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# Strangers and Pilgrims on Earth

Essays in Honour of Abraham van de Beek

*By*

E. Van der Borcht and P. van Geest



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THE TEACHING CONCERNING THE LORD'S SUPPER IN THE 1559  
HUNGARIAN REFORMED CONFESSION OF MAROSVÁSÁRHELY  
(TRANSYLVANIA)

Botond Kund Gudor and István Pásztori-Kupán

The evolution of religious identity constitutes a matter of great debate between Protestant churches and secular historians. Antithetical opinions exist in both European and Transylvanian Protestantism. While Reformed church historiographers note the appearance of a written confession of faith of a given religious denomination unambiguously as a defining moment of religious identity, secular historians often consider the *confessio fidei* only as a typical manifestation of the religious élite, i.e. as an intellectual product rather than a personal choice of identity. In this latter view the emphasis lies on the historicity of the religion and not on its spirituality or beliefs. According to the church-historical definition, the Reformation is a belief-continuum, a process of disseminating the gospel in which God is the main acting subject.<sup>1</sup> It is not accidental that the evaluation of the Reformation by secular historians is more focused on prominent personalities, whereas the Reformation of the masses is often considered as hardly being a process of careful deliberation, with doubtful depth of sincere probing. The question is unavoidable: how and when did the Calvinist Reformation manifest itself in Transylvania? Was the Helvetic trend a mere self-definition of the Protestant élite or did it represent a wider social identity?

The publication of polemical tracts and confessions of faith in the first decades of the Reformation are visible achievements of a strengthening identity. Besides the wording of the doctrines, mostly but not regularly, in such publications the external order of the church is considered as being a part of the religion. Numerous tracts and confessions of faith were intended to help the followers of the Swiss Reformation in gaining the same secular recognition as the Lutherans. Nonetheless, even within

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<sup>1</sup> See Dezső Buzogány, "A Marosvásárhelyi Hitvallás teológia- és egyháztörténeti helye [*The Theological and Church-Historiographical Place of the Confession of Marosvásárhely*]," in *Marosvásárhelyi Hitvallás [Confession of Marosvásárhely] 1559* (Kolozsvár: EREK, 2010), 5–12.

reformatory groups, the differences between teachings required clarification in order to avoid confusion. The *Confession of Marosvásárhely* (Târgu Mureş / Neumarkt) of 1559 does not contain an exposé concerning ecclesiastical order, yet it tries to promote reconciliation with the Lutheran party without abandoning its method of peaceful persuasion. Many of such Reformed publications have begun to surface again by making these documents available to international readership.<sup>2</sup>

In the relevant literature, 1564 is widely considered as the official date of the formation of the Transylvanian Reformed