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Of Multidisciplinary Research in the Humanities

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## Transylvanian Journal Of Multidisciplinary Research in the Humanities

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## RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION, EXILE AND THE MAKING OF THE LONG REFORMATION (1500–1800) IN ROYAL HUNGARY

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ZSOMBOR TÓTH \*

**Abstract** This paper intends to focus on the Calvinist and Lutheran refugees of Royal Hungary in order to introduce the major types of exile cases and to evaluate their particular significance in the relevant historical and intellectual contexts of the late seventeenth century. It will argue that the emergence of a reformed confessional identity may well have been influenced by exile experiences, yet the Hungarian case displayed some special features, such as the close interrelatedness of martyrological discourses with patterns of early modern proto-nationalism. It will conclude establishing that the delayed character of both persecution and the emergence of a protestant martyrology demand a rather different perception of Reformation too. Taking into account the historical facts that it was only the Edict of Tolerance (1782) and its validation (1791) that terminated religious persecution and granted free practice of religions, the concept of long Reformation appears to be the most fitting application to the Hungarian case.

**Keywords** Long Reformation, confessional exile, protestant martyrology, nostalgia, patriotism, István Nagy Szőnyi, Georgius Lani.

### I. Introduction

Early modern exile experiences, as a consequence of religious persecution, often contributed to the emergence of confessional identities during Reformation era.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I am referring to the emergence of those protestant martyrological discourses that after a first period of ambiguity during the sixteenth century evolved into determining markers of confessional identities. For further considerations see: Robert Kolb, *For All the Saints: Changing Perceptions of Martyrdom and Sainthood in the Lutheran Reformation* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1987); Robert Kolb, "From Hymn to History of Dogma. Lutheran Martyrology in the Reformation Era," in *More than Memory. The Discourse of Martyrdom and the Construction of Christian Identity in the History of Christianity*, ed. Johan Leemans (Leuven–Paris: Dudley, Peeters, 2005) 295–313; Diana Wood ed., *Martyrs and Martyrologies*

Moreover, early modern persecuted refugees whether they were Scots or French Huguenots finding refuge in the Netherlands, English Protestants enduring European or even transatlantic exile, including forced migration undertaken by Catholics, Anabaptists, and Jews, all appear to have been part of one comprising transnational historical process. A particular form of early modern exile is the one described as confessional migration unfolding throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and located predominantly to Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, confessional migration appeared to be a multifaceted phenomenon that emerged from the antagonisms between the persecutory authorities and the persecuted individuals or communities, both Protestant and Catholic. The reaction to having been persecuted in early modern times must have been rather complex; for when the conflict escalated uncontrolled violence would unavoidably break out, therefore the grim perspective of execution or even mass murder seemed a rather realist scenario. As opposed to these options, forms of exile and displacement, justified by a genuine early modern martyrology allowing the persecuted one(s) to run away from their persecutors, could have certainly been one of the best choices an early modern individual might have had.

However, contrary to cases of western exile experiences ensuing from persecutory actions, forced migration in early modern Eastern Europe, and in particular on the territories of Tripartite Hungary<sup>3</sup> reveal a somehow different situation. As Reformation had been embraced without any significant opposition and

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Studies in Church History 30 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993); Gregory Brad, *Salvation at Stake, Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Irene Backhus, *Historical Method and Confessional Identity in the Era of Reformation (1378–1615)* (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2003); David K. Anderson, *Martyrs and Players in Early Modern England* (Ashgate: Routledge, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> For the concept of confessional migration and its various interpretations see: Heinz Schilling, “Confessional Migration as a Distinct Type of Old European Long Distance Migration,” in *Le migrazioni in Europa, Secc. XIII–XVIII*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1994), 175–89; Bettina Braun, “Katholische Glaubensflüchtlinge: Eine Spurensuche im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit,” *Historisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft* 130 (2010): 505–76; Alexander Schunka, introduction to *Migrations in the German Lands, 1500–2000*, ed. Jason Coy, Jared Poley, and Alexander Schunka (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2016), 8–10. Alexander Schunka proposes in the same volume an excellent article with references to Central Europe and Hungary as well: Alexander Schunka, “No Return? Temporary Exile and Permanent Immigration among Confessional Migrants in the Early Modern Era” in *Migrations in the German Lands, 1500–2000*, ed. Jason Coy, Jared Poley, and Alexander Schunka (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2016), 67–87.

<sup>3</sup> The concept of Tripartite Hungary describes the division of the former late medieval Hungarian Kingdom into three major parts, such as the Habsburg-controlled Upper or Royal Hungary, Ottoman Hungary, and the Principality of Transylvania, a semi-independent state under Ottoman suzerainty.

a multid denominational society supported by laws and diet had been implemented both in Royal Hungary and Transylvania, there were neither victims nor organisers of any kind of religious persecution, at least, certainly not before the second half of the seventeenth century. Moreover, not only were the persecutory forces missing, but also the martyrs and the martyrologies were rather unknown to early modern protestant communities residing in Tripartite Hungary. Yet, migration and exile, due to the particular military and geographical situation of the divided Hungarian state, constituted a most common course of action of social mobility or political enterprises. In addition, for many Hungarians having been located at the border of the Pagan and Christian worlds, or even worse, having been posited on the battlefield of the permanently conflicting Christian and Ottoman military forces, exile constituted the sole option in terms of survival irrelevant of their religious convictions whatsoever. With the advent of Habsburg military superiority over the Ottomans corroborated with the imposed absolutism of imperial policy, this situation altered essentially. The beginning of the systematic persecution of Protestants culminating in the so-called decade of persecution or *persecutio decennalis* (1671–1681), brought about, indeed, confessional forced migration and displacement.<sup>4</sup>

Accordingly, the declared aim of this paper is to focus on the Calvinist and Lutheran refugees of Royal Hungary in order to introduce the major types of exile cases and to evaluate their particular significance in the relevant historical and intellectual contexts of the late seventeenth century. I shall argue that the emergence of a reformed confessional identity may well have been influenced by exile experiences, yet the Hungarian case displays some special features, such as the close interrelatedness of martyrological discourses with patterns of early modern proto-nationalism. I will conclude suggesting that the delayed character of both persecution and the emergence of a protestant martyrology demand a rather different perception of Reformation too. Emphasizing the historical fact that it was only the Edict of Tolerance (1782) and its validation (1791) that terminated religious persecution and granted free practice of religions, the concept of long Reformation<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Zsombor Tóth, “Persecutio decennalis (1671–1681). The Lutheran Contribution to the Emergence of a Protestant Martyrology in Early Modern Hungarian Culture: The Case of Georgius Lani”, in *Luther in Calvinism: Image and Reception of Martin Luther in the History and Theology of Calvinism*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis and J. Marius J. Lange van Ravenswaay, *Academic Studies* 42 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2017), 335–53.

