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The Impact of Péter Bod's Translation of a Text about Galley Slaves

Abstract

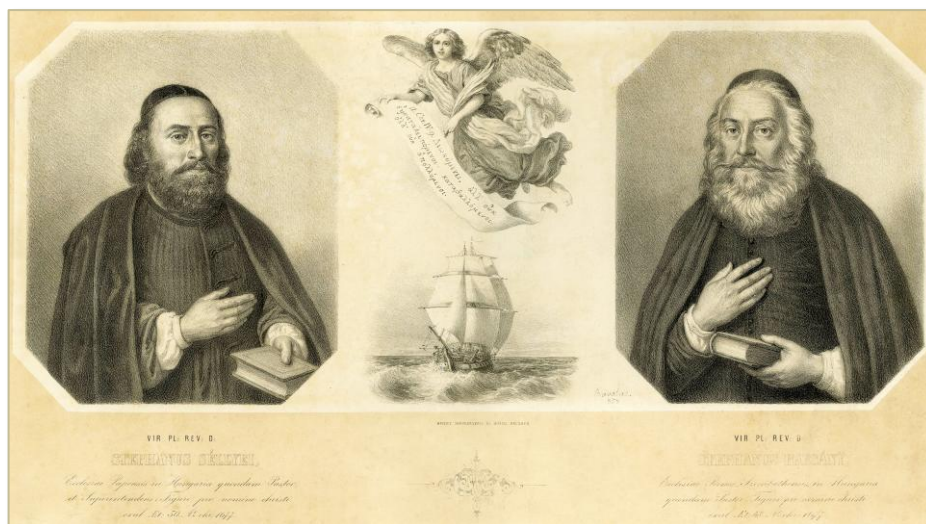
Within his work on Protestant church history, Péter Bod's translation of the galley slaves' history was one of those 18th century Protestant historiographical approaches, which bound the image of the struggling Church to personal sacrifice for the true faith. In 1738, he translated Bálint Kocsi Csergő's *Narratio brevis*, i.e. the history of the galley slaves' suffering, into Hungarian, entitled *Siege of a House Built on a Rock*. Although it was a manuscript, it became a bestseller copied and read all over the Carpathian Basin. Later, the image of the Protestant martyr was identified with what he delineated in his works *God's heroic Holy Mother Church* and *St. Heortocrat*, namely, a martyr is an individual who, in the midst of persecutions and fleeing, does not grow weary in being of use for the benefit of his nation, his Church, the common good. In his works on church history, many inventories of suffering from the 16th and 17th centuries demonstrate his utilitarian view of martyrdom. The secularized view of martyrdom identifies the notion of suffering for religion with the struggle that he himself fought against the Habsburg censorship. The 17th and 18th century Protestant history of suffering turned into an intellectual commitment that is unfolding in the midst of difficulties and preserves our nationhood, and can be formed along the *jus* and *bonum publicum* (public good, and public law).

Keywords: galley slaves, martyrdom, Péter Bod, utilitarianism

Today, people's interest in history focuses in particular on role models from the past that are valid even today. Such an ideal was the Reformed minister, Péter Bod (1712–1769), for the Transylvanian Protestant society. Born in Felsőcsernáton, he was of Székely origin, and worked in Magyarigen (Fehér county, Romania) most of the time. It was he, who tried to break out

of the grip of the 18th century slow Counter-Reformation and the depressing Transylvanian provincialism through his view of nation, his diligence dedicated to the Enlightenment. It is unavoidable even today to summarize his successes and ill successes, list his friends and opponents to make the portrait of the scholarly minister even more impressive. He was a role model for congregational care, confessional conduct and family care. He was a loving father, a faithful husband, a reliable and indefatigable church leader who was lighting the tiny torchlights of the soul and intellect of his people in the Hungarian-inhabited area near Gyulafehérvár, in Magyarigen at the foothill, which later grew into an all-pervading lucidity in the course of Hungarian Enlightenment. His Baroque clothing, rice dust wig, four-horse carriage and his Rococo style sentence structures hardly allow to see the big thoughts he brought from Leiden (the Netherlands) to Transylvania as indestructible spiritual treasures, to make them public property. He tried to preserve and pass on knowledge, be of use to and creative for the nation, establish and transform institutions for a lifetime. In his life that was '*like slipping on the ice*' and more like a drama, sadness went in and out like '*a fast stagecoach*.' He was the only one who used these noble ideas for the benefit of the Hungarians, and he did this mainly in the Hungarian language. He did not throw the life-giving seeds of science on barren land but on such soil that the Bethlen College of Nagyenyed, whose thankful day-labourer he was to the end of his life, had been preparing for the huge job throughout centuries.

Péter Bod was born in Felsőcsernáton in Háromszék county on 22 February 1712 and came from a (*armalistic, primipilus*) Székely gentry family where he spent his childhood after his father's death.¹ According to the tradition of the age, he became a scholarship holder of Leiden State University in the Netherlands, after he had graduated from the College of Nagyenyed (1729–1740). After three years of study abroad (1740–1743), he served in the court of the Countess Kata Árva Bethlen (1743–1746), and held a minister's position in Sorotély (Szeben County, Romania) and then in Olthévíz (County of Brasso, Romania) (1746–1749). He must have been very busy because – besides his service as a preacher – he also dealt with theology and history in his free time. The appropriate place for this activity was the library that had significance also for all Hungarians, namely it proved to be an inexhaustible treasure mine of history and theology besides important publications on Hungarian pietism.



Double portrait of István M. Harsányi and István M. Séllyei (M. Barabás, Lithographie, 1854)

His activity was replaced then by a ‘quieter’ but still urban service in Magyarigen where, besides his pastoral service in the neighbourhood of the mansion-houses of the Teleki family in Celna, Sárd, Fehérmegyei and the settlements at the Erdély-foothills, he pursued an extremely prolific scientific life characteristic of a real scientist. He lived still in Magyarigen when he formulated the need to establish the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (*Litterata Societas*) just like Apáczai. He became immortal to the Hungarian science when he summarized the Hungarian scholarship ‘*The strong men in shields and helmets standing on the castle of Zion*’, in the Carpathian Basin with an outlook on his region in Hungarian in a separate volume. He was the founder of the discipline *historia litteraria*. However, no shadow can be cast on what he himself formulates as his scientific creed, namely, his scientific interest focusses in the first place on theology and only then on history ‘*After my [studies of] Theology that my Office requires, I have greater pleasure in examining History, any books I get about this material are dear to me.*’²

The bibliography of the scientist’s works is quite rich. Judit Nyerges worked up the bibliographic data related to his scientific work.³ At first his former student, the Reformed preacher József Benkő,⁴ then the Roman Catholic scientist Elek Horányi⁵ and in 1817 the Lutheran Gábor Döbrentei

(1785–1851) founder of the journal *Erdélyi Múzeum* [Transylvanian Museum] drew attention to the scientific value of Bod's activity:

For my part, as I have mentioned it above, I wanted that at least some biographical news should maintain the memory of this diligent, good patriot. Blessed be the ashes of those who with inexhaustible diligence worked for the scientific cultivation of the nation; let us hold them in respect, and let us who live in this age try to follow them, and where it is necessary let us go ahead on the glorious track with noble progress.⁶

Two Reformed preachers and Count Imre Mikó (1805–1876), a prominent figure of Protestantism and politics in Transylvania, who was also engaged in a wide range of scientific work, worked up Péter Bod's biography. He was the first to praise him as a historian,⁷ which could be attributed to the fact that he might have had access to his published and unpublished works, on the one hand; and that he examined Bod's oeuvre in its entirety, on the other hand. The national Romanticism and the ethical evaluation of his person delayed his recognition as a historian. We owe the second, comprehensive elaboration of his oeuvre to the Reformed minister Aladár Sámuel (1869–1926),⁸ who did not change Miko's evaluation too much, but he contributed some significant details to the Bod-biography, which Imre Mikó did not know about or did not consider particularly noteworthy. The last comprehensive research examining Bod's historiographical work in all detail was published in 1916, in the middle of World War I.⁹ Its author was the church historian Imre Révész, who lived in Kolozsvár and later moved to Budapest (1889–1967). He examined Bod's historiographical methods and style in detail.

