed text of the catechism, commonly

attributed to Várfalvi Kósa, this study argues contains the lost „Catechism Désiana”. In addition, the *Examination of the Trinity (Az Háromságnak megvizsgálása)* is identified as a translation of Fausto Sozzini’s *Tractatus de Deo, Christo & Spiritus Sancto*, and attention is drawn to a Unitarian manuscript (Pál Csanádi (1672–1636): *Argumentorum de Doctrina Triadis solutio*) appears as a metatext of a Reformed work published in Leiden in 1634. The study also considers Radecke’s *Formula administrandi coenam Dominicam (The Agenda of Holy Communion)* as the zenith of early seventeenth century Unitarian literature.

The Utilization of the results

I would like to utilize the results of my Ph.D. thesis two different way. I can undertake to list Kénosi Tózsér’s and Uzoni Fosztó’s sources with the documents, wich I processed in my Ph.D. thesis, and my plan for the future to publish a professional monograph.

Aknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor, professor Mihály Balázs for the continuous support and guidance during my Ph.D. and undergraduate studies. I wish to thank my colleagues for the numerous stimulating discussions and for providing a cheerful environment.

Publications closely related to the subject of the Ph.

D. thesis

*„...az nagy tengerből való folyóvíznek sebessége...”
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