<sup>5</sup> The first occurrence of the concept of long Reformation dates back to the late 1990s. Secondary literature on long Reformation includes: Nicholas Tyacke ed., *England’s Long Reformation 1500–1800* (London: UCL Press, 1998); Peter G. Wallace, *The Long European Reformation: Religion, Political Conflict, and the Search for Conformity, 1350–1750* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Peter Marshall, “(Re)defining the English Reformation”, *Journal of British Studies* 48 (2009): 564–86; John McCallum, ed., *Scotland’s Long Reformation. New*

appears to be the most fitting application to the Hungarian case. The determining impact of forced migration upon the development of an early modern Protestant identity is best observed in the historical, theological and intellectual context of the long Reformation.<sup>6</sup>

## II. Historical Contexts: Persecution and Forced Migration in Tripartite Hungary

The particular nature of Reformation implemented on the territory of the Tripartite Hungary appears to reinforce the historical claim that the Hungarian political and clerical elite decided to have chosen a tolerant stance towards the process of confession-building. Accordingly, both Royal Hungary and the Principality of Transylvania opted for a religious policy supporting religious liberty and religious toleration granted by laws. It is not surprising in this historical context that the diet of Pozsony (Bratislava) held in September 1608 endorsed religious liberty as an unalienable right of the population inhabiting Royal Hungary. In a similar manner, it had been confirmed on two occasions (1568, 1595) that all four religions (Lutheran, Calvinist, Antitrinitarian and Catholic) were accepted and protected denominations allowed to be freely professed in the Principality of Transylvania. It is safe to assert that in Tripartite Hungary, at least during the sixteenth century, political will protected and supported a multid denominational religious culture refraining from any religious persecution or coercion.<sup>7</sup>

With the increasing distrust of the Hungarian estates towards the Habsburg administration and military strategical planning, the surprising peace-treaty of Vasvár (1664) signed by the Habsburgs unleashed unexpectedly intense passions. A major political and military crisis would emerge as the Protestant estates openly expressed their disagreement and decided to revolt against the Habsburg rule. Although the Habsburgs managed to uncover the initial conspiracy (1671) and execute its protagonists, the supporters of the opposition were still far too

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*Perspectives on Scottish Religion, c. 1500-c. 1660* (Leiden: Brill, 2016); Sari Katajala-Peltomaa ed., *Lived Religion and the Long Reformation in Northern Europe c. 1300–1700* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> For further details regarding the application of the concept to Hungarian historical, social, and cultural contexts with a particular emphasis on methods and historiography see: Zsombor Tóth, „Hosszú reformáció Magyarországon és Erdélyben I.: konfesszionalizációk és irodalmi kultúrák a kora újkorban (1500–1800). Módszertani megjegyzések egy folyamatban lévő kutatáshoz [Long Reformation in Royal Hungary and Transylvania (1500–1800): Methodological Remarks Regarding Early Modern Confessionalization(s) and Literacy],” *ItK* 123 (2019): 719–39.

<sup>7</sup> For a historical survey on the course of events that helped establish Reformation on Tripartite Hungary see: Zsombor Tóth, “The Importance of Being (In)Tolerant, the Strange Case of Transylvanian Puritanism” in *Reformed Majorities in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Herman Selderhuis et al., *Academic Studies* 23 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 91–3.

numerous and a military conflict erupted. The rebellion led first by Mihály Teleki (1672) and then by Imre Thököly (1680), was sustained by the Ottoman Porte and the Principality of Transylvania as well.<sup>8</sup> The tensed situation consistently escalated due to the unrestrained persecutory actions of the Jesuits assisted by the imperial army and directed against the Protestants inhabiting Royal Hungary.

Furthermore, the Habsburgs under the plausible pretext of conspiracy had organized a merciless campaign against the intellectual elite, mostly Calvinist and Lutheran ministers and pastors, whom they accused of ideological agitation and of inciting the population against their ruler, the emperor. Three hundred Calvinists and Lutherans were sentenced to death on the charge of treason against the Emperor and the Kingdom in April 1674. Moreover, those Calvinist and Lutheran ministers who had refused to recant were sent to labour as galley-slaves in 1675. Those who survived this extreme punishment were released only after the political intervention of the Dutch Republic, when the Habsburgs, probably under the international political pressure and burdened by multiple wars, decided to withdraw the initial sentence in 1676. Still, these survivors were not allowed to return home; after having been liberated they would experience a new type of persecution, that is, exile and all the traumatic implications and consequences of such a condition.

The violent events of the so called *persecutio decennalis* (1671–1681) with its merciless intensity and horrifying repertoire of brutally applied coercion shocked both the Hungarian and the international Protestant communities. For the very first time during the history of Hungarian Reformation religious persecution produced numerous victims, for those who did not die in prison became refugees looking for support either in Transylvania or in Western Europe. With the growing number of the persecuted ones, the Hungarian Protestants Churches felt resolute to declare the advent of a new era, for both the refugees and their families left behind agreed that they had been experiencing extraordinary times, an era of the martyrs and confessors willing to bear witness to the truth. The battle had begun; the True Church (*Vera Ecclesia*) had to find her valiant soldiers-like martyrs willing to confront and prevail over the False Church (*Falsa Ecclesia*) and her army commanded by the Antichrist. Experiences of exile as direct consequences of religious persecution brought about the emergence of a Protestant Hungarian martyrological paradigm for the very first time after one and half centuries of Reformation.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Zsombor Tóth, “The Homiletics of Political Discourse: Martyrology as a (Re)Invented Tradition in the Paradigm of Early Modern Hungarian Patriotism,” in *Whose Love of Which Country? Composite States, National Histories and Patriotic Discourses in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Balázs Trencsényi and Márton Zászkaliczky (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 547.

<sup>9</sup> For further insights into how Calvinist and Lutheran martyrologies evolved after the events of the decade of sorrow see: Zsombor Tóth, “‘Calvinian Anthropology’ and the Early Modern Hungarian Devotion: The Case of István Nagy Szőnyi, the First Hungarian Martyrologist”, in *Anthropological Reformations – Anthropology in the Era of Reformation*, ed. Anne

### III. Types of Religious Persecution and Exile

As the particular development of Reformation within Hungarian territories, briefly surveyed in the previous section, testifies for it, neither acts of religious persecution nor narratives of martyrdom before the 1670s were familiar beyond measure to early modern Hungarian Protestants. Indeed, one can justly claim that the *persecutio decennalis* commenced rather unexpectedly and neither historical experience nor any Hungarian native literary tradition as an antecedent had helped people understand what had been going on or what would have happened in the near future. Still, with its various forms of violence persecution was unstopably thriving at the beginning of 1670s and it would not be halted for a whole decade. The aim of this section is to provide a basic classification of displacement cases and introduce them in the historical and intellectual context of religious persecution suffered during the decade of sorrow.

