Hungarian Studies 36 (2022) S, 149–157
DOI: 10.1556/044.2022.00202

AKADÉMIAI KIADÓ

Catholic Reformation and radical heterodoxy in Central-East Europe: Antonio Possevino against Antitrinitarism

Ádám Szabó*

Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtára, Magyarország

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Received: June 2, 2022 • Accepted: August 17, 2022
Published online: October 24, 2022

ABSTRACT

It is well known that, alongside Lutheranism and Calvinism, other, even more radical forms of Protestantism emerged in the 16th century, attacking fundamental Christian beliefs such as the dogma of the Trinity. However, neither Catholic, nor Protestant states welcomed heterodox views, so their proponents were forced to flee to the East, where they were permitted to build their own churches in Poland and Transylvania. In the western parts of the continent they were largely unknown, so when the first representatives of the Counter-Reformation (mainly Jesuits) arrived, they were confronted with a new, obscure foe.

Antonio Possevino, one of the most well-known and influential figures of the Catholic Reformation, wrote a lengthy polemic book against Antitrinitarism based on his own experiences which he acquired in the early 1580s when he performed various missions in Poland and Transylvania, while also studying Antitrinitarism. Possevino's work outlines the history of Antitrinitarism, summarizes its doctrines, and refutes its most important book, *De falsa et vera unius Dei … cognitione*. Although Possevino's book is intriguing in and of itself, its publishing history is also worth noting. It was not published until 1586, after a heated debate between Possevino, his Jesuit censors, and the pope, and it was printed in three cities (Poznan, Cologne and Vilnius) at the same time with different titles and prefaces. Within a few years, the book was edited two more times. This history outlines some tactics on behalf of the Catholic Reformation, with a focus on the importance of printed books.

KEYWORDS

Antonio Possevino, Counter-Reformation, Jesuits, radical heterodoxy, Antitrinitarism

* Corresponding author. E-mail: szabo.adam.agoston@gmail.com

The Jesuit father Antonio Possevino (1534–1611) was one of the best known figures of Catholic Reformation and Counter-Reformation in the 16th century. Based on his enormous erudition, Possevino wrote a whole collection of different works, propagating and supporting the Catholic faith or refuting Protestant doctrine. Besides being an author, he also acted as a polemist, a diplomat and an organizor, coming in contact with the most powerful rulers of his time, for example with John III of Sweden, Ivan the Terrible, or Stephen Báthory, prince of Transylvania and king of Poland.[1]

While visiting Báthory's countries, Possevino wrote a book which is barely known nowadays, although it adumbrates some interesting aspects about the history of Reformation in Central-East Europe. The cause for writing this work was the fact that one of Possevino's main duties was to deal with local Protestant churches, either peacefully or, if it was necessary, in a polemic manner. These Protestants were mainly Lutherans and Calvinists, but in Poland and Transylvania there was a third group, quite strong and much more radical than the former two: Antitrinitarians. While in other regions of Europe everyone who denied the orthodox dogma of the Trinity had to suffer persecution, in these two countries they had their own church, even though at that time Poland and Transylvania were under the rule of the Báthory family, who were devoted Catholics. So Possevino did a great favour both to his church and to the Báthories, when he wrote a refutation against the most important Antitrinitarian book, the *De falsa et vera unius Dei cognitione*. Its title was *Summa et refutatio pestilentissimorum librorum, quod Transsylvanici ministri contra Sanctissimam Trinitatem evulgarunt*. Originally, this work formed part of a much more voluminous book, but in 1586, when this larger book appeared, *Summa et refutatio* ran to two more editions in the same year as an independent work. In this study I will try to explain the background story of this threefold edition, very briefly summarising the history of Antitrinitarism, then Possevino's activity in the region, with special attention to his relationship with Antitrinitarians. The main focus is on his written works: beyond *Summa et refutatio* there are many letters and another book, which was not edited, because the pope himself prevented its publication. My hope is that the details of this story will reveal many things about the publishing methods and strategies of the Catholic Church during the 16th century.