In the 20th century, Elemér Jancsó,¹⁰ Samu Benkő,¹¹ and Domokos Kosáry's research stressed that Bod, who also achieved excellent results in the field of historiography and literary history, used to be a prominent personality in Transylvania in the 18th century:

The most significant Transylvanian scholar of the period is Péter Bod, a Reformed village preacher, [...] a theologian of firm faith, a church historian, [...] an ecclesiastical jurist. However, he enters the history of Hungarian culture primarily through his work in the field of literature and culture. In 1756, he proposed the establishment of „a literary society” consisting of Hungarian and Transylvanian members, as well as the conscious cultivation of the language [...], for the first time. In 1760, he urged the creation of ‘a Hungarian society of scholarly people’ to revive the Hungarian language as is the case with other nations.¹²

The evaluation of the life and work of the scholar from Magyarigen objectively or subjectively stressed the outstanding value and quantity of Bod's work he had done for the sake of the Hungarians. Through the efforts of Dezső Buzogány and Gábor Sipos, church historians from Kolozsvár, the contents of registries and summaries of the synodal sessions having been compiled by Péter Bod became known, however, they could only be read in manuscript until 1999.¹³ Gábor Sipos' study analysed Bod's church historical and research work from the viewpoint of an archivist.¹⁴

Also Ákos Egyed, the excellent historian from Kolozsvár, investigated Bod's life. He presents the summarised results of research on the oeuvre of the prestigious, large-scale polyhistor in a modern, complex way.¹⁵ Gábor Tüskés compiled a volume on the evaluation of Bod's achievements in the cultivation of *historia litteraria* on the 290th anniversary of his birth. The studies analyse Bod's scholarly nature from the viewpoint of the history of law, church and literary history, ethnography and historiography.¹⁶ Hedvig Dáné published a detailed study on the 20th and 21st century-Péter Bod-research.¹⁷

The volume of essays and studies edited by Botond Gudor, György Kurucz and Enikő Sepsi, which compiles the papers read in Magyarigen and Nagyenyed on the 300th anniversary of Péter Bod's birth, presents the results of the Bod-research after 2000 from the viewpoint of church, society and civilization.¹⁸ In 2012, Botond Gudor and Mónika Imregy published Bod's historiographical work, his church historical writings on the Romanians that were formulated under the influence of the school of civics and were in manuscript form until that time.¹⁹ Hunor Boér and Judit Dobra presented a case when the publishing house had confused the errata (*Corrigenda*) to the scientific lexicon with that to the Latin-Hungarian-German *Dictionarium* in the course of reprinting the *Magyar Athenás* [Hungarian Athenas].²⁰ We are thankful to two young researchers for Bod's historiography and the re-evaluation of his literary history. In her summarised study, Emese Rácz describes Bod's place in the field of historiography, the sources he used, his religious bias, *hungarus*-consciousness, human relations and values. In her conclusion, she draws attention to the fact that Bod's history of science and church meant a unique historiographic undertaking in its day.²¹ Annamária Bretz, surveys Bod's *historia litteraria*-project, the use of his mother tongue and his working methods in her PhD thesis that she defended in 2016, she also performs the reassessment and re-evaluation of Bod's role in literary history. The author, who critically examines Péter Bod's originality and working methods,

highlights the scientist's use of his mother tongue and authentic communication of data; she also picks the phrase 'preservation of memory' as a keyword of the *historia litteraria*-project.²² József Kurta, considering recent research findings, surveys the relationship between Péter Bod's New Testament theology and Cocceianism.²³

Dezső Buzogány describes the fate of Bod's manuscripts on church history and the scientific values of the historiography he wrote for the benefit of the Church.²⁴ László Gróf, a map historian from Oxford, has an indisputable merit in promoting Péter Bod's international reputation. Namely, he reviews Bod's cartographic work in one of the most significant British historic and cartographic journals, the *Imcos Journal*,²⁵ and then publishes his map of Africa and his biography in a publication of the Oxford Bodleian Library presenting map rarities (*Treasures from the Map Room*).²⁶

Bod believes in research seeking new scientific paths all the time. He uses the (comparative, cause and effect) methods he learnt at the Leiden University that acted as a Nagyenyed and an Eastern 'lantern' in theology. Besides a remarkable Hebrew exegesis, also his text interpretation using philological comparison and Hungarian and classical historical archetypes resonates in his sermons. Péter Bod's scientific activity is to be interpreted in the intersection of theology, literature and history. Otherwise, his work can become suspicious of subjectivism. The literary criticism of our age occasionally suspects his extraordinary productivity as a writer of unfounded overproduction; it has to be remarked that he wrote about 50% of all his works in Hungarian. It is part of his method of work to translate the entries in European encyclopaedias (Hoffman), and then to use these translations several times. He does not want to enhance the number of his publications; on the contrary, he seeks the benefit of the science he practises in his mother tongue. This desire of his was crowned when he and József Benkő republished the new edition of Pápai Páriz's *Dictionarium*.

Péter Bod regards himself a cultivator of theology. However, this part of his oeuvre is the least known to the public. Research has scarcely praised his scientific activity in this field. Still *A szentírás értelmére vezérlő magyar leksikon* (Kolozsvár 1746) [Hungarian Lexicon for the Interpretation of the Holy Scripture] is one of the Transylvanian writings, in which – by means of a theological glossary of lexicographical sophistication of the Enlightenment – the covenant theological and the typological-emblematical perspectives of the Dutch Cocceian (Descartian) professor Johann van der Honert becomes better known for the theologian community in Transylvania and Hungary. Though the *Szent Biblia históriája* [History of the Holy Bible] is

rather a summary of the history of Bible editions, his theological character can be felt on every page of his work, and his text interpretation makes the classical-philological knowledge arising from his theological character obvious. Finally, his apologetic tone filled with the theological struggles of his age can be perceived in the explanation of the *Szent Júdás Lebbeus könyve* [Book of St. Jude Lebbeus]. The true religion is the rule of Christ against pagan 'naturalism', 'deism', i.e., it is the Christian Reformed creed that Bod himself hurries to defend. He views the secularisation caused by the 18th century Enlightenment from a conservative viewpoint. His opposition supported by the *defensor fidei* (apologetics) seems natural for him, however, he moves to the direction of enlightened confessionism in the course of the apologetic discussion. He is a faithful preacher and a popular preacher of his congregation. During his service in Magyarigen he baptised 262 persons, married 24 couples and participated in 24 partial synods. Today his sermons can only be assessed through his *Funeral orations*. As a favourite preacher of the funerals of the aristocracy, he mingled among the Baroque figures of speech everything he wanted to tell the educated and influential audience about Hungarianness, society and God. He did not silence his contempt for the secularization of his age. However, his sermons illustrate the best that the Hungarian Enlightenment is seeping into public consciousness along the conservative reaction against traditional forms and behaviours. While praising the human virtues that he regards divine gifts, he highlights the life events that made the diseased person a useful member of his/her society and church (the theory of *utilitas* and *bonum publicum*). He considers the support of the living memory and the transmission of historical-religious heritage the greatest tasks of human existence. He might have become a scholarship holder and later clergyman at the court of Kata Árva Bethlen because of his Christian life; moreover, he owes his ecclesiastical advancement not merely to his scholarly activity but also to his courage to stand for his church.

It is because of his historical creed that he occupies a prominent place in the portrait hall of the church historians of the Transylvanian Reformed Church. In his work *Az Isten vitézkező Anyaszentegyháza* [God's Heroic Holy Mother Church], published two times, he synthetically depicts the world history, and with an excellent sense inserts into it the main series of events of the history of the Hungarians, thus, also the history of the Reformation. Due to high data loss, the knowledge published in his monographs and mainly in the *Magyar Athenás* can be regarded as a significant collection of national memories. The huge corpus of his church history, the

history of the Reformed Church (*Historia Hungarorum Ecclesiastica*), was published in Leiden in 1888, thus, it could no longer have a great impact on his age. For history, however, it is a work that ‘illuminates past events’ and is a great teacher of life at the same time. Translating Bálint Kocsi Csergő’s *Brevis*, i.e., the description of the galley slaves’ history, into Hungarian in 1738, at a historical time that was unfavourable for his church, he emphasized the 18th century martyrology (suffering) of his church. This translation made the history of suffering of the Hungarian Protestantism known in European church historical context. The hand-written translation, which can be classified as a genre of Protestant martyrology, is the success story of the galley slave literature in the Carpathian Basin at an age when the history of suffering of the Roman Church had to be equilibrated at the time of the Reformation. The martyrology of the Catholic Church achieved significant results in the field of church history and mission at the Baroque age. The success of the Catholic reform after the Concilium Tridentinum led to significant Protestant losses. The social and political positions of Catholicism were strengthening in proportion to the consolidation of the Habsburg rule in Hungary. Protestant churches in Hungary, forced into a defensive attitude characteristic of minorities, were guarding the bridge-heads that could still be kept. Due to the constitutional background of the region, Protestantism in Transylvania and within that the Reformed Church could play a much bigger role than its coreligionists in Hungary. This leading role, which socially came to a halt due to the establishment of the Romanian Greek Catholic Church, seemed to function in the social sphere dominated by the feudal society with more or less restrictions, though.

In submissions like *Supplex Libellus*, the Reformed society complained about its requests, which were rarely taken into consideration; it fought in the field of church and literary history, in order to preserve the Transylvanian denominational *status quo*.²⁷ It is not by chance that the renowned church historian, Péter Bod, called the Reformed Church of the Baroque age „*Isten vitézkedő Anyaszentegyháza*” [God’s heroic Holy Mother Church] that became the metaphor of Protestant martyrdom.²⁸

This view of martyrdom developed in political struggles; however, it grew significant on the ground of Transylvanian cultural history. Literary historical, church historical examples and topoi attest that Protestant martyrdom is the natural life process of the struggling Church. The slowly developing 18th century personality cult of Protestant martyrology places the representatives of piety and culture (*pietas et eruditio*) to the forefront of the shapers of denominational consciousness. Behaviours nurtured on