The trial held in the spring of 1674 was certainly a major event of persecution which greatly contributed to the growing number of Lutheran and Calvinist refugees forced to flee from Royal Hungary. Some of them would head towards west, others, probably hoping a miraculous remediation of the unbelievable situation, preferred to stay closer and found refuge in the Principality of Transylvania under the protection of the Protestant prince Mihály Apafi (1632–1690). This type of forced migration had started, in fact, well before the trial proper. Some of the Lutherans, especially the descendants of those families whose ancestors had already experienced Habsburg persecution while living on Czech territories, decided not to wait for the trial, but leave immediately.<sup>10</sup> Thus the decade of sorrow, even before the infamous death sentence on some 300 Protestants had been pronounced, saw a massive migration, both *internal* and *external*, as some found temporary refuge in Transylvania, while others tried their luck at more distant western locations.

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Eusterschulte and Hannah Wälzholz, *Academic Studies* 28 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 415–28; Tóth, “Persecutio decennalis,” 335–53.

<sup>10</sup> A great number of Czech Protestants forced into exile after the Battle of the White Mountain (1620) had settled down in Royal Hungary. Yet, their escape from persecution proved to be only temporary, as they would become subjects of the same Habsburg persecutory religious policy during the 1670s. For instance, the Pilarik family and their offspring had to endure this most remarkable ‘twofold persecution.’ For a detailed assessment of their case see: Papp Ingrid, “Lutheránusok rabszjion: az üldöztetés és a fogság irodalmi ábrázolása Pilárikttól Krmannig [Lutherans in Shackles: Literary Representations of Exile and Imprisonment from Pilárik to Krmann]” in *Börtön exilium és szenvedés* [Prison, Exile and Afflictions], ed. Anita Fajt, Emőke Rita Szilágyi, and Zsombor Tóth (Budapest: Reciti, 2017), 77–86, esp. 77–78.

A distinct group of Protestants that would choose exile in Western Europe was constituted by those who had survived serving at the galleys. This cohort of liberated prisoners deserves all the more our attention, as they were the promoters of a martyrological message and self-representation enthusiastically received, for instance, in Zurich by professor Johann Heinrich Heidegger and his immediate theological entourage in 1676. Others, though members of the same group, had had some difficulties in obtaining the financial, political or even spiritual support that would have helped them return to the distant fatherland. All in all, the disparate destinies of those involved in this extreme experience, despite the rather different course of actions they had followed, coincided in one major fact: they had all suffered religious persecution with a lasting impact upon their social, physical and spiritual condition.

Indeed, this type of forced migration ensuing from religious persecution had certainly influenced the life of individuals or even larger communities as well. For not only numerous households and large families lost their homes, but even institutions of education and their student body were obliged to flee as well. The appalling case of the Calvinist College of Sárospatak is a relevant example to be examined in this paper. The religious persecution or its threatening perspective during the decade of sorrow constituted the main cause for undertaking *individual* or *collective* exile. In order to propose a better understanding of the various types of displacement, such as internal, external, individual, and collective exile, I intend to provide detailed examples for each and every one of them.

### III. 1. Internal Exile: The Case of the Calvinist István Szőnyi Nagy

István Nagy Szőnyi (1633–1709) was one of those Calvinist priests whose life had been dramatically altered by the persecution of the early 1670s. Szőnyi Nagy seemed to have followed the standard carrier of the elite Calvinist intellectuals of the era, which would have provided him a decent living and a significant social promotion. He had commenced his studies in Debrecen, then as a *peregrinus academicus*, he shortly attended some western universities, presumably Utrecht and Groningen. Upon his return to Hungary, he would take over the ministry of Torna, a significant Calvinist location in Royal Hungary. At this incipient stage of his career as a minister he had been confronted with the cruelty of persecution as soon as 1671. With the assistance of a Habsburg military unit, a certain Jesuit, referred to as Pater Herko, had commanded several intimidating actions against the Calvinist residents of Torna. Apart from spreading fear and terror amongst the population, the ultimate aim of the entire operation was to occupy the Calvinist church and throw the Calvinist minister out from his office. Szőnyi Nagy, though had bravely confronted the Jesuit Pater Herko and even resisted the provocations of the soldiers, would finally give in and handed over the key of the Church. Though initially Szőnyi Nagy had been

resolute not to leave his flock, later, in order to avoid a more violent conflict and spare the lives of his clergymen, he opted for fleeing. With growing regret in his heart, he committed himself to come back as soon as possible. The details of this affair had been immortalised by Szőnyi Nagy himself in a short narrative account published in 1675.<sup>11</sup>

This humiliating event deeply influenced his life. Szőnyi Nagy went to Debrecen, but soon departed for Transylvania, which would become not only a major and recurring destination of his internal exile in the years to come, but his home for the concluding part of his life as well. Having entered the territory of the Principality of Transylvania, a safe haven for all Protestant refugees coming from Royal Hungary, including the army of the rebels lead by Pál Wesselényi (1654–1694), Szőnyi intended to establish himself as a minister serving a Calvinist community. Yet, after some short periods of services, he decided to join the military campaign against the Habsburgs and became a preacher in the army of the rebels in 1675. Not only did he dedicated himself to preaching, but he embarked on a writing career, producing what is justly regarded the very first Hungarian Calvinist martyrology that served as an ideology of the rebellion against the emperor as well. With the suggestive title of “The Crown of the Martyrs” and dedicated to Pál Wesselényi the supreme commander of the rebel army, Szőnyi Nagy’s book constituted a strong claim to equate the spiritual fight of the Protestant priests and the military combat undertaken by the rebels. Szőnyi Nagy apparently produced a genuine Protestant martyrology following the example of the major early modern martyrologies from John Foxe to Pantaleonus or Crespin, including Rabus as well, but he was also determined to articulate a piece of Calvinist political theology of loyalty insisting on the idea that a martyr was equally committed to the True Church as *Ecclesia* and the fatherland as *Patria*.<sup>12</sup>

It was this context of political theology that enabled him to set forth a genuine definition of martyrdom tailored to the ideological priorities of the persecuted Protestants and the justification of the rebels’ military actions for having fought against their ruler. According to Szőnyi Nagy:

He who bears witnesses to the Justice of Christ and undertakes in any possible manner suffering for the Gospel’s truth is declared to be a martyr. In this broad sense, therefore, all those persons who serve the Lord honestly with their minds and souls every day, are considered to be martyrs, for they bear witness to the Truth.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The narrative account of his persecution had been attached to his martyrology and published together as one single book: István Nagy Szőnyi, *Mártírok Coronája* [The Crown of the Martyrs] (Kolozsvár: 1675).

<sup>12</sup> Tóth, “Calvinian Anthropology,” 420.

<sup>13</sup> Szőnyi Nagy, *Mártírok*, 5.