Concerning Antitrinitarism, it must be emphasised that this was a Protestant church that was less unified than the Lutheran or Calvinist churches; it was closer to a group of radical heterodox thinkers who had begun to criticise the doctrine of Trinity independently and, meeting with each other, tried to come to some sort of a consensus and create a doctrine accepted by everyone. However, there were not many countries in Europe where these radical thinkers could live and work peacefully because they were persecuted both by Catholics and by other Protestants. The best known example to illustrate their dangerous situation is that of Miguel Serveto who was sentenced to death by Calvin himself in Geneva, but similar cases happened in Catholic and Lutheran regions, too. There were only two countries on the continent where Antitrinitarism was more or less tolerated, namely Poland and Transylvania. This tolerance was due to a number of (political, social, cultural etc.) causes; the main point is that from the middle of the 16th century onwards many Antitrinitarians migrated to these lands and established their own church there. The first representatives of this faith were mainly Italians, e. g. Francesco Stancaro and Giorgio Biandrata, but Antitrinitarian doctrine was welcomed

[1]For more on the life and works of Possevino, see Colombo (2016) and the literature listed there.

by local inhabitants as well, such as Piotr of Goniądz, Simon Budny, Gregorz Paweł in Poland, or Francis Dávid in Transylvania. In the 1560's Antitrinitarism grew particularly strong in the latter country, where its leaders, the aforementioned Biandrata and Dávid, even managed to convert the prince, John Sigismund Zápolya. Zápolya gave them considerable support: the Antitrinitarians were placed in charge of the most important school of the principality in Kolozsvár,[2] as well as the press in the capital, Gyulafehérvár.[3] During this same period Transylvanian and Polish Antitrinitarians were in active communication, in an attempt to create a unified theology.[4]

The main product of their effort was *De falsa et vera*, published in 1568. This large volume contained a thorough critique of the traditional dogma of the Trinity and explained the Antitrinitarians' own ideas about the existence and relationship of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. However, it was not a totally new work, because most of its chapters had already been published as independent treatises in Latin, Polish or Hungarian. The editors, Giorgio Biandrata, Francis Dávid and Gregorz Paweł translated all of the chapters into Latin and formed a coherent work. *De falsa et vera* was one of the most important products of Antitrinitarism in that period of time.[5]

We can say that Possevino's story starts where the Antitrinitarians' begins to decline, because after the death of Prince John Sigismund, in 1571, Stephen Báthory became the new ruler in Transylvania, and in 1576 he was elected King of Poland, too. As a faithful Catholic, he wanted to strengthen the position of the church in his countries, and Jesuits played an important role in Báthory's plans because they had acquired a very good reputation as teachers, missionaries, penitentiaries and writers of devotional, polemic and apologetic works. The Societas Jesu was already present in Poland, but to Transylvania the fathers were invited by Stephen Báthory. The king supported Jesuits just as much as his predecessor had done the Antitrinitarians in the principality, granting them money, churches, possessions, schools etc.[6]

Antonio Possevino was one of Báthory's Jesuit protegés, probably the most influential one. He had a very good relationship with the king and served him for many years. As a diplomat, he was instrumental in Báthory's negotiations with the Russian tsar, Ivan the Terrible, and with Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph. Possevino also helped to organise the improvement of Catholic life in both countries. He promoted the settling of Jesuits in Transylvania, the establishing of Catholic schools and churches, and tried to get the favour and support of many influential people for his order. Negotiations with Protestants also formed part of his duties. Usually he strove to treat them peacefully: in his letters Possevino reported that he had close private conversations with Protestant magnates and priests and, although they often came to sensitive topics, the tone always remained friendly.[7]

[2]Today Cluj Napoca in Romania. In the 16th century the city was often mentioned by its Latin name, Claudiopolis.

[3]Today Bălgrad in Romania. Its Latin name, which is in use nowadwys as well, is Alba Iulia.

[4]About the history of Antitrinitarism in Poland and Transylvania during the second half of the 16th century, see e. g. Wilbur (1952); Dán and Pirnát (1982); Balázs (1996).