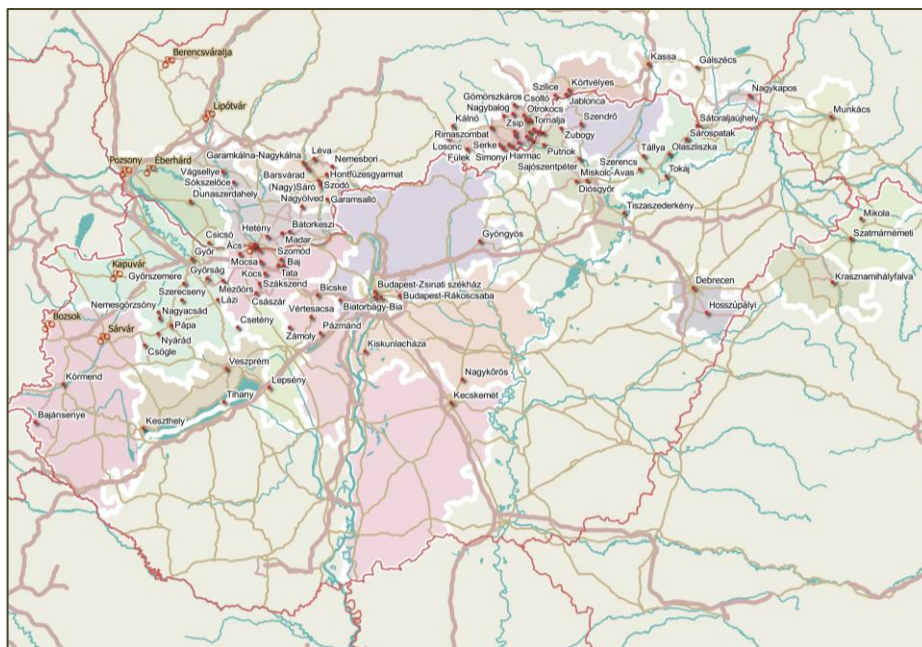
the biblical ground of Protestant ethics naturally blend the symbolic stories of the Reformation era, but through their perseverance and consistency and social usefulness (*utilitarianism*) they become a religion and nation pedagogical tool. The Protestant martyr formulates the new life situation of modern martyrdom in a politically exposed environment, i.e., to survive and be useful mean much more than to die as a persecuted martyr. However, this commitment requires instructive church historical stories that the tragic event history of the galley slaves' suffering provides abundantly. The galley slaves' martyrdom has become a pedagogical tool for a nation. A martyr is a true Christian who is loyal to his church and is willing to meet persecution (*persecutio*) with patient endurance (*patientia*) until a sacrificial death.²⁹ In fact, there is a parallelism between Catholic and Protestant martyrology whose 18th century historical self-representation is out of balance. Catholic martyrs of Kassa³⁰ versus Protestant galley slaves,³¹ the expulsion of the Transylvanian Catholic bishop versus St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in Paris,³² are the usual, frequently mentioned church historical issues in 18th century historiography. Martyrdom was a popular subject in Catholic Baroque art. Martyrdom concepts and narratives played a significant role in shaping the individual, community, denominational, and national identity in the Early Modern Age, in the rebirth of the Church and in the formulation of the victory of faith. It was the intention of Protestant martyrology to explain the real efforts of Counter-Reformation, making the most of its potential.³³ The representation of the Protestant martyr is a censored representation that is a foreign body in the history of ideas of Catholic Baroque. Catholic historiographers consider the assumed martyrdom due to false teachings a legitimate expiation. Protestant martyrs teach us in the first place through their life example; Catholic martyrs teach us mainly through and after their death. The attribute of Catholic martyrs' holiness is the opportunity to intercede for the living. Protestant martyrdom is the history of earthly suffering placed in eschatological perspective (symbols of historical approach: the lamb, the lily, the predestination, the idealism of the statement: I am standing here, I cannot do anything else). Catholic martyrdom is about death after unjust suffering assumed against the principle of the sanctity of life and salvation still on earth (angels immediately lift the martyrs up). Consequently, the saints' life is instructive through their tragedy. Calvin's anthropology (*praedestinatio, mortificationem, via salutis* etc.) is palpably present also in the martyrology of Hungarian theological discourses, which sets an example of life for other church members through the suffering due to personal piety and the con-

sciousness of chosenness. For Catholicism, martyrdom is a precondition for the tragic experience of the promise of salvation (a salvation-historical approach), it is a stepping-stone in the canonisation-process; it is an eschatological reality with the characteristics of active intercessory-teaching also after martyrdom. We have to distinguish between martyrdom (that does not necessarily ends up with death) and martyrdom. Martyrdom and martyrdom do not necessarily cohere with each other in Protestant thinking. Consequently, Protestant apocalyptic is mostly a worldly history of mental and physical suffering, persecution and deprivation (that is why Job's story or the galley slaves' history of suffering are so popular). However, we cannot exclude the possibility of a combative attitude, the rhetoric of persecution and suffering to death,³⁴ which is justified by the consciousness of chosenness (*predestination*), the characteristics of Christ-likeness (*Christiformitas, conformatio ad Christum*) or the pastoral quality, possessing a prophetic tone (ruthless designation of sins). It is not by chance that Bod, for objective reasons, has a powerful martyrological tone during the silent Transylvanian Reformation in the 18th century history of events, namely, he entitles his first volume: '*the history of the siege by the gates of hell against God's Holy Mother Church and Christ's tempted, suffering servants*'.³⁵ In his *Athenas*, he calls the mostly Protestant doyens of the Hungarian culture '*Helmeted, Shielded Men in Zion*.' When answering denominational questions and questions of identity, one of the aims of the long Reformation is to lay down the elements of protonationalism besides protecting and strengthening the confessional status. These include the metaphor of the suffering Hungarian Church, too.³⁶

The excessive cult of saints is not acceptable for Peter Bod. With a sense of historiography and keeping Baronius' pattern in mind, he formulates a critique of the cult of saints in his volume *Szent Heortokrates* [*St. Heortocrat*], in which he secularises the great personalities of Roman Catholic martyrology:

The Roman Catholics increased greatly the number of their holidays according to the number of their saints; imposing severe penalties, they even forced the Protestants to celebrate them both in Hungary and Transylvania. Moreover, the zealous temper encouraged some of them to go to the fields, the meadows and to take something as a pledge from the peasants working there, they beat, chased, and punished them otherwise.³⁷

In his opinion, the old martyrdom cannot cause martyrdom again, referring this time to the sufferings of the Protestants.



Places in the Carpathian Basin preserving the memory of the Galley slaves (by Attila Ősz)

His volume and his task as a historiographer offer a good opportunity to explain his theology of the martyr:

The old Christians took care of those who suffered for the Christian faith, and they visited them as long as they were alive and in captivity, they visited, consoled and nurtured them, they sent them letters of consolation, they commemorated them in worships, so that they would not fail [...]. Those who were killed, were called martyrs after their death, they were kept in memory, their history of suffering was described, spoken about and praised, to encourage other people to steadfastness in faith and martyrdom.³⁸

For this purpose, sacred registers were made of known martyrs in *Dipticho Ecclesiastica*, *Tabella Ecclesiastica*, in that of Constantine the Great.³⁹ The only feast in the calendar, where no saint is mentioned, is 1 January, namely, also pagans celebrated this feast. He also mentions a prayer to martyrs.⁴⁰ In addition, the funeral feast is mentioned in memory of the martyrs where people got drunk, they ate and drank a lot. He also writes about the canonization of martyr saints: ‘*Was that necessary?*’ he asks rhetorically. In his

positive answer to this question, he analyses the process of consecrating a martyr:

Yes, people did have that *sanctos faciendi pruritus*, i.e., the superstitious temper that they greatly sought to multiply the number of saints, they were soon declared worthy of public veneration: thus, it happened that the body of a rogue executed for theft was respected like the body of a great and sacred martyr. [...] The souls of many, whose bodies have been honoured on the earth, are tormented in hell. In order to eliminate such an erring, it had to be examined who should be called a martyr and be included in the register of saints. [...] Published in the *Kalendarium Martyrium, Lectionarium*.

Without specifying the martyrs' denomination, Bod suggests that he is explaining universal martyrology, mostly praising the suffering of the early Church. He also sets up a typology of the history of suffering by publishing new varieties of martyrdom, namely the *Confessors* and the *Benefactors*. Consequently, he incorporates the 18th century theological and social narrative of martyr-interpretation into a lexicon of seemingly Catholic saints. His Protestant pragmatism disguised in a Baronian mask underlines his opinion: "*In the darkness of the time of ignorance, the saints multiplied incessantly*" (he invokes Lot and Germanus' case, who were driven away by St. Ignatius of Loyola). Also Pope Urban VIII intervened in this case,⁴¹ Péter Bod claims to justify himself in his Protestant martyrology.⁴²

By the end of the 18th century, martyrology had developed a significant tradition of historiography within each denomination. Jean Crespin's (1520–1572) *Martyrologium*⁴³ was followed by István Szőnyi Nagy's book (*Mártírok koronája, Kegyes vitéz*, 1675) [The Crown of the Martyrs, Gracious Knight],⁴⁴ and that of Mihály Szöllősi (*Martyrium Historicum* 1662, *Sion Leánya Artatlan Ügyét védő Hitnek Paissa* 1668). [The Shield of the Faith Defending the Innocent Case of the Daughter of Zion] In their volumes, they formulate the basic doctrines of Protestant martyrdom: exile and suffering from religious persecution.⁴⁵ This can be realised on the title page of Péter Bod's volume *Szent Heortokrates* [St. Heortocrat], where the author appears as an '*exiled preacher from Magyarigen*' who – for fear of censorship – brings one of the doctrines of martyrdom, i.e., the forced hiding due to persecution, close to the reader. The Protestantism-inspired church history writing, which also researched martyrology, was not without precedent for Péter Bod.⁴⁶ We know about a similar work written by Bod that unfortunately got lost: *Szent Vincentius, vagy Martyrologiáról* [St

Vincent or About Martyrology]. Bod himself was a winegrower and a winemaker, thus, the Spanish martyrology appreciating the personality of the martyr St. Vincent was not strange for him. The Reformed bishops' biographies worthily commemorated the Protestant history of suffering. *Szmirnai Szent Polikárpusz* [St Polycarp of Smirna] is actually the martyrology of bishops as indicated by the title of the volume:

Saint Polycarp of Smirna, or the history of Transylvanian bishops holding their office among troublesome hostilities with Christian diligence. That was gathered from under the dust of the stones of the country that was burnt down by the Tatars and the Turks [...].⁴⁷