While developing the particular features of his own concept of martyrdom nurtured from his experiences of displacement and religious persecution, Szőnyi Nagy followed Calvin and Tertullian and their sometimes-contradictory views as to whether running away from the persecutors had been allowed or not. In addition, Szőnyi Nagy asserted that having been persecuted and forced into exile was a challenge that had to be accepted for it clearly constituted an act of martyrdom:

Martyrs are those persons who are refugees, who fled from the bloody hands of the persecutors, for they bore witness to the Truth. Therefore, they have lost all their fortune, houses and values and became servants among strangers and foreign peoples. They are in continuous necessity, and they are crying and sighing. Petrus Martyr writes about them: *Est enim ipsa fuga confessionis species. Quis enim non maluerit domi suae manere, bonis suis frui, suae gentis hominum familiaritate uti, quam pauper et ignotus in longinquam regionem peregre proficisci?* (Fleeing from persecutors is, so to say, a way to bear witness to the Truth. For, who would not rather stay at home at his own place and house, keep all his fortune and live amongst his own nation, than go in exile to distant places?<sup>14</sup>

With his own exile account<sup>15</sup> cleverly added as an appendix to this book, Szőnyi Nagy successfully established a Hungarian discourse of martyrdom which clearly expressed that forced migration, as a result of religious persecution was an affliction that had to be endured with patience and steadfastness by the chosen ones. For these sufferings of the brave chosen were the unmistakable proof and paramount attribute of their martyrdom. Not surprisingly the experience of forced exile and the condition of being a refugee left long-lasting marks on Szőnyi Nagy's mental world, some traumatic memories that he would render into influential texts after the 1670s. To promote more efficiently his concept of martyrdom with the central idea that enduring exile was the equivalent of bearing witness to the truth, a conduct pattern attributed exclusively to martyrs, Szőnyi Nagy committed himself to writing in other genres than martyrology as well. His thesis of martyrdom having claimed that the patient sufferings of afflictions would have been rewarded with the crown of the martyrs, as a motive, occurred in his funeral sermons as well (cf. Szőnyi Nagy: 1686). Moreover, he emphasized the connections between a Calvinist, even Puritan-like practice of piety and the perspective of martyrdom. His prayer book

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<sup>14</sup> Szőnyi Nagy, *Mártírok*, 5-6.

<sup>15</sup> As I have mentioned it before, Szőnyi Nagy provided an exhaustive narrative account of his experience titled: *The Sad Story of the Persecution and Exile of István Nagy Szőnyi from the Parish of Torna*. See. Szőnyi Nagy, *The Crown*, O5r-O8v.

published in 1681 was designed deliberately to stress the significance of exile and its undertaking as an act of martyrdom. The prayer book suggestively titled *The guiding star of the pious soul while at home or during various wanderings* dedicated in several special sections prayers accommodated to the status, condition, and situation of exile.<sup>16</sup>

It appears that Szőnyi Nagy was successful in establishing a Hungarian Calvinist paradigm of martyrology. Not only did he publish the written account of his own persecution and exile, but complemented his own experience with a theological and political support. Martyrdom envisaged and promoted in this particular manner relying on the Calvinist theology and political theology as well, soon would become a major ideology to resist the growing Catholic and Habsburg influence oriented against the Protestant communities. Lay people, whether influential individual of the Calvinist elite or simple political migrants, while confronted with the harshness of prison or exile often identified themselves with the martyrology and the martyr-concept formulated by Szőnyi Nagy. Furthermore, the increasing number of ego-documents reproducing exile or prison accounts following this martyrological pattern as a means of self-fashioning suggests a remarkable *autobiographic turn* in the Hungarian and Neo-Latin prose after the decade of sorrow.<sup>17</sup> This process sometimes referred to as Calvinist life-writing,<sup>18</sup> I believe, culminates with the first Hungarian translation of John Calvin's life in 1758. The manuscript authored by László Huszti,<sup>19</sup> rendered to Hungarian Theodor de Bèze's Latin narrative (*Ioannis Calvini*

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<sup>16</sup> One of the prayers conceived and written typically for individuals in exile was given this suggestive title: *The morning prayer of the exiled man grievously lamenting his condition and longing for his family and beloved homeland*. See. Szőnyi Nagy István, *Kegyves lélek vezér csillaga, Istennek otthon s uton valo járásában* [The Guiding Star of the Pious Soul While at Home or During Various Wanderings] (Debrecen: 1681), 134–41. This prayer book was rather popular, for after its first publication in 1681 two further editions were printed out in 1687 and 1714.

<sup>17</sup> A most remarkable representative of this literature and life-writing was Count Miklós Bethlen (1642–1716). Bethlen, an influential politician and ardent Calvinist, while in prison in Vienna (1708–1716), produced a narrative of his life, both in Latin and Hungarian, following the genre of the *récit martyrologique*, depicting himself as a martyr of the Calvinist Church and the Principality of Transylvania. For further details on Bethlen Miklós's life and puritan devotion see: Zsombor Tóth, "A Man for All Seasons: Exile, Suffering and Martyrdom in the Autobiography of Miklós Bethlen", *Hungarian Studies* 2 (2012): 273–83.

<sup>18</sup> Catharine Randall Coats, *(Em)Bodying the Word: Textual Resurrections in the Martyrological Narratives of Foxe, Crespin, de Bèze and D'Aubigné* (New York: Lang, 1992), 1–32. A further significant contribution by the late Irena Backus surveys the entire corpus of early modern narratives immortalising the lives of the reformers: Irena BACKUS, *Life Writing in Reformation Europe* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2008).

<sup>19</sup> I had discovered this unknown manuscript in 2017, and I published it in 2019. It is a remarkable source that casts a new light on early modern Hungarian Calvinism and Calvin's

*Vita a Theodoro Beza Genevensis Ecclesiae ministro accurate descripta*) published in 1575 together with Calvin's correspondence.<sup>20</sup>

It is safe to conclude that Szőnyi Nagy's efforts to articulate a Calvinist martyrology developed from exile and displacement experiences reinforced the conviction shared by his contemporaries and fellow-sufferers that loyalty towards the Ecclesia or Patria was an extraordinary act, not accessible to ordinary men, for it were only the martyrs who would have lived up to these harsh expectations.

### III. 2. External Exile

Having revisited Szőnyi Nagy's case of individual and internal exile allows us to reiterate one of the central theses of this article. While confronted with persecution the Protestant elite sought to formulate a theological or even a political ideology to help endure and survive this type of affliction. As mentioned before, Szőnyi Nagy authored the very first Hungarian martyrology, one predominantly articulated from the perspective of Calvinism. Lutherans, who experienced similar persecution, would promote their concept of martyrdom as well. This subsection provides cases of external exile focusing on Lutheran refugees, who contributed to the formulation of a Lutheran martyrological discourse during and shortly after the decade of sorrow.