[5]About the background of the publishing of the *De falsa et vera* Mihály Balázs gives a good summary in his treatise written to the Hungarian edition of the work. Balázs (2002), 9–29.

[6]About the activity of Jesuits in Transylvania see Molnár (2009), 23–27.

[7]Possevino's visit to Transylvania was described by Fraknói (1902).

However, when Possevino came into contact with Antitrinitarians (or Arians, as the Jesuit father called them),[8] he considered this group to be far the worst among all Protestants. For example, when speaking about the late brother of Stephen Báthory, Christoph, Possevino glorified his persecution against Francis Dávid, the leader of Antitrinitarians, as a heroic act.[9] In another letter he wrote to the Polish king: 'I may find it advisable for you to prohibit the public speeches of Arians against the divinity of Christ … and I know very well how much Your Royal Majesty is solicitous for the annihilaton of this plague.'[10] The Jesuit father and Báthory really wanted to eliminate the whole Antitrinitarian church.

Apart from his letters, Possevino wrote two major works, which at least partly concern Antitrinitarians. One of them is the aforementioned *Summa et refutatio*, against their *De falsa et vera*. Possevino also wrote another book, in Italian, entitled *Transilvania*. It was not a theological as much as a historical work, although the causes which motivated Possevino to write it, were based on religion. Namely, Stephen Báthory had already employed a historian at his court, Giovanni Michele Bruto, who was an excellent humanist, but also a follower of Protestantism. So, when Bruto finished his work about Transylvania, and Possevino managed to read it, he found the book 'heretic-minded',[11] and decided to write the history of the country from a Catholic perspective.[12] And so he did, composing his *Transilvania* during 1583 and 1584. The work was based on thorough research, and today it is a useful source for scholars, although the Jesuit father – not surprisingly – had a softspot for the Catholic Church and tried to underline the role of Stephen Báthory and his ancestors. Besides political events, in *Transilvania* Possevino focused on religious questions as well, and gave a very detailed description about the origin and progress of different Protestant churches, especially Antitrinitarism. His report is very prejudicial: according to Possevino, Biandrata was *pieno di fraude et iniquitá*,[13] he was *dato ad una vita epicurea*,[14] Biandrata and Stancaro *porgevano atrocissimo veleno all anime*;[15] Francis David

[8]At that time Antitrinitarians did not have a universally accepted common name to distinguish their church from others. Such names appeared only at the beginning of the 17th century: in Poland, they called themselves *ecclesia minor* (while *ecclesia maior* contained other Protestants), *fratres Poloni* (the Polish Brethren) or *Sociniani* (after their most important leader, Fausto Sozzini); in Transylvania, the phrase *unitarii* was used, expressing the accordance of all members.

[9]'Et vero recordaris Christophori parentis tui, quam heroico, hoc est Christiano pectore … peste illa Francisci Davidis (publica sententia ordinum) extincta … frenoque Satanae iniecto …ostium isthic fidei aperuit.' Veress (1913), 199.

[10]'Consultum putarem, si … iubeat ut in Transsylvania publicae illae Arianorum conciones adversus Christi divinitatem … tollantur … Et sane scio, quantopere Regiae Maiestati Vestrae cordi fuerit, ut ea pestis tolleretur.' Lukács (1976), 581.

[11]'Quell' historia sarebbe prohibita a leggersi da cattolici' (Possevino to Cardinal Tolomeo Gallio, Brünn, April 17, 1583). Possevino (1913). 201.

[12]Eventually, Bruto's work, *Rerum Ungaricarum libri*, was not published, because after Báthory's death the author changed sides and joined the service of the Habsburg family, so he did not want to publish a book which had been written for the enemy of his new employers. Thus, only fragments of *Rerum Ungaricarum libri* were known until 2021, when two scholars, Péter Kasza and Gábor Petneházi found a manuscript in Trento which contained Bruto's entire work.

[13]Possevino (1913), 93.

[14]Possevino (1913), 100.