Bod's work on biographies of Transylvanian Reformed bishops (*St Polycarp of Smirna*, 1766)

Of course, the expression ‘troublesome hostilities’ caught the attention of censorship despite the perfect Peterbodian mask, i.e., he often named his books with Protestant contents after Catholic saints (*Policarp, Hylarius, Vincencius, Hylarius, Heortocrat*). Consistently adhering to the image of martyrdom of his age: In his publication *Isten vitézkedő Anyaszentegyháza* [God’s Heroic Holy Mother Church] he associates ecclesiastical valour with the idea of Protestant martyrdom. His Protestant martyrology projected on the first Hungarian world map appears as a completely new aspect, through which he communicates the geographical coordinates of ecclesiastical courage for pedagogical reasons.⁴⁸ His well-known work *Magyar Athenás* [Hungarian Athenas] that he claims to be the storehouse of helmeted men fighting for Zion like heroes is no exception to this aspect either.⁴⁹ These men, he considers himself to be one of them, are the soldiers of Protestantism that they regard *vera ecclesia*, and who, in his first work *Narratio brevis*, he contrasts with the Jesuit missionaries who were considered violent and caused martyrdom.⁵⁰ One of the most influential moments of his martyrology is the translation of Bálint Kocsi Csergő’s book *Kősziklán épült ház ostroma (Narratio brevis)* [The Siege of the House Built on a Rock (Narratio brevis)]⁵¹ into Hungarian, many manuscript copies of which circulated throughout the Carpathian Basin as early as in the 18th century.⁵²

Péter Bod’s works are not simply a sequence of church historical data translated into Hungarian but they are also a collection of Protestant martyrdom that he publishes more openly or more covertly. Martyrdom as a notion frequently appears in his writings. He declares the Jesuits crueller than the ‘pagan persecutors.’ Using the universal church historical topoi of martyrology, he considers the Albigenses and Waldenses Christians who ‘listened to the word of God’ ‘wanted to improve religion’ [...] ‘they were silenced by force.’⁵³ Martyrdom comes close when we read about Jan Hus, Thomas Cranmer or other personalities of the English Reformation.⁵⁴ Using the data sequences in Lampe’s History, he gives a detailed description of the St. Bartholomew’s Day massacre: (*Párisi lakodalom* [Paris Wedding] 1766): ‘in the course of 30 years since 1550 39 princes, 148 earls, 147.518 noblemen, 760.000 commoners were killed for religious reasons.’ (based on Lampe’s History).⁵⁵ At the same time, he considers Servet’s martyrdom in Geneva unreasonable because auto-da-fe is, in his opinion, ‘a remnant of the Middle Ages.’ He states about the Huguenot colonies in the Netherlands that ‘the (number) of exiled ecclesiae multiplied.’



Bod's translation of Bálint Kocsi Cseregő's book *Narratio brevis*
(*The Siege of the House Built on a Rock, 1738*)

Nor does he act any differently in his martyr-centered evaluation of Hungarian Protestantism. He mentions the well-known fact that before 1526, it was the Law Article 4 issued by the Pozsony Parliament that decreed the execution of Lutherans on the stake.⁵⁶ He considers István Szegedi Kis' life a real history of martyrdom. His former patroness, Kata Árva Bethlen, whom he places in the ranks of⁵⁷ 'the immovable strong pillars of the house of God, helpless weak widows,' personifies in his works the Baroque ideal of female suffering due to orphanhood, religious persecution and widowhood.⁵⁸ Péter Bod changes the metaphor of martyrdom (protector of the Church, a sufferer because of Her), i.e., 'a gracious nurse to the house of God' into a weak and peccable female ideal, the embodiment of the suffering ecclesial community.⁵⁹ He considers the 18th century the age of martyrdom of the Church:

[...] but in Hungary and in the whole century her state (of the Church) deteriorated. The church buildings were occupied in many places, the free exercise of church services was banned in many places and they were not allowed to file their complaints with the Court [...] The young people's studying abroad was restricted. In some places of Transylvania the churches were forcibly occupied, the typography was restricted [...] and the salaries of the preachers were taken away in some places.⁶⁰

This was preceded by the carrying off of the galley slaves who were *persecutio decennalis*, i.e., the faithful victims of the decade of sorrow of the Church.⁶¹ An interesting historical event motivated him to translate Bálint Kocsi Csörgő's work, i.e., Lampe's publication into Hungarian:

The beginning of this sad story [I mean that of the carrying off of the galley slaves] – if one pays attention to it – corresponds to the distressing happenings in the current year [1738] because they were even then at war with the Turks and they captured the noblemen and the preachers on charges of rebellion. As I did not know whether this story had already existed in Hungarian, I translated it in these sad days into Hungarian; in some places I appended some material to it, taken from elsewhere, as an explanation and to make the data in it more striking, I registered them: I also added to the list data about some towns that were persecuted later because these belonged to the same topic. (Preface: *Kösziklán épült* [Built on Rock])

In his Church History he writes about the motivation for publishing the story of the galley slaves in detail; he registers the age of the Transylvanian nobles and preachers arrested in 1738 and the reasons for their arrest.⁶² He even publishes János Lázár's elegy to the Reformed bishop:

In 1738, a regiment of cavalry and a squad of German infantry arrested him in his house on the Saturday before Palm Sunday, his letters were rummaged [...] following many examinations he was found innocent and released on 15 January 1739.⁶³

Because József Rákóczi II's (1700–1738) troops invaded Ojtoz, the Court used violence against prominent figures of the Transylvanian society under the leadership of Reichsmarschall, Count Christian Lobkowitz (1686–1755) and his army, right in the College where also Bod used to study.⁶⁴ One of his young teachers, Zsigmond Borosnyai Nagy (1704–1774) and an old Reformed bishop, Gyula István Szigeti (1678–1740) were also among

the persons in detention (2 April 1738). Also a high number of Reformed and Unitarian noblemen were arrested: Count János Lázár, Sámuel Bethlen, Ferenc Rhédei, László Rhédei, Zsigmond Thoroczkai, a 60-year-old aristocrat, Mihály Toldalagi, a 70-year-old 'surdus' [deaf] nobleman. They were charged of conspiracy because of a letter in Runic script attributed to Count János Lázár.⁶⁵ Bod writes about his bishop as follows: 'Professor Gyula István Szigeti from Enyed was selected in 1737 and he was kept prisoner in Károlyvár from 29 March 1738, he was still in prison on 29 September (St. Michael's Day).'⁶⁶ The Reformed preachers István Törsök from Szancsal and István Szoboszlai from Újfa were arrested on the same charges, i.e., they prayed for the success of the insurrection.⁶⁷ István Szathmári Paksi's verse justifies Péter Bod's feeling the most:

Lord, it is a terrible bitterness of our hearts
That it is not the Pagan that is the enemy of our National faith:
Those who we fear God and honour the King together,
Are against us.⁶⁸

But also Bod himself writes: 'These days are evil, there is hostility/Marauders, loafers rule powerfully.'⁶⁹ He formulates the martyrology of the young preacher against the dominant Habsburg Catholicism. The translation of the galley slaves' history into Hungarian might have become a message of value in the decades of the Counter-Reformation. The nightmare of the persecution of the Church stayed there just like in the previous century:

In Hungary, there were not any Calvinists without suffering [...] they faced great persecution during the decade following the year 1670. [...] The archbishop and other priests abused their power, the archbishop as the governor of the king had the Reformed and Lutheran preachers cited to Pozsony, he sentenced them to death, then they were put to jail and finally were sold like some evildoers to the galleys in Naples in 1675.⁷⁰

The texts, that describe parts of the galley slaves' forced emigration experience or offer narrative accounts, are formulated using the linguistic and theological patterns characteristic of the biblical parallels or martyrological tradition, and especially of the martyrs of the Early Church.⁷¹ Its translation appeared in full and as an independent work only in 1866. The earlier and partial editions of the galley slaves' history were published in 1728 under the editorship of Pál Debreceni Ember, i.e., Friedrich Adolf Lampe. The

fifth chapter contains the fragments of Bálint Kocsi Csergő's memoir entitled *Narratio brevis de oppressa libertate Ecclesiarum Hungaricarum*, however, he omits the last three of the original twelve chapters.⁷² In his translation, Bod draws a parallel between the confessor and the benefactor martyrs. In his Church History, he specifies the three galley slaves trials: 1 session in Nagyszombat, 2 trials in Pozsony.⁷³ This time he uses several sources to discuss this case. He analyses the course of the lawsuit and the verdict in detail, lists the members of the jury, the plea (Séllyei, Harsányi), and publishes the galley slaves writings, then he touches upon their correspondence with Heidegger, Switzerland and the Netherlands. He lists the names and places of origin of the 57 prisoners and the bibliography of the 18th century galley slave trial. (Johann Heinrich Heidegger, Kocsi Csergő, *Historia diplomatica* 1710, the Pozsony verdict of 1674, Miklós Bethlen: *A lelkészek apológiája* [The Apology of the Preachers] 1677, György Lani, Franz Wagner: *Historia Leopoldi*).