The scandalous trial of 1674 proved to be the first major outbreak of hatred against the non-Catholic population of Royal Hungary. As the persecutory actions followed the standard procedure imposed by Habsburg confessional policy, there were certainly not few, who would have remembered the events of a similar persecution organized against the Czech Protestants after 1620. With threatening pressure upon their everyday lives, some decided not to wait for the worst. A cohort of Lutheran émigrés, who left Royal Hungary at the beginning of 1670s, headed towards German territories hoping to find refuge there.<sup>21</sup> Though, none of them proposed a genuine martyrology imitating the extant literary genres, still several refugees, after having been enrolled as students, would express their interest in the study of persecution and exile as theological-historical phenomena.

For instance, Esaias Pilarik, the offspring of an important Lutheran family from Upper Hungary, after having been cited to the same court in 1674, chose to

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popularity in the Principality of Transylvania. I proudly recall that the online publication occurred exactly on the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Theodore de Bèze's birth (June 24, 2019). See. László Huszti, *Calvinus János élete* [The Life of John Calvin] ed. Zsombor Tóth, ReTextum 10 (Budapest: reciti, 2019).

<sup>20</sup> *Ioannis Calvini Epistolae et responsa. Eivsdem I. Calvini Vita a Theodoro Beza Genevensis Ecclesiae ministro accurate descripta*. (Genevae: apud Petrum Santandreanum, MDLXXV).

<sup>21</sup> Eva Kowalska, „Confessional Exile from Hungary in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Europe: the Problem of Mental Borders” in *Imagining Frontiers, Contesting Identities*, ed. Steven G. Ellis and Lud'a Klusáková (Pisa: University Press, 2007), 229–242, here 239.

migrate instead of converting to Catholicism. As a religious refugee he found support in Wittenberg, where he carried on with his studies, as he had written and then defended a theological dissertation dealing with the issue of persecution.<sup>22</sup> Another Lutheran victim of persecution, Georgius Krüger was the author of a philosophical disputation which reflected on the issue of exile.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, there is a distinct group of Lutheran memoirist, Tobias Masznicus, Johannes Simmonides and Georgius Lani, who recorded their experiences while having been imprisoned or brought to trial. They were all persecuted Lutheran ministers, who had refused to recant or admit the invented charges of high treason. The uniqueness of their biographical works is due to their eye-witness testimony, complemented by a certain theological reflection making use of martyrological considerations. After they had escaped in 1675, they wrote and published their memories either in Latin or in German, which had some far-reaching consequences.<sup>24</sup>

Out of these three, Georgius Lani (1646–1701) deserves a special treatment.<sup>25</sup> As one of those talented Lutherans students, who had profited of a prolonged stay abroad, he studied theology and philosophy in Wittenberg in 1662. He turned back home to start a career as a rector and minister in Korpona, Upper Hungary. With the outbreak of the persecution of the 1670s, unavoidably, he too was summoned to appear in front of the court in March 1674. As he had refused to sign and accept the charges, he was first imprisoned, and then chosen to be transported to the galleys. During the prolonged travel to the galleys, he profited of the momentary disregard of the military escort and escaped. Though he was not captured he was not allowed to return home, thus he became a religious refugee, who joined his liberated fellow-prisoners and went to German territories in 1676. He found support there and established himself in Leipzig, but never turned back home. Instead, he carried on with his studies, and he would obtain a doctorate in theology.<sup>26</sup>

Lani had his own significant contribution to the exile literature and Protestant martyrology of the decade of sorrow. Not only did he write in both Latin

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<sup>22</sup> Esaias Pilarik, *De Persecutione Verae Ecclesiae* (Wittebergae: Johann Sigismund Ziegenbein 1676).

<sup>23</sup> Georgius Krüger, *Disputatio philosophico-practica de exilio* (Wittebergae: Henckelius, 1674).

<sup>24</sup> Tobias Masznicus, *Unerhörter Gefängniss-Process* (Halle: 1676); Georgius Lani, *Martyrum Protectoris, Consulitoris et Assertoris. Narratio Historica, Crudelissimae & ab Hominum memoria nunquam auditae Captivitatis Papisticae, necnon ex eadem Liberationis Miraculosae*, (Lipsiae: 1676). Simonides's work (*Galeria Omnium Sanctorum*, 1675) remained in manuscript and was published only in 1865.

<sup>25</sup> For further details concerning Lani's life and oeuvre see: Eva Kowalska, "Klesch, Láni und die anderen. Zur Typologie der ungarischen Exulanten des 17. Jahrhunderts," *Acta Comeniana* 20/21 (2007): 49–64.

<sup>26</sup> Tóth, "Persecutio decennalis," 344.

and German the story of his persecution, but he produced within a volume of selected Latin oration, a remarkable text incorporating his own experiences of persecution in the ancient and early modern Lutheran tradition of martyrology.<sup>27</sup> When treating the concept proper, he differentiated between two types of martyrdom, one that involved bloodshed and another one that did not. Furthermore, this typology of *martyrium cruentum* and *incruentum* was rendered to the more prevalent differentiation between martyrs and confessors:

[Martyres] Duae vulgo constituuntur species Martyrii. Incruentum, quod eorum est Confessorum Christi, qui sanvinem quidem non fundunt, sed pro Christo & veritate Evangelii multa indigna, calumnias, ignominiam, carceres, exilia & infinita alia pericula forti subeunt & sustinent animo, parati ipsam quoque subire mortem, si ita Deus velit, & necessitas ferat. Alterum est Cruentum eorum, qui ita libere Christum corum Tyrannis profitentur, ut ipso actu non bona modo omnia negligant, sed & vitam ac sanguinem profundant.<sup>28</sup>

Accordingly, Lani explained that the confessors bore witness to Christ and the Truth of Gospel; therefore, they were willing to endure with patience prison, exile, and all kinds of calamities, or sometimes even death provided that God wanted or necessity imposed it. As for Martyrs, they bore witness to Christ in front of the tyrants and willingly shed their blood or sacrifice their lives. The most relevant textual antecedent articulating this typology is the shared tradition of the Fathers, for Lani referred to Augustin and Cyprian. As a result of this particular theological contextualization of the concept of martyrdom, Lani seemed to define exile or forced migration as an act of martyrdom that unavoidably would cast the role of confessor or martyr on the person enduring this affliction.<sup>29</sup> Hence Lani's theoretical approach to martyrdom defined his own and his fellow-refugees' accounts of their persecution as afflictions in multiple perspectives. It had clearly reinforced the status and genre of these narrative accounts as martyrological narratives (*récit martyrologique*);<sup>30</sup> but most importantly incorporated them into a genuine Lutheran martyrology insisting on the idea that those afflictions constituted unmistakably acts of martyrdom

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<sup>27</sup> For an examination of the oration with the focal point on Lani's perception of martyrdom see: Tóth, "Persecutio decennalis," 347–48.

<sup>28</sup> Georgius Lani, *Hermathena sive Orationes panegyricae* (Lipsiae: apud Michaellem Russworm, 1682), 240–41.

<sup>29</sup> Tóth, "Persecutio decennalis," 347.