[15]Possevino (1913), 102.

con horribile bestemmia niegó la Santissima Trinita[16] and so on. On the other hand, the data in the book are trustworthy and it is clear that Possevino was well informed about the doctrine and significant leaders of Antitrinitarism and the most importants event of its history.

However, *Transilvania* was not published because the two censors who had read the book made some objections. One of them, Paulus Hoffaeus, did not think that a Jesuit should write historical and political works at all: 'Now this *Transilvania* has come out, although it seems better to eliminate it than to give it to anybody for examination. I can simply not convince myself that this genre was inspired by God for the Society. It seems more probable that this kind of literature was suggested by an evil demon who the missions and worldwide expeditions of the Society, made for the sake of our brethren, wanted to represent as hateful and suspicious things.'[17] The other censor, Fabrizio Pallavicino had no major objections, but he did not find it useful to write about conflicts between Christian rulers – he was afraid that Possevino's favour for Báthory would offend the Habsburgs, who were in serious debate with the Polish king. Interestingly, Pallavicino had another argument: 'it does not seem useful to publish Transylvanian errors and heresies in Italian, because it would offend the ears of Italians who are not accustomed to hearing such horrible blasphemies.'[18] Beyond any doubt, these *errores seu haereses* were Antitrinitarian doctrines, because other Protestant theologies could not be referred as a heresy specific to Transylvania. This statement shows that Antitrinitarism in other parts of Europe was a barely known phenomenon.

Possevino's *Transilvania* eventually was not published, but after a few years, in 1586, he edited the *Summa et refutatio*, as part of a voluminous work, with the title *Notae divini Verbi et apostolicae ecclesiae fides, ac facies ex quatuor primis oecumenicis synodis*. This writing was originally a book of polemic against a certain Lutheran theologian, David Cythraeus., trying to prove that it was Protestantism that had deviated from the ancient Christian tradition, not the Catholic Church, as Cythraeus asserted. However, in the chapter where Possevino was speaking about the history and tradition of Christianity, he inserted a treatise: *Atheismi Lutheri, Melanchthonis, Calvini, Bezae … aliorumque Pseudoevangelicorum* (hereinafter *Atheismi*).[19] In this treatise Possevino outlined the process through which Protestant thinkers had gradually distorted the true Christian doctrine, sinking into total atheism. At he end of this decline– according to Possevino – stood Antitrinitarism. The Jesuit father described the origin and history of this heresy, just as he had done in *Transilvania*. He highlighted some episodes: the polemics at Piotrków in 1565,[20] the teaching of the aforementioned Antitrinitarian leader, Francis Dávid,[21] and *De falsa et vera* as the main work on Antitrinitarism. So, this chapter

[16] Possevino (1913), 102.

[17] 'Nunc autem accedit Transsylvania, quae supprimenda potius erat, quam ad examinanda ulli exhibenda. Non possum mihi persuadere hoc scribendi genus a Deo Societati inspirari, sed ab aliquo malo daemone, qui ut Societatis missiones et peragrationes per mundum ad proximi auxilium reddat odiosas et suspectas, hoc genus scribendi suggessisse videtur'. Lukács (1976), 956.

[18] 'Non videretur expedire committere praelo lingua Italica … errores seu haereses Transylvanorum … tum quia videntur offendere posse aures Italorum, qui non sunt assueti tam horrendas blasphemias audire.' Lukács (1976), 954.

[19] Possevino (1586a), 64–139.

[20] Possevino (1586a), 104–108: Summa colloquii cum novis Arianis Petricoviae.

[21] Possevino (1586a), 130–139: Franciscus Davidis cum nefarias theses … proposuisset … infelicissime moritur.

contained the *Summa et refutatio*.[22] Possevino moved step by step in the Antitrinitarian book, analysing and confuting every argument, using his enormous erudition in patristics, dogmatics, biblical exegesis and other theological sciences.