The galley slaves' suffering might have become national memory because the Protestants associated the galley slaves' sentencing to the sacred tradition of the persecution of the Early Church. This association was considered one of the doctrines of the Protestant martyr cult, as the martyrdom of Early Christianity had been present in the writings of the Church Fathers acknowledged by the Calvinist and Lutheran exegesis. The contemporary historiographers interpreted the history of the galley slaves and the death of the persecuted as an exemplary martyrdom and testimony for the faith of Christ. In 1738 in the light of the events and martyrdom, the young Péter Bod felt encouraged to say harsh, defensive words and to show defensive conduct, in which the aggrieved denominational background manifested itself in a natural way. Martyrdom and apologetics were inseparable from the real political situation in his case either.⁷⁴ The story of Enyed in spring 1738 strengthened his dislike of the Jesuits even more: in the preface, he declares the Jesuits crueller persecutors than the 'pagan persecutors' had been. A Jesuit, who was crueller than *Diocletian* had been, decreed the torturing and killing of János Száki.⁷⁵ Bod's early martyrology is radical: The struggle of the true (*ortodox*) and struggling Church (*vera ecclesia*) against the false Church (*falsa ecclesia*). The persecution of the Early Church increases the tension of the opponent church image loaded with eschatological-apocalyptic perspectives and borrowed from the arsenal of humanist historiography, which is a valid analogue also for the 17th and 18th centuries in Bod's view. The opposition between the persecuted and the persecutor, good and bad, true and false, victim and executioner

are the re-duplicates of Bod's narrative, which force the reader to make a compelling and clear statement. The following can be read in his translation showing Péter Bod's subjectivity:

They weren't exactly without any consolation in their many afflictions either: they were singing the psalms of St. David day and night, they were praying with great zeal, which was why the persecutors really gritted their teeth.⁷⁶

The expressions like snarling and pulling out the teeth, the laughter of a Catholic adversary showing his white teeth made the Protestant martyr-ology in Péter Bod's writings part of the narrative mocking its adversaries. The self-sacrifice of the galley slaves is a testimony, an identity building martyrdom. It is a feature of Protestant martyrdom that even in the midst of the cruellest form of persecution, the martyr remains disciplined even at the time of ordeals: it tolerates afflictions (*afflictiones*) with perseverance (*constantia*) and patience (*patientia*) without a word of complaint. The galley slaves' common commitment is patience: *Patientia nobis opus est!* The Reformed bishop István Séllyei confirms this, citing the proverbial exclamation from the martyr legends: we were and we are even today so, and if we are oppressed in spite of our innocence, we must be peaceful, tolerant (*Patientia nobis opus est*). The perseverance and steadfastness in suffering supports the pastoral functions of martyrdom.⁷⁷

Bod's manuscript has been copied several times. Two copies are available in Nagyenyed: one of them is a copy made by Ferenc Csató in Enyed in 1770 (Csató 1770) and the other one is a copy made by Ferenc Almási in Kolozsvár on 8 December 1833 (Almási 1833).⁷⁸ The repeated copying of the manuscript is a significant task in the memory political process of Protestantism because of the circumvention of censorship. Its copies have reached Hungary as well: Márton Rákosi, village schoolmaster and cantor, copied it in Nagykároly in 1784; Sándor Szalai published it in Hódmezővásárhely in 1815. Translation has become a component of Protestant national identity.

Péter Bod's translation flashed the need for *mutual tolerance* in the 18th century, however, he did not give up his idea to list so many church historical topoi of Protestant martyrdom. He finds the appropriation of churches, accompanied by various violations of religious freedom, the most painful. In his essays on church history, the appropriation of the big church in Gyulafehérvár,⁷⁹ the former Reformed churches in Borbánd, Kend, Mócs, Kolozsmonostor, Katona, Kál, Kolozs, Marosszentgyörgy, Miklós-

vár, Balázsfalva, Maroskeresztúr, Ebesfalva (Erzsébetváros), Meggyesfalva are listed among others.⁸⁰ He deplores the education policy, which has adversely affected Protestants, especially because of hindering the peregrination. Religious abandonment due to the marriage law and mixed marriages, puts his canon lawyer's talent also to the test, he himself sums up the great grievances caused by the family policy of the Habsburgs in the case of the believers in Háromszék. He considers the Romanians' joining the Greek Catholic Church to be one of the most serious tools of the Counter-Reformation, which – in his opinion – can endanger the Transylvanian civil law.⁸¹ The possibility of defence belongs to the fate of martyrs, which shows the image of the struggling Church in the mirror of *ratio politica*, whether it is about religious struggles, parliamentary documents or imperial submissions. Martyrdom and the economic restrictions affecting Protestants, e.g. the tithes and church elevenths that got lost or were taken away (tithes, quarts),⁸² undermines the economic situation of the Church: 'Ecclesiastical beneficium went wrong, decreased.'⁸³ He considers the censorship of book publishing the gravest limitation (Biblia 1753, censorship),⁸⁴ as he has to make this tragic experience in his life. He shows quite a subjective attitude toward the history of suffering of other Protestant churches, e.g. Unitarian and Anabaptist churches.⁸⁵

The events in the first half of the 18th century warned Bod and his contemporaries to be much more careful. The great sufferer of the events in 1738, the arrested Reformed bishop did not volunteer to be martyred either. Silent Reformation needed silent confessors. The battles with the Turks in Banat and on the Balkan Peninsula continued even at the time of his liberation in 1739, however, the involvement of the Hungarians as a political factor was omitted. The Turks occupied Vég-Szendrő, Mehádía and Orsova, and then the battle at Mehida stopped their attack on 4 July. In this period of the war Count Friedrich Heinrich von Seckendorff (1673–1763) was replaced by Lothar von Königsegg Rothenfelds (1673–1751), president of the Council of War who was replaced by Georg Olivier Wallis (1671–1743) later on. In the battle east of Beograd, the imperial army was completely defeated and they left the battlefield with a loss of 20,000 soldiers. Yet, the peace of Beograd was created in the Grand Vizier's tent in a way favourable to the Habsburgs on 1 September 1739. In 1739, when the bishop had already been released, he wrote the following prayer as a witness to his faithfulness on Fasting Sunday:

We said this with great courage: peace, peace!, but behold! you took away the peacefulness from the Earth and wuthered to the Pagans far away, who came at a high speed and you evoked our fears as if for a holiday. [...] The young men, the virgins, the infants together with the old men are tormented by weapons outside, they are tormented by fear inside.⁸⁶

To stress his loyalty to the court even after his release, he said a Saturday prayer wishing that good luck be bestowed on Charles VI.'s weapons when fighting against the Turks:

Be repentant, you disobedient sons, I will cure your perfidy. [...] Help me now God of Salvation! Give me headway now. Behold! The Christians are in camps against the Pagans' emboldened pride. [...] we can live a quiet and peaceful life under the reign of our king.

The Reformed bishop of the oppositional city, Nagyenyed, could not be a martyr because of this pro-war sentiment either. In the course of rebuilding the library and dormitory he learnt the following: 'In war-time, the furnace is larger than the house because only the furnace and the chimneys are to be seen in the villages and towns when the house is destroyed.' (Rabutin)⁸⁷

Péter Bod is not only interested in the history of his own denomination but also in that of the Unitarian and Greek-Catholic Romanians who he examines from the perspective of their feudal and ecclesiastical affiliation. In his historiographical narrative he applies the latest results of civics and those of the Jesuit historiographic school, consequently, after 1750, he strives to make critical and balanced historiographic statements instead of his earlier subjective denominational attitude. This paved the way for the modern historiography practiced by József Benkő.

A lesser-known fact is that he is also a pioneer researcher of the history of the peoples and denominations in Transylvania. He is the first scholarly historian of the Romanians, although he discusses in the first place the Greek-Catholic church, i.e., the union of the Orthodox Church with the Roman Catholics in 1700. The way he investigates the Romanian folk customs, priests' clothing, and institutional system can be considered a modern collecting and analysing work according to the 18th century standards of historiography. He very keenly feels that the resurgence of Romanian nationalism in religious guise will cause Hungarian constitutional law problems later on. He makes the history of the Transylvanian Romanians an integral part of the history of Transylvania. Being of Székely origin, he separately discusses the History of the Székely (Hungarians in

Eastern-Transylvania) in his work *Siculia Hunno-dacia*. The chapter on Háromszék is the most elaborate one while the description of the Catholic region remains sketchy. Apart from a few Catholic regions (Szilacsek 1731 and Lakatos 1702), the description considering also aspects of historical geography, is the first systematic work including knowledge of civics compiled by a Protestant scholar; it suggests in addition to the love of the homeland, the sincere intention to save it from the obscurity of oblivion. In his manuscript on church history but also in his work *Az Isten vitézkező Anyaszentegyháza* [God's Heroic Holy Mother Church] he uses maps to illustrate the migration of the Hungarians and the spread of the Reformation on the continents. He is the first to publish maps of the continents with Hungarian inscriptions. Thus, he becomes a pioneer in mapping in the Hungarian language in Transylvania, although, his original intention has been to use the maps as a tool for pedagogy. In *Szent Heortokrátés* [St Heortocrat] he tries out something that was considered revolutionary even in the Western part of Europe. He considers the cycle of liturgical seasons and the legends of the related Hungarian saints in such a way that he practises his criticism of the cult of saints of the Baronian Catholic historiography in Protestant guise. The great virtue of his work is the preservation of 18th century Transylvanian folk traditions and customs, that we would hardly know about today without Bod.