<sup>30</sup> For the concept of *récit martyrologique* see: David El Kan, *Les Bûcher du Roi. La Culture Protestant des Martyrs (1523–1572)* (Seysssel: Champ Vallon, 1997), 123.

While Lani, Szimonides, and Masznicus were able to escape during the travel to the galleys, there was a distinct group of both Calvinist and Lutherans priests, who had served at the galleys and they would only be liberated in 1676. The survivors of this group had been set free on February 11, 1676 only to find out that a new type of affliction would await them, exile in Western Europe. As they were not allowed to return to Hungary, they looked for support in the nearest Protestant territories such as Switzerland or further north the Netherlands or even England. The individuals of this group had already formulated for themselves, of course, as an ideology of survival, a certain tenet of martyrdom. It appears that they construed and defined their sufferings in the theological context of early modern martyrdom. While in prison and later on at the galleys, this predisposition to refer to martyrdom evolved into a deliberate self-fashioning frequently displayed both in private letters or official documents. For instance, Stephanus Beregszászi in a letter sent to his wife on May 30, 1676, when reflecting upon the destiny of his fellow-prisoners clearly stated:

Seven of us had been incarcerated in the prison of Kapuvár, but only three of us survived. Out of some other poor seven, all of them of Reformed religion, jailed in Sárvár, only three remained alive. That already makes 16 of those who suffered martyrdom for Jesus Christ.<sup>31</sup>

After having been liberated the Hungarian exiles often used the definition of *exul Christi*, or *exul pro Christi religione* when referring to themselves.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, they had relied on the literary means of collective representations too,

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<sup>31</sup> Lajos Pap Maklári, "Sélyei István levele. Beregszászi István levele [The Letters of István Sélyei and István Beregszászi]," *Sárospataki Füzetek* 7(1863): 60–6, here 62.

<sup>32</sup> The expatriate Balázs Köpeczi in a holograph letter addressed to Ludovicus Throncius on July 1678 refers to himself as '*exul pro religione Christi*.' This letter has been published: László Zsigmond Bujtási, "A megszabadított gályarab prédikátorok küldöttsége Hollandiában [The Deputation of the Liberated Hungarian Priests to the Netherlands]" in *Történetek a mélyföldről* [Stories from the Low Countries], ed. Réka Bozsay (Debrecen: Print Press kft, 2014) 63–7. In a similar way with Köpeczi, several of the Hungarian exiles accommodated in Zürich signed and added short entries to the album amicorum of Johann Heinrich Fries (1639–1718) defining themselves as '*exul*,' or '*exul pro Christo*.' See: Ádám Hegyi, "A gályarab lelkészek bejegyzései Johann Heinrich Fries (1639–1718) albumában: magyarországi diákok Bázelen és Zürichben 1677 és 1720 között [Of the Entries Added by Hungarian Refugee Priests to the Album of Johann Heinrich Fries (1639–1718). Hungarian Students in Basel and Zürich from 1677 to 1720]," *Egyháztörténeti Szemle* 11(2010): 9–27, here 11). It appears that the Hungarian refugees whenever relying on this formulation, were actually following a most influential tradition established previously by Lutherans more than a century ago, around the 1550s. (Vera v der Osten-Sacken, "Lutheran Exiles of Christ in the Sixteenth Century", *JEMC* 3(2016): 31–46, here 31–5).

when they published their *Apology* in 1677 and 1678.<sup>33</sup> It must have been a rather popular text as the 1704 edition of Hornius's ecclesiastical history also republished it.<sup>34</sup> However, the refugees attempted to gain support from the Calvinist and Lutheran churches of Western Europe by claiming that their suffering constituted an act of bearing witness to the truth, a truth that had been assimilated at Western universities and brought back and spread all over in their homeland.<sup>35</sup> The collective representation formulated in such manner reinforced the idea that the Hungarian exiles were confessors and martyrs who had endured terrible afflictions for the cause of Reformation and their reformed belief. Furthermore, their proved loyalty to the *Vera Ecclesia*, as they intended to remind their Protestant sympathizers, came at a high price for some of the exiles had died in prison or at the galleys, others had suffered tremendously.

Although even the temporary hosting of the refugees was not unproblematic at all for the receiving early modern communities, there were undeniably situations when the much-afflicted Hungarian clergymen had enjoyed almost unlimited support in every respect. This was surely the case of Zürich, where the Calvinist Church and the University in a joined effort offered their utmost. 21 individuals of the refugees had been hosted here from May 19–20, 1676 to October 22, 1677. When they first reached Zürich in May, 1676, the famous professor of the University of Zürich, Johann Heindrich Heidegger (1633–1698) saluted them with a Latin oration. Two of the refugees István Mórciz Harsányi and István Séllyei had been immortalised on canvas by Conrad Meyer; the martyr-like depiction of the two was further emphasized by the subscription added to the painting, referring to them as the living martyrs of Christ.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, apart from political and financial support, the Swiss helped the refugees bring their cause in the centre of European public attention. The Hungarian refugees came to be regarded as living martyrs in Zurich, and their cause was promoted as one worthy of the common interest of Protestants all over Europe. The *album amicorum* of the refugee István Séllyei (1627–1692) Calvinist priest and bishop, contains the entries of several Swiss intellectuals, which as a reliable historical source convincingly testifies for this fact.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Apologia Ministrorum Evangelicorum Hungariae...*, (Ultrajecti: 1677).

<sup>34</sup> Georgius Hornius, *Historia ecclesiastica* (Francofurti ad Moenum: 1704), 786–807.

<sup>35</sup> Hornius, *Historia*, 803: "...nos ob illam fidem pati, quam in vestris Academiis didicimus et in patriam nostram reportavimus."

<sup>36</sup> The oil painting of the two Hungarian refugees, István Séllyei and István Harsányi Mórciz, is still being preserved at the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich.

<sup>37</sup> It is very suggestive the Latin description of this particular item by Johannes Jakobus Wagnerus, who explicitly formulated that Stephanus Séllyei together with his Hungarian brothers after having endured several afflictions and martyrdom for the Gospel (post multas diras durasque afflictiones atque martyria ob. S. S. Evangelium perpressa) returned to Hungary on October 20, 1677. This source was published: Mihály Zsilinszky, "Egyháztörténeti emlékek a

While Conradus Buckhardus, the Calvinist pastor of Zurich, declared Séllyei the martyr of Christ (*Martyri Christi*) and his supreme invincible soldier (*invictissimus athleta*), Johann Heindrich Heidegger described Séllyei as a most esteemed hieromartyr (*pretiosissimus hieromartyr*). Professor Heidegger expressed his unconditional support for the Hungarian refugees in a different way as well. He insisted that the issue of martyrdom be incorporated in the curriculum of the University as well.<sup>38</sup> Finally, Rudolph Hofmeister's remarkable entry confirmed too that the sufferings of the valiant Hungarians had been a clear sign of the persecution endured by the true church claiming that 'Ecclesia persecutionibus crescit, et martyriis coronatus est.'<sup>39</sup>