Although the content of the *Summa et refutatio* is remarkable as well, this article focuses only on the circumstances of its edition, which also makes an interesting subject. Firstly, we have to admit that a treatise written against Antitrinitarians doesn't really fit to a book, which is written against a Lutheran theologian. Possevino probably did not want to put it in the *Notae divini Verbi*, but later he changed his mind. I think that this change was caused by the ban on *Transilvania*: *Atheismi* would have been a good supplement to that work, and it would have been very useful to publish both of them at the same time, but the author could not do that, so under the pressure of necessity, he edited only *Atheismi*, attaching it to *Notae divini Verbi*. At least it fulfilled the requests of the aforementioned censors: *Atheismi* is a theological, not a political work, and its language is Latin, so Possevino did not scare the Italian common people with the horrific Antitrinitarian doctrine. This way Possevino had some compensation for the cancelling of *Transilvania*, because his research about Transylvanian history and Antitrinitarism eventually yielded some results.

However, there were other considerations as, well: *Atheismi* was written simultaneously with *Transilvania*,[23] and they were strictly connected, but still remained independent works, aimed at a (partly) different public, which is clear from the fact that they were written in different languages. *Transilvania* was a representation of the Transylvanian Principality and the Báthory family for the common people, from a historical-political aspect, serving the interests of Stephen Báthory and Catholicism. *Atheismi*, written in Latin, focusing on theological subjects and using sophisticated argumentation, could serve for other purposes. We have seen in Pallavicino's letter that Antitrinitarism in Italy and other countries of Europe was rather unknown, but those Catholics (primarily Jesuits), who came into Transylvania and Poland with the purpose of reviving the Catholic church needed to be well prepared for every challenge they could face in the region, even for such a mysterious enemy as radical heterodoxy. So, Possevino's other purpose could be to present Antitrinitarism to his brothers, and to give them a weapon against this heresy.

But even if Possevino didn't have this in mind, others certainly did. *Summa et refutatio* or rather the whole *Atheismi*, right after its first appearance, still in 1586, was published two more times, in Cologne[24] and in Vilnius.[25] The editor in both cases was a certain Stephen Bodoni, a Transylvanian nobleman, who at that time was in the service of the Báthory family.[26] While studying theology in Vilnius, he personally met with Possevino, as well. The cause for this, while he was also promoting the publication of *Atheismi*, was declared in the *epistola dedicatoria* of the work, written by Bodoni himself to Stephen Báthory:

[22]Possevino (1586a), 111–130: Summa et refutatio pestilentissimorum librorum, quod Transsylvanici ministri contra Sanctissimam Trinitatem evulgarunt.

[23]Cf. Dóbék (2014), 867–868.

[24]Possevino (1586b).

[25]Possevino (1586c).

[26]About Stephen Bodoni see Nagy (2013), 187–188.

> Antonio Possevino, a Jesuit, who is well known to Your Royal Majesty, published a voluminous work in which he refuted the *Responsio* written by a certain David Chytraeus, and uncovered the frauds of other heretics, too … However, it was not easy to spread this work widely. So, according to the advice of some wise theologians, it was decided that it should be published divided in many separate pieces. Since the most useful part is the one where he reveals the atheisms of this age for everyone, and cuts with an axe the roots of this poisonous tree, which has generated so many monsters of heresy, I, who thanks to the grace of Your Royal Majesty, in this Academy of Vilnius can study right the same object which is discussed in this book, decided to edit the work of this man, who has so many merits towards us, and dedicate it to Your Royal Majesty. On the one hand, it is very necessary for our country, on the other, Your Royal Majesty (not just nowadays, but also when he ruled Transylvania as a prince) clearly declared how much he hated this heretic plague, when he threw on the fire a manuscript written by a certain Arian, saying: 'Too much plague has already got into Transylvania, so we cannot let this poison come in, as well.'[27]