As a librarian, Bod is among the first professional users of biblioteconomy, i.e., library science. While organizing the Bethlen Library in Nagyenyed, and then the libraries of Kata Árva Bethlen and Sámuel Teleki, he compiles book catalogues containing besides the catalogue number of the books, the author's name, publisher, and number of pages, also information on the quality of the various editions, their location. He is constantly extending these catalogues with new book acquisitions. It is not by chance that one of the library use competitions has been named after him. His encyclopaedic approach characteristic of the erudition in 18th century Europe in general, is not far off his enthusiasm to systematise, immortalize and collect memories that survived under "dust and ash". *A Magyar Athenás* [Hungarian Athenas] contains a pragmatic collection of the biographies of 528 scientists from the Carpathian Basin and a *Bibliai Lexikon* [Bible Lexicon], moreover historical notions (*Históriákra utat mutató magyar lexikon* [A Hungarian Lexicon of History]), rhymed epitaphs (*Hungarus Tymbaules*) and historical documents (*Noctes Heviziensis, Iubar*). It is a recurring element of his working method to re-use the lexical notions, entries whenever he can apply them to justify events or life situa-

tions. Although his approach cannot be called solely encyclopaedic, still he considers the conservative European repository of notions apt to complement Pápai Páriz's *Latin–magyar Lexikon* [Latin–Hungarian Lexicon], that already existed in the Transylvanian erudition, with a German dictionary and several explanatory tables belonging to the auxiliary sciences of history.

As far as the Transylvanian printing history is concerned, he is the first to write the history of Hungarian printing in his volumes *Biblia história* [History of the Bible] and *Erdélyi Félix* [Felix of Transylvania; the annotation of the poem written to the memory of Miklós Misztótfalusi Kis]. He analyses the language of Bible translations, the typeface, the paper quality, and finally yet importantly, praises the activity of the printer, which he considers to be of national importance. Besides praising the monograph of Miklós Misztótfalusi Kis and the significant results of Hungarian erudition, he is also critical of the pitfalls of reception history.

Finding an employment as an educator seems to be the most difficult for him. The recommendation letters from noblemen for professorship in Szászváros, Marosvásárhely and later in Nagyenyed fail one after the other. The contemporary society considers others more worthwhile. Yet enjoying the trust of the family Teleki, he becomes the preceptor of József Teleki (1738–1796) one of the leading figures of Hungarian Enlightenment. He uses the most modern Swiss textbook: the textbook by Jean Alphonse Turretini (1671–1737) (*Historiae ecclesiasticae compendium a Christo nato usque ad annum MDCC*, 1734), thus, demonstrating that provincialism does not at all mean isolation and inferiority. The efficiency of educators always unfolds in the life history of students. Count József Teleki's activity as the keeper of the crown, a church patron and church-builder in the neighbourhood of Pest, his scientific debate with Voltaire show that Péter Bod's teaching proved to be a seed that 'fell on good soil.'

The preacher from Magyarigen is a lover of literature and a jovial author. In his work *Szent Hilarius* [St Hilarius] he complements the humorous, anecdotal stories and fables in Heidfeld's *Sphinx* with snappy stories often with a Transylvanian flavour. Besides being readable, this genre also exhausts that of entertaining history (*historia delectat*). Through his short, aphoristic stories with a dramatic turn, he tries to cultivate the moral growth of his society.

The scholar, who loves his nation, always considers the creative genius important who obeys God's command. In his opinion, religious compromise and the financial greed of gain relating to career building contribute

to the degradation of scientists. Undoubtedly, the Hungarian or non-Hungarian personality is considered valuable, who through his work and conduct earns the name *Hungarus*. For him, this means the idea of ‘being of use to the country,’ it is utilitarianism that he himself consistently professes. His utilitarianism is confirmed by the fact that he published his works mainly in Hungarian. The translation of the galley slaves’ story serves his scientific commitment to his mother tongue. Many of his manuscripts in Latin have tided over the two and a half centuries that separate us from him. The deliberate use of the Hungarian language has not gone to the detriment of the Latin language scholarship. In his opinion, the ‘enlightenment’ of the masses is only possible by continuing the Reformed mother tongue project. However, he does not abstain from using the Latin of high scholarship either. Unfortunately, his life’s work *Magyar Egyház története* (*Historia Hungarorum Ecclesiastica*), that has also a manuscript version in Hungarian, has not been published in Hungarian in print up to now. Likewise, the *Litterata Panno-Dacica* (an extended Latin version of *Magyar Athenás* [Hungarian Athenas]), or the *Historia Siculorum* (The History of the Székely in Latin) are waiting to be translated and published. His project promoting the use of the Hungarian language stresses that it is not necessary to use French, German words in the case of scientific terms, their Hungarian equivalents have to be found instead. Even though his attempt has not worked perfectly, it does not detract from its merits that he tries to address and teach his Church and his people in their mother tongue, at a time when Latin is still the dominant language of science.

Reviewing his work, we can delineate the result of his scientific activity with greater or lesser accuracy. The number of the volumes he wrote and that were published until 2021, is 31. In his life, he published 18 independent volumes, the others (reprints, secondary editions, original works) were issued afterwards. Of his books published later, the following are considered first editions and significant from the viewpoint of literary history: his *Egyháztörténet* [Church History] (published in Leiden in 1888), the *Consistorialia*, i.e., that summarizes the decisions of the synod (published in Kolozsvár in 1999) and the *Románok történetének két könyve* [Two Books on the History of the Romanians] translated into Hungarian (published in 2012). The last one was issued in Sepsiszentgyörgy. After his death, 18 of his works and collections remained unpublished, of which the following are the most significant ones: *Református Egyház története* [The History of the Reformed Church] (published in Latin in 1888), *Székelyföld története* [The History of Székelyland], *A históriákra utat mutató magyar*

lexikon [Hungarian Lexicon on History], *Gellius Transsylvanicus*, *Gellius Molnarianus*, *Szenci Molnár Albert és Veresmarti Illés monográfiája* [Monograph of Albert Szenci Molnár and Illés Veresmarti], *Az erdélyi történetírás története (Neccesaria ac utilis scriptorum)* [The History of the Transylvanian Historiography], *Halotti prédikációi* [Funeral Sermons], *A magyar irodalomtörténet szinópszisa* [Synopsis of the Hungarian Literary History], etc. Thirty-seven of his published and unpublished volumes are considered the most significant ones, besides these several document collections, pastoral notes and letters remained unpublished in his heritage. Twenty-six of these are works and manuscripts in Hungarian, 23 are works and manuscripts in Latin. His volumes published in his life were written in Hungarian almost without exception. He published only a part of his volumes on marriage and canon law in Latin. Relatively few, i.e., only nine volumes in Hungarian remained unpublished. Eight volumes in Latin comprise a study on law (marriage and canon law), two shorter studies on church history (*De reformatione hungaricae*, *Az unitáriusok története* [The History of the Unitarians]) and three of them comprise tomb inscriptions (*Hungarus Tymbaules*). At least 14 of his works in Latin remained unpublished, although several of them would have deserved wider social recognition.

He is a scholarly figure struggling between the Baroque and the Enlightenment. His clothes, rice-dusted wig, sentence structures and social embeddedness remind us of the Baroque style. The inner sound that more and more loudly can be recognised from behind the Baroque style of his works indicates the efforts he took to take Transylvania and the Hungarians through the light of faith and reason nearer to the Europe that had already been living in the fever of the Enlightenment. His vehemence condemning the radicalism of the Enlightenment is present in his pastoral and historiographical narrative not only as a professional expectation, but it involves also the traditionalist character of Transylvanian life and thinking, i.e., there is no development where the possibility of the renewal of the spirit is not built on the past; there is no light where the purpose of human life turns into darkness without God. The mediatorship of his scholarly personality lets us see the characteristics of the generation whose ballast of self-consciousness carried as a heavy burden of the late Middle Ages will be transformed into a new, scientific behaviour that is more secularised, but all the more consistent in its faith (Pietism). The combined manifestation of faith and reason brings Péter Bod's scholarship and personality close to and makes it attractive even to posterity.



The liberation of the Hungarian ministers from the galleys, Theatre des Martyrs by Jan Luyken, 1712 (Leiden University Library, 21219 E 12)

Péter Bod is far from being perfect, as no one is. He becomes suspicious for József Rájnisi and Dienes Hermányi because of his imperfection, and they make him the tough discussion partner of the Unitarian preacher János Kénosi Tőzser. His work is not free from some kind of intellectual competition that often ends up in scientific mud wrestling. The significant amount of his publications and manuscripts are imbued with Reformed conservatism occasionally giving way to denominational subjectivism. His writings represent the many struggles, falls, and joys of his age as he himself feels and sees them. What is victory for the Catholics that is the moment of defeat for him. Although he loves to wear the mask of religious objectivity, it often falls off his face. Bod remains with his mistakes who he was, a man of his age, a scientist trying to balance somehow or other between the old and the enlightened world. His subjectivity, which also the Censorship Committee perceived that was not known for its objectivity, made also the state his adversary. This happened despite the fact that he was a loyal subject to the Habsburgs. In addition, the court considered the pen one of the most

dangerous weapons. His most relentless opponents were the opportunist noblemen favoured by the Habsburg court because they were willing to change their religion. Accordingly, he determined whom he liked or disliked. Yet he frequently exchanged information with his interlocutors.