The western exile of the Hungarian refugees came to an end by 1681, as most of them had decided to return either for a temporary or for a permanent stay to Royal Hungary. Some of them had already undertaken this home journey in 1677–1678. This decision was not without risks, as only the diet of Sopron ratified the law which granted them safe return and recommencement of their offices as ministers in 1681. The conclusion of the decade of sorrow (1671–1681) was an extraordinary moment in the history of Hungarian Reformation. The gravity and often tragic intensity of the persecution, whether it consisted of imprisonment or exile, brought to surface the true commitment and loyalty of the Protestant clergy, as some of them had accepted to suffer or even die in order to bear witness to the truth. It took almost 150 years for the Hungarian Lutheran and Calvinist Churches to find their martyrs and confessors, whose sacrifice bolstered up the status, position, and self-esteem of all Hungarian Protestants. Once established the Protestant martyrological tradition imposed a particular understanding of Reformation, one that would lastingly influence and inspire new martyrs and confessors during the eighteenth century as well. It is safe to assert that religious persecution and martyrdom brought about the long Hungarian Reformation concluded only at 1791, when the Edict of Tolerance (1782) received validation from the Diet.

### III. 3. Collective Exile: The Destiny of the Persecuted Calvinist College of Sárospatak

The previous subsections have introduced examples of internal and external exile experiences that involved both distinct individuals and smaller communities. The task of this particular subsection is to provide an example of internal and collective

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Zürichi könyvtárból [Sources Concerning Hungarian Church History Preserved in the Library of Zürich],” *Sárospataki Füzetek* 3(1866): 75.

<sup>38</sup> Thesis defences and public examinations reflecting on the issue of martyrdom had been organised and took place under Heidegger's supervision: Johann Jakob Hottinger, *Dissertatio de martyrio* (Tiguri: David Gessner, 1677); Johann Heinrich Heidegger, *Consolatio Christiana s. martyrum, omniúmque persecutions sustinentium* (Tiguri: David Gessner, 1678).

<sup>39</sup> Zsilinszky: “Egyháztörténeti emlékek,” 457.

exile case, one that involved one of the most important Calvinist institutes of education, the Reformed College of Sárospatak. It had been founded as a trivial school in 1548, but soon after would become the most prestigious educational and cultural institute of the Hungarian Calvinist intelligentsia.<sup>40</sup> With the increasing support of the Hungarian nobility, especially under the patronage of the Rákóczi family, the former modest trivial school developed into a most esteemed College, one that attracted even Johan Amos Comenius (1592–1670), who would become a member of the faculty from 1650 to 1654.<sup>41</sup> Having set up a printing shop in Sárospatak, the Calvinist patrons of the College added further major perspective to the nourishment of this cultural establishment. Furthermore, the untimely death of the young Zsigmond Rákóczi (1622–1652) made possible a most generous book donation for the library of the college. Some 2000 items of excellent Latin and Hungarian books, mostly reflecting the recently passed prince's excellent intellectual orientation and taste, had been transferred to the college and made available for students and faculty members. Despite these promising developments the College and its student body, including the faculty as well, would soon face a sad turn of events.

George the II. Rákóczi, the Calvinist Prince of Transylvania and patron of the College of Sárospatak, who used to be landlord of the Sárospatak estate, died in 1660. As the College had always been financially supported by the Calvinist landlord of the estate, the last two Rákóczis, father and son, as Princes of Transylvania, did their utmost to provide the necessary funding for its untroubled functioning. With the death of the prince in 1660, the situation became uncertain. It would worsen, when George II Rákóczi's widow, Zsófia Báthory together with his son, Francis, decided to convert to Catholicism in the same year. The aggravation of the situation reached a climax, when the Jesuits had been invited to the city and domiciled there to the great horror of the Calvinist residents and clergy in 1663. With the advent of the persecution against the Protestants, Habsburg forces entered the city in the spring of 1671. On August 5, 1671 the Calvinist Church had been occupied by troops; events seriously escalated, as the imperial army took control of the college too, and forced out its inhabitants in October 21, 1671. Moreover, the buildings had been handed over to the Jesuits, though they did not install themselves in it at once as they only rented them. Given these circumstances, the students and the faculty had to leave the city. It was the beginning of their internal and collective exile.

They first headed to Debrecen, then they went to Transylvania, as the Prince of Transylvania, Michael Apafi offered them support and protection. They were invited to occupy the buildings of the former Calvinist College of Gyulafehérvár

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<sup>40</sup> For the early modern history of the Reformed College of Sárospatak see: Dénes Dienes and János Ugrai, *A Sárospataki Református Kollégium története* [The History of the Reformed College of Sárospatak] (Sárospatak: Hernád, 2013), 19–48.

<sup>41</sup> Dienes and Ugrai, *A Sárospataki Református Kollégium*, 35–6.

(Alba Iulia), a city located in the north-western area of the principality. After having covered a distance of 500 kilometres they arrived to their final destination to Gyulafehérvár, a location that would host the exiled Reformed College of Sárospatak for almost half a century. Soon the College restarted its activity, new students were recruited and the education was reorganized at this new residence as early as January 1672. Due to the generosity of Prince Mihály Apafi, the college functioned here until 1716. In order to preserve its identity, the College defined and referred to itself in every official document as the Reformed College of Sárospatak and Gyulafehérvár.<sup>42</sup> The forced migration of the whole institution with its student body and faculty members produced damaging consequences. The printing shop and only some of the holdings of the famous library could have been rescued. A significant corpus of both books and manuscripts had been lost for good. No wonder that in these circumstances the College of Sárospatak could not function anymore as efficiently as it used to. This was in fact the common destiny of several other Calvinist colleges and churches as the persecution and the Catholic restauration spread and gained terrain in Royal Hungary. Indeed, the exile of a whole College including not only the body of students, but the faculty members and the assisting personnel convincingly depicts the tragic dimensions of the *persecutio decennalis*.

Unfortunately, the college would not be spared from further troubles and persecutions. After it had already spent 44 years in Gyulafehérvár the Habsburg military inflicted further damage on this institute. The College was forced out of the city and an unexpected period of exile would start anew in 1716. It took two more years to find a solution. On April 30, 1718 the College of Sárospatak exiled to Gyulafehérvár was united with the Calvinist primary school of Marosvásárhely, located some 120 kilometres away in the centre of Transylvania. This concluding event of collective and internal exile that took place already in the eighteenth century, suggestively points to the fact that persecution once started in the 1670s would last over a century and ought to be evaluated in the historical and intellectual context of a long Reformation.