So, the purpose of publishing *Atheismi* was, on one hand, to gain Stephen Báthory's favour. In this regard, Bodoni fulfilled his plan, because we know from other sources that he remained a trusted man of the king, and later of the new prince in Transylvania, Sigismund Báthory. On the other hand, Bodoni wanted to help his fellow Catholics in their fight against heresy, giving them a useful weapon to crush the main arguments of Antitrinitarian doctrine. *Atheismi* and *Summa et refutatio* proved to be useful in this regard, too, at least we can draw this conclusion from the fact that in the next year, 1587,[28] and in 1595[29] the work was published once more, as an appendix to another famous writing by Possevino, *Moscovia*. Overall, there were five editions in ten years. The editor of the last two was a certain Arnold Mylius, a publisher from Cologne. In his *epistola dedicatoria* he wrote: 'A little book by the same father Possevino fell into my hands, narrow by extent, but excellent by the gravity of its content. It was written against the atheisms of this age. Since in its preface there is mention of another, more voluminous work, also written against the heretics of our wretched times, I drew hope to find and publish it in this region.'[30]

So, Mylius read *Atheismi* first (actually, he was one of its editors in Cologne), and from Bodoni's preface he was informed about the existence of *Notae divini verbi*, and decided to edit

[27]'Antonius Possevinus Societatis Iesu, Regiae maiestati Vestrae satis cognitus, magnum opus praelo dedit, quo responsum cuiusdam Davidis Chytraei refutans, haereticorum aliorum simul fraudes aperuit … Sed ut opus illud non ita facile quoquoversum disseminari poterit, sapientum consilio theologorum, iudicatum est expedire, ut in varia opera partitum emitteretur in lucem. Cum vero haec pars utilissima sit, qua, cum atheismos huius saeculi ob oculos omnium posuit, securim admovit ad venenatae istius arboris radicem, quae tot haeresum monstra protulit, ego, qui ex Regiae Maiestatis Vestrae clementia in hac Vilnensi Academia, hanc ipsam materiam, de qua hoc libro agitur, haurio, laborem viri de nobis optime meriti edendum, Regiae Maiestati Vestrae dicandum putavi, tum quoniam patriae nostrae pernecessarius est, tum quod Vestra Regia Maiestas non modo nunc, sed et cum princeps Transylvaniam regeret, satis ostendit, quam sibi pestes istae haeresum displicerent, cum Ariani cuiusdam impii manuscriptum librum in ignem iniiciens, dixit: Satis pestium importatum est in Transylvaniam, ut in eam ne istud quoque venenum infundi patiamur.' Possevino (1586b), A2r–v., Possevino (1586c), A2r–A3r.

[28]Possevino (1587).

[29]Possevino (1595).

[30]'Incidit in manus nostras eiusdem patris Possevini libellus, mole quidem exiguus, sed rerum pondere praestans, de atheismis haereticorum nostri temporis, in cuius praefatione quia mentio fit alterius maioris voluminis contra eosdem nostri infelicis saeculi haereticos, eius consequendi ac typis in hisce partibus edendi, spes animum meum obtentavit.' The text is the same in both editions.

the whole book. As we have seen, after a few years he repeated the publishing, and so *Atheismi* and *Notae divini verbi* certainly were popular among Catholic readers.

Concerning the long-term effects, Possevino did not reach his final goal with *Atheismi*. Although the work proved to be useful, and the Jesuit father reached great successes in the improvement of Catholic positions, he could not eliminate Antitrinitarism, either in Poland, or in Transylvania. The main cause of this failure was the weakness of Catholicism in the region, because the Roman Church simply did not have enough power (yet) to counterbalance Protestantism, which had more followers and powerful patrons. However, in Poland Possevino's and his fellow Jesuits' activity marked the beginning of a process: the recovering of Catholicism. Under the rule of Stephen Báthory and his successor, Sigismund III Vasa, there was a central effort to repress Protestants, and not only by establishing of Catholic schools or churches, but also by violent persecution. During the 17th century, Poland became a Catholic state again. Antitrinitarians suffered the heaviest disaster, in 1658 they were expelled from the country. In Transylvania things moved in a very different direction: here the Jesuits were expelled after Stephen Báthory's death, and the new prince, Sigismund Báthory, could not do much for the Catholic Church. A few years later a war (the so called Long Turkish War) broke out between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires, where Transylvania supported the former, but the Christians were defeated, Sigismund Báthory lost the throne, and the country was totally destroyed. The emerging new Transylvanian regime was dominated by Calvinists, who oppressed both Antitrinitarians and Catholics. However, Antitrinitarians managed to survive, and their church continued to exist until the present day.