In the end, we cannot disregard his difficult fate as a parent, namely he lost his first wife and several of his six children under tragic circumstances. Péter Bod's mandate as a church leader, namely he held the office of Chief Notary (Deputy Bishop), presented quite a challenge for him, although he was known as a legal scholar, too. He became a consistent legal defender of the victims of the bloodless Reformation at a time when he represented his co-religionists in Háromszék, his narrower homeland, in their matrimonial matters (i.e. children issuing from the marriage shall be brought up in the faith of the other partner). By this time, not only his personality but also his science had made him suspect in the Habsburg court. While Transylvania was slow to recognize his greatness as an intellectual scientist, the Habsburg court, that several times sued the not yet ordained preacher who had studied abroad, was certainly faster to perceive this, and the *Comissio Censurae* chaired by the bishop Bajthay sentenced him to book confiscation. Even the high politics noticed Bod's publications, especially the *Hungarian Athenas and Saint Polycarpus of Smirna (The Life of the Transylvanian Bishop)*. In her letter of 28 November 1768, Maria Theresa called on the Transylvanian Provincial Central Government (Gubernium) to punish Bod because of his publications.⁸⁸ The *Hungarian Athenas* and *The Life of the Transylvanian Bishop* he wrote with the intention of objectivity, reveal that the Reformation does not mean to make no progress but to reshape the old way of thinking all the time. The continuous Reformation could never conceal that the Reformed Church in Transylvania became one of the great losers in the 18th century. While the Transylvanians in solidarity with him collected the books as slowly as possible, his summons to the court arrived late. After all, he was one of the most scholarly preachers in Transylvania, whose scientific activity and ecclesiastical status earned him respect. His manuscript translation of the galley slaves' suffering that he made in the early stages of his historiographical career achieved its pedagogical goal: it mobilized the dormant, oppressed resources of Hungarian Protestantism. Not many of our 18th-century Hungarian scholars earned praise in French in recognition of their work. The Chancellor, Sámuel Teleki (1739–1822) conceived of Bod the following: 'The honourable Mr. Bod, preacher of my country [...] is such a man who has dedicated his writing to his community, for whom he works

tirelessly.⁸⁹ The prehistory of this work also includes the translation of Csergő Kocsi's writing. The publication of the galley slaves' suffering makes the modern approach to martyrdom clear: an individual who sacrifices himself for the common good, who with his life example and faithfulness to his faith can further enrich the great commitments of the previous centuries. This places the idea of Protestant persecution almost exclusively within the sphere of worldly exemplification and utilitarianism; thus, secularizing the interpretation of the concept of martyrdom. Bod's juvenile view of martyrdom turns into an intellectual commitment that is unfolding in the midst of difficulties and preserves our nationhood, and can be formed along the difficulties of persecution due to religion and difficulties due to peregrination and exile,⁹⁰ thus, along the *jus* and *bonum publicum* (public good and public law). The narrative of his martyrdom in this way gets from the historiographical polemics to the insistence on the useful act for the common good.⁹¹ Also his personal example underlines this utilitarianism. The proverb '*Peter Bod had a Viennese stroke*,' which became an adage in Transylvania after Bod had been summoned before the court in Szeben in 1769 justifies the difficulties and dangerous circumstances of this intellectual behaviour.⁹² His death can be considered one of the martyrologies in Transylvania.

The scholarly preacher summoned to Szeben by the censorship had already been seriously ill when the dean's visitation took place on 5 February 1768. However, the lawsuit could no longer take place, because Péter Bod passed away on 2 March 1769 at the age of 59. The imperial decree issued against his works was sent to Magyarigen through the mediation of the gubernium four days after his death on 6 March 1769.⁹³ Also the pastoral list of his time reported on his death:

The honourable and famous man, Péter Bod from Felsőcsernáton, Chief clerk of the General Assembly and Gyulafehérvár Diocese used to be an indefatigable preacher of the Word of God in the Magyarigen Congregation in the past 20 years. He gave his soul back to his Creator at the same place on 2 March 1769. An outstanding accomplishment of his life is the 14 works he published in various countries. As long as he lived, his communication to the people was clear so within as outside the country. At general request, János Deák, who has newly returned from his academic peregrination, will follow him in this position.⁹⁴

The preacher who passed away due to a stroke or heart attack was buried in the preachers' cemetery in Magyarigen, in 1912 he was reburied in the graveyard in Magyarigen.

Notes

- ¹ 'Én, Bod Péter, Erdélynek abban a részében, amely Moldvára tekint, a szántóföldben, rétekben, erdőkben, vizekben és más természeti javakban bővelkedő Felsőcsernáton községben, Kézdiszékben, a székelyek között születtem az 1712-ik évi február hó 22-ik napján.' ['I, Péter Bod was born among the Székely people in the part of Transylvania that looks towards Moldavia, in the village Felsőcsernáton, in Kézdiszék that is abundant in arable land, meadows, forests, waters and other natural resources, on 22 February 1712.'] Bod, *Önéletírás*, 4.
- ² Peter Bod's Letter to Gedeon Ráday on 20th October 1756 see Ladányi, 'Bod Péter egyházi jellegű művei.', 83; Szabó, 'Bod Péter levelei.', 123; Kiss, 'Bod Péter három levele.', 172–176.
- ³ Nyerges, *Bod Péter*, 1–18.
- ⁴ Benkő, *Transilvania*, II: 461–464.
- ⁵ Horányi, *Memoria Hungarorum*, I: 305–311.
- ⁶ Döbrentei, 'Tudósító levelek.', 174.
- ⁷ Mikó, *Bod Péter élete és munkái*.
- ⁸ Sámuel, *Felsőcsernátoni Bod Péter*.
- ⁹ Révész, *Bod Péter, mint történetíró*.
- ¹⁰ Elemér Jancsó wrote the preface to both Péter Bod-autobiographies: Bod, *Önéletírás*, 1–43.
- ¹¹ Benkő, *Sorsformáló értelem*, 54–68.
- ¹² Kosáry, *Művelődés*, 376–377.
- ¹³ Buzogány & Sipos (eds.), *Erdélyi református zsinatok végzései 1606–1762*, 1–124.
- ¹⁴ Sipos, 'Bod Péter.', 173–178.
- ¹⁵ Egyed, 'Bod Péter.', 573–577.
- ¹⁶ Tüskés (ed.), *Bod Péter*, 1–208.
- ¹⁷ Dáné, 'A Bod Péter-kutatás történetéből.', 49–57.
- ¹⁸ Gudor et la. (eds.), *Egyház, társadalom és művelődés*, 1–317.
- ¹⁹ Bod, *Az erdélyi románok*, 1–388.
- ²⁰ See the *Hungarian Athenas* that was reissued according to new aspects with an epilogue by Hunor Boér and Judit Dobra in 2003: Bod, *Magyar Athenas*, 412.
- ²¹ Rácz, 'Bod Péter.', 26–34.
- ²² Bretz, *Bod Péter historia litteraria programja*, 149–157.
- ²³ Kurta, 'Bod Péter és a szentírástudomány.', 213–231.
- ²⁴ Buzogány, 'Bod Péter az egyháztörténész.'; Buzogány, 'Bod Péter egyháztörténeti kéziratának viszontagságai.', 45–59.
- ²⁵ Gróf, 'The (Virtually) Unknown Maps of Péter Bod.', 37–50.
- ²⁶ Gróf, 'Péter Bod's Lost Continent.', 62–63.
- ²⁷ See Tóth, 'Historia querelarum.'; Murdock, *Responses*, 37–52.

- ²⁸ More on this in the volume under review: Csízy & Hóvári (eds.), *Hősök, mártírok, áldozatok és szentek*, 247–264.
- ²⁹ Tóth, ‘Kálvinizmus.’, 17.
- ³⁰ Száraz, ‘A kassai jezsuita mártírok.’, 254–273.
- ³¹ Péter, ‘A magyarországi protestáns prédikátorok és tanítók ellen indított per 1674-ben.’, 200–210.
- ³² Oláh, ‘A Parisi lakodalom (1572).’, 232–259.
- ³³ Baricz, ‘Mártírok emlékezete: Recenzió.’, 121.
- ³⁴ About Protestant Martyrology see: Csorba et al. (eds.), *Protestáns mártírológia*, 317; Mihály Imre chapter on Protestant Martyrology and Conversion in: Imre, *Utak Herborn és Nápoly között*, 15–145; Fazakas et al. (eds.), *Mártírium és emlékezet*, 121.
- ³⁵ Kocsi Csergő, *Kősziklán épült ház ostroma*, 10.
- ³⁶ Bod’s view of martyrdom see Bretz, *Bod Péter historia litteraria programja*, 90–100.
- ³⁷ Bod, *Szent Heortokrates*, 4.
- ³⁸ Ibidem, 5.
- ³⁹ Bod refers to Sagittarius, *De Martyrium*.
- ⁴⁰ Bod, *Szent Heortokrates*, 9.
- ⁴¹ Ibidem, 16, 116.
- ⁴² In his volume, Bod elaborates the history of Catholic martyrs based on Baronius’ *Martyrologia Romano* és *Romanum Breviarium*. See Gudur, *Bod Péter*, 366–370.
- ⁴³ Crespín, *Le Livre de Martyrs*. The writer discusses the history of Christian martyrdom divided into 10 eras from Nero to 361 AD incl. Emperor Julianus Apostata.
- ⁴⁴ Nagy, *Protestáns mártírológia*, 337–339; Sipos, ‘Szőnyi Nagy István.’; Szőnyi Nagy, *Martyrok coronája*.
- ⁴⁵ See it also in the popular Zion songs: Révész, ‘Paksi Szathmári.’; Imre, ‘Sion Siralma.’, 40–93.
- ⁴⁶ Csorba, ‘Kora újkori kálvinista műfajok.’; 45; Győri L., ‘Apológia és mártírium.’; Győri L., ‘Reformáció, mártírológia, exemplum.’, 37–55; P. Vásárhelyi, ‘Szenci Molnár Albert.’, 116–117.
- ⁴⁷ The volume was published in Nagyenyed in 1766. See Bellágh, ‘Bod Péter püspökei.’, 599–609.
- ⁴⁸ Gudur (ed.), *Bod Péter a kartográfus*, 1–139.
- ⁴⁹ Bod, *Magyar Athenas*, 10.
- ⁵⁰ About the activity of the Jesuits see Shore, *Narratives of adversity*, 72.
- ⁵¹ Bretz, ‘Bod Péter fordítása.’, 340–347.
- ⁵² See besides the manuscript copies in the Bethlen Documentation Library in Nagyenyed, also the manuscript:
- Debrecen, Great Library of the Reformed College, with the signature R 748, i.e., *the theological collection of Márton Rákosi*. Nagykároly, 1767–1785. Its second part comprises Péter Bod’s collection on the galley slaves.
 - Sárospatak, The Great Library of the Transbiscan Reformed Church District, Kt. 76. Kocsi Csergő, *Kősziklán épült ház ostroma* [The Siege of the House built on a Rock by Bálint Kocsi Csergő], 1–190;