However, apart from the afflictions endured by the main actors, students and faculty members of the college, it is remarkable how various objects and mostly books had preserved too, the extreme experience of multiple displacements. There is a rather significant body of books, precisely 103 titles (approximately 125 books) that also testify in a rather particular way to this exceptional exile. As a consistent part of the holdings of the former library of the Reformed College of Sárospatak, had been transported first to Gyulafehérvár, then to Marosvásárhely there are still items that had been marked as the possessions of the Library of the United college of Sárospatak, Gyulafehérvár and Marosvásárhely: *Liber Bibliothecae Colegii*

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<sup>42</sup> Dienes and Ugrai, *A Sárospataki Református Kollégium*, 45.

*Sarospatachino-Albano-Marosvásárhelyensis*.<sup>43</sup> Not only did these books preserve in this way their fate as lifeless objects transported during travel but immortalized the very vivid and emotionally charged experience of having been forced to leave and undertake exile. Furthermore, they raise a very challenging methodological issue, namely, how religious persecution and exile looked like from the perspective of books and other populations of objects?<sup>44</sup> Books or manuscripts, though lifeless objects, display an almost similar vulnerability as human individuals when confronted with the extremity of forced migration. The disappearance of a rare text, either book or manuscript could be sometimes, without exaggeration, a tragic loss, for it is a reminder of human fallibility and the evanescence of everything which is man-made, including books.

#### IV. Conclusion

It is possible to conclude that the religious persecution of Protestants in Royal Hungary brought about displacement and exile in a more or less similar manner as everywhere in early modern Europe. Yet, the Hungarian case displays unmistakably some specific features.

First of all, religious persecution supported by Habsburg political will and military interventions broke out only in the second half of the seventeenth century (1671–1681). It appears that both exile experiences and a certain literary canon narrating these events, often from the perspective and reliable accounts of eyewitnesses commenced only in the 1670s and evolved well into the eighteenth century. Accordingly, the emerging Protestant martyrological paradigm, through the discourses of its both Calvinist (Szőnyi Nagy) and Lutheran (Georgius Lani) authors and survivors promoted a martyrology that incorporated the ancient authorities of the Primitive Church and some of the early modern influential texts as well.<sup>45</sup> The idea that undertaking exile or displacement as an act of witnessing reiterated and endorsed the claim that he who had suffered in exile, though not executed, would

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<sup>43</sup> Regarding the history of this particular corpus see: Mihály Sebestyén–Spielmann, “A Sárospataki (-gyulafehérvári) Református Kollégium Marosvásárhelyen őrzött könyvei [The Books of the Reformed College of Sárospatak and Gyulafehérvár Preserved at the Bolyai-Teleki Library of Marosvásárhely]” in *Emlékkönyv a Teleki Téka alapításának 200. évfordulójára 1802–2002* [Teleki Téka Album: Commemorating the Establishment of the Teleki Library 200 years ago, 1802–2002] ed. Deé Nagy Anikó et al. (Marosvásárhely: Mentor, 2002) 272–89.

<sup>44</sup> I am referring to the application of the so called ‘it-narrative’ or object narrative. Further methodological insights and applications are to be found in: Leah Price, “From the History of a Book to a History of the Book,” *Representations* 108(2009): 120–38; Ruth Ahnert, *The Rise of Prison Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 144.

<sup>45</sup> For a thorough assessment how the ancient and early modern martyrological tradition had shaped the discourse of Hungarian Protestants see: Tóth, “Persecutio decennalis,” 347–48.

certainly qualify as a martyr. Therefore, martyrdom without bloodshed as *martyrium incuruentum*, appeared to be a genuine and accepted act of witnessing that promoted the confessor-type of early modern martyr or martyrdom. Nevertheless, this perspective reveals a particular feature of early modern Hungarian martyrdom. As the persecution of the Protestants started with and under the pretext of rebellion against the emperor, the martyrological discourse had been impregnated with concepts such as spiritual and bodily freedom that transcended the discourse to another realm, toward a proto-nationalistic and patriotic self-perception. As early as 1675 Szőnyi Nagy in the very first Hungarian martyrology already attempted to amalgamate piety with bravery, and the spiritual and physical dimensions of the struggle, resulted, it seems, in a coherent propaganda focused upon *freedom* as an unalienable right in both a political and religious-confessional sense. Moreover, Szőnyi Nagy sought to equate military combat with religious and confessional resistance by attributing common motivations, aims and ideology to their supporters, namely soldiers and clergymen. Thus, a spectacular transformation from martyrology as an act of witnessing towards a predominantly political theology of loyalty, referring to a commitment to both *Vera Ecclesia* and *Patria* took place that evolved later on, into the nostalgia (*nostalgia*) of the political exiles, who considered themselves martyrs of the fatherland they had to leave against their will.<sup>46</sup> This is how early modern patriotism as *amor patriae* or *pro patria mori* appropriated the original concept of martyrdom in the excruciating circumstances of exile.

Finally, it is also remarkable how the martyrological accounts of sufferings both in Latin and vernacular nurtured the development of the Hungarian memoir-literature and the very first attempt to formulate an ecclesiastical history of the persecuted Protestant church in Royal Hungary and Transylvania. Though these first known or unknown attempts often remained in manuscripts and in their contaminated copies, for only a very few of them would be published with remarkable delay, they still function as sources to the history of religious

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<sup>46</sup> The suggestive example of János Komáromi (?–1711), a political refugee spending several years in Nicomedia, suggestively reveals how the concept and terminology of martyrdom had been taken over and applied to political exile in order to express a patriotic commitment to the fatherland. Komáromi, for instance, defined himself in his writings as martyr of his fatherland. For an elaborated examination of this case see: Tóth, “The Homiletic of Political Discourse,” 545–68. For the emergence and the Hungarian reception of the concept of nostalgia (*nostalgia*) see: Zsombor Tóth, “De Nostalgia: A kora újkori kényszermigráció politikai diskurzusa [Nostalgia as a Political Discourse Reflecting on Forced Migration]” in *Politica philosophiai okoskodás”: Politikai nyelvek és történeti kontextusok a középkortól a 20. századig* [Political Languages and Historical Contexts from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century], ed. Gergely Tamás Fazakas et al. (Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetem Történeti Intézete, 2013), 117–36. For the very first and original formulation of the concept of nostalgia see: Iohannes Hofervs, *Dissertatio cvrioso-medica de nostalgia* (Basel: Jacobus Bertschius, 1688).

persecution. A persecution that had commenced as late as 1671 and went on until the Edict of Tolerance was first promulgated (1782) and then reconfirmed in 1791. These exile cases providing valuable historical insights into the nature and historical reality of religious persecution question as well the validity of the traditional Reformation concept incorporating all these events and characters into one master narrative. For it has become clear, I believe, that only a long Reformation concept stretching the historical confines of Reformation related events from the fifteen to the very late eighteenth century would justly assess these exile experiences as determining components of the historical phenomenon defined as early modern religious persecution. Reformation(s) in Tripartite Hungary may well have unfolded rather differently, but the concluding event of the historical process of Reformation occurred, when the supreme political will expressed predisposition toward compromise only at the end of the eighteenth century.

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