By way of summary we may conclude that Possevino's work and its fate represent very well the special conditions of religion in Central-East Europe at the second half of the 16th century. One of the most skilled, most famous figures of Catholic Reformation and the most radical heterodox thinkers could live and work there at the same time, propagating their faith and publishing voluminous works. This co-existence was not always peaceful, and did not last long, but for some decades the region still remained a relatively tolerant part of Europe, having a large diversity of various Christian doctrines. *Atheismi* could be seen as a symbol of this situation, while the prelude and the story of its publications shows how the Catholic Church tried to handle it in the area of typography.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This article is based on research supported by the NKFIH project Nr. 137963: *A magyar filozófia története a korai újkorban (1570-1710).*

REFERENCES

Balázs, M. (1996). *Early Transylvanian antitrinitarianism (1566-1571): From Servet to palaeologus*. Koerner, Baden-Baden.

Balázs, M. (2002). Bevezető. In: *Két könyv az Egyedülvaló Atyaistennek, a Fiúnak és a Szentléleknek hamis és igaz ismeretéről.* Unitárius Egyház, Kolozsvár, pp. 9–29.

Colombo, E. (2016). Antonio Possevino. *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 85. https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-possevino_(Dizionario-Biografico)/ (Accessed 26 April, 2022).

Dán, R. and Pirnát, A. (Ed.) (1982). *Antitrinitarianism in the second half of the 16th century*. E. J. Brill, Leiden and Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest.

Dóbék Á. (2014). Possevino-kutatások a római jezsuita levéltárban. *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények*, 118: 863–868.

Fraknói, V. (1902). *Egy jezsuita diplomata hazánkban*. Katolikus Szemle, Budapest.

Lukács, L. (Ed.) (1976). *Monumenta Antiquae Hungariae II. (1580–1586)*. Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, Rome.

Molnár, A. (2009). A jezsuita rend a 16. századi Magyarországon. In: *Lehetetlen küldetés? Jezsuiták Erdélyben és Felső-Magyarországon a 16-17. században*. L'Harmattan, Budapest, 23–27.

Nagy, D. (2013). Birtokmegőrzés és atyafiság a 17. századi Erdélyben. In: Bárány, A. and Papp, K. (Eds.), *Történeti Tanulmányok XXI*. Debreceni Egyetem, Debrecen, pp. 187–188.

Possevino, A. (1586a). *Notae divini verbi*. Wolrab, Poznan.

Possevino, A. (1586b). *R. P. Antonii Possevini, theologi Societatis Iesu, de sectariorum nostri temporis atheismis liber*. Birckmann and Mylius, Cologne.

Possevino (1586c).*Atheismi Lutheri, Melanchthonis, Calvini, Bezae … et aliorum nostri temporis haereticorum*. Karcan, Vilnius.

Possevino, A. (1587). *Antonii Possevini … Moscovia et alia opera de statu huius seculi, adversus Catholicae Ecclesiae hostes*. Bickmann and Mylius, Cologne.

Possevino, A. (1595). *Antonii Possevini … Moscovia et alia opera, quibus nunc recens … adiuncta sunt Martini Broniovii … Tartariae descriptio … Transsylvaniae, ac Moldaviae … descriptio Georgii a Reichersdorff … item, Georgii Werneri de admirandis Hungariae aquis hypomnemation*. Bickmann and Mylius, Cologne.

Possevino, A. (1913). *Del Commentario di Transilvania (per cura di Andrea Veress)*. Tipographia artistica Stephaneum, Budapest 1913.

Veress, E. (Ed.) (1913). *Fontes rerum Transylvanicarum II*. Athenaeum Részvénytársaság, Budapest.

Wilbur, M. (1952). *A history of unitarianism: socinianism and its antecedents*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge (MA).