- Bp., Ráday Collection, 469. K–1. 227, Literary Collection. (early 19th century) 13–104: Kősziklán épült ház ostroma [The Siege of the House built on a Rock], 105–119. A part of the manuscript volumes is listed in the translations by Bretz and Péter Bod, 340.
- ⁵³ Bod, *Az Isten vitézkedő anyaszentegyháza*, 439.
- ⁵⁴ Ibidem, 460.
- ⁵⁵ Ibidem, 458.
- ⁵⁶ Zoltán Csepregi investigated the consequences of these political decisions, reconstructing 6–8 cases of Lutherans to be burnt at the stake in the second half of the 1520ies. He found that the provision in force for 10 months caused 2–3 victims to be burnt. See Csepregi, 'Lutherani omnes comburantur.'
- ⁵⁷ Bod, *Szent irás' értelmére vezérlő*, a1r
- ⁵⁸ See Péter Bod's role as an editor of memoirs in Fazakas, 'Árvaság és mártírium.', 217–219.
- ⁵⁹ Fazakas, 'Mártírium, vallási persecutió.', 446–465.
- ⁶⁰ Bod, *Az Isten vitézkedő anyaszentegyháza*, 527.
- ⁶¹ Kocsi Csergő, *Kősziklán épült ház ostroma*, 1995; Debreceni Ember, *A magyarországi és erdélyi*, 545–665. The literature on the martyrdom of the galley slaves is very rich, only a few studies are published here: Bretz, 'Bod Péter fordítása', 340–341; Szimonidesz, *Magyar vértanuk nyomában*, 1–190; Imre, 'Consolatio és reprezentáció.', 51–77; Tóth, 'Persecutio decennalis.', 423–438; Bujtás, 'A megszabadított gályarab prédikátorok.', 63–67.
- ⁶² Bod, *Historia Hungarorum*, III: 222–228.
- ⁶³ A copy by István Almási from 1833, BGDK, Ms. 143–144.
- ⁶⁴ On 1 March 1738 József Rákóczi and his troops attempted an invasion at the Ojtoz gorge, however, they lost 120 soldiers and were defeated. The Vienna government called for revenge against the Protestant public figures whom they considered conspirators. According to the Vienna government they wrote letters Ádám Máriássy Kuruc captain, who was taken for a rebel, and József Rákóczi and asked them for assistance. Marshall Lobkowitz arrested several Transylvanian personalities and politicians on the National Assembly on 29 March 1738. The College in Enyed was surrounded by the military, he had the Reformed bishop István Gyula Szigethi, and several teachers, Baron János Lázár, Mihály Toldalagi, László and Ferencz Rhédey and the 60-year-old Zsigmond Thoroczkai caught and imprisoned. The impeachment was accompanied by a great deal of dissatisfaction and fear, which manifested itself mainly on the part of the Calvinists. Following the investigation of the 'extraordinary case,' the innocence of the chief persons arrested came to light. They were released under social and foreign pressure on 15 January 1739. See Kővári, *Erdély Története*, VI: 107–108.
- ⁶⁵ See Zsupos, *A székely írásról*, 11–28.
- ⁶⁶ Kocsi Csergő, *Kősziklán épült ház ostroma*, 156.
- ⁶⁷ K. Papp, 'Egy felségsértési per története.', 1–7.
- ⁶⁸ Imre, 'Sion Siralma.', 11; Szathmári Paksi, *Sion siralma*.
- ⁶⁹ Bod, *Tiszta, fényes drága bíbor*, C5v–C6r.

- ⁷⁰ Bod, *Isten vitézkedő anyaszentegyháza*, 494.
- ⁷¹ Tóth, 'Persecutio decennalis.', 424.
- ⁷² Bretz, *Bod Péter fordítása*, 340–347.
- ⁷³ Bod, *Historia Hungarorum*, II: 58–127.
- ⁷⁴ Győri L., 'Apológia és mártírium.', 133.
- ⁷⁵ Kocsi Csergő, *Kősziklán épült ház ostroma*, 15.
- ⁷⁶ Ibidem.
- ⁷⁷ Tóth, 'Persecutio decennalis.', 429.
- ⁷⁸ BGDK, Ms 25, Ms 1.
- ⁷⁹ Bod, *Historia Hungarorum*, III: 214.
- ⁸⁰ Ibidem, 310.
- ⁸¹ Gudur, 'Az erdélyi románok.', 14–18, 155–226.
- ⁸² Gudur, 'Inquisitoria Dioceseos.', 361–368.
- ⁸³ BGDK, Almási 1833.
- ⁸⁴ Bod, *Historia Hungarorum*, III: 386–387.
- ⁸⁵ Bod, *Isten vitézkedő anyaszentegyháza*, 534.
- ⁸⁶ The prayer of professor Gyula István Szigeti from Enyed on Fast Sunday in 1739 see BGDK, Ms. 44, 12–13.
- ⁸⁷ BGDK, Almási 1833, 89.
- ⁸⁸ Harsányi, 'Eddig ismeretlen feljegyzés.', 538–539. Maria Theresia' decree dated n 28th November 1768. for collection books of Bod. 'Illustribus, Reverendo, Spectabilibus, Inagnificis, Genrosis, Egregiis, Prudentibus item, ac Circumspectis N.N. Consiliariis nostris in haereditario Nobis Magnó Transylvania Principata Gubernialibus Fidelibus Nostris sincere nobis dilectis. Maria Teresia Divina Favente Clementia, Romanorum Imperatrix Vidua, Regina Hungariae, Bohemiae et Archidux Austriae, Dux Lotharingiae et Barri, Magna Dux Retruria, Dux Burgundia, Styria, Carinthia, et Cannioliae, Magno Princeps Transilvaniae, Comes Flandriae, Tyrolis, Goritiae et Siculorum. Illustres Reverende Spectabiles Magnifici Generosi Egregii, Prudenteritem, ac Circumspecti Fideles nostri sincere nobis dilecti! Displicenter fane intelleximus, quod Helvetica Confessionis Pastores et Magistri Dogmata Catholicorum extra etiam Gymnasia et Scholas suas in Publicis declamationibus impugnent quodve porrosata Confessionis addicti posthabita Regia nostra Ordinatione Anno 1753 emanata sine constituta facultate libros edant in iisque non solum Religionem Catholicam, verum etiam Augustissimam Domun nostram tantopere insectentur út inde odium a invidiam utrique in asse clarum animis constari necesse sit. Volumus proinde et positive mandamus út, quod ad ejusmodi declarationes publica attinet? illae serio ubique interdicandur, et diversis a Catholica Religione Dogmata sua contra Catholicos defendenda, in Scolis duntaxat, et Gymnasiis ipsorum admittandur. Duod autem libros prosatos respicis, cum tales tres sub titulis Polycarpi Episcopi Smyrnensis, Catechismi item, et Athenae Hungaricae, in lucem prodiiisse informemus, Vestrum erit actutum disponere, út libri tri ubicunque reperti fuerint, confiscentur, et usus ipsorum interdicandur. Ordinabitis ad hoc, út authores horum librorum, tum editionis Patroni, nec absimiliter etiam Typographi, quorum prelo subjecti erant, exquirantur et Nobis adjecta Opinione Vestra referantur, ultiores nostras dein prostolaturi dispositiones quibus in reliquo Gratia

nostra Caesareo Regia ac principali benigne propenso manemus. Datum in Civitate nostra Vienna Austria, die Vigesima quarta mensis, novembris, Anno Domini, Millesimo Septingentesimo Sexagesimo Octavo, Regnorum vero Nostrorum Vigesimo Nono. Maria Theresia mp. Carolus Comes Breiner mp.' Nagyszeben / Sibiu, State Archive, Fond Bruckenthal Q1–6, 178, 1–4.

⁸⁹ 'Monsieur Bod, Ministre de mon Pays [...] c'est un homme qui a dévoué sa plume au public, et qui travaille sans relâche.' Postma, 'Hebräische Grammatiken.', 3.

⁹⁰ Bretz, *Bod Péter historia litteraria programja*, 99–100.

⁹¹ Gudor, *Bod Péter*, 447–448.

⁹² Ibidem, 464.

⁹³ Lukinich, 'Bod Péter'. Cf. 'Expedit die 6.a Marty 1769', Nagyszeben/Sibiu, State Archive, NÁL-Fond Brukenenthal Q1–6, 178., 5.

⁹⁴ 'Viro Clarissimo ac vere Celeberrimo Domino Petro Bod de F. Tsernaton, Generalis Synodi ut et Tractus Albensis Notario Disertissimo, in Ecclesia M. Igeniensi sub viginti 20 annorum decursu V. D. Ministro indefesso, ibique Anno 1769. d. 2 Martii animam sui redemptori inter suspiria devota, tradenti, 14 operum in lucem editione in utraque Patria, imo et in Oris Exteris vere claro mihi vero dum viveret Genero Desideratissimo successit ex Academiis Neo redux Clarissimus D. Johannes Deak.' Gyulafehérvári Református Egyház Levéltára (GYREL), Nomina, 1–3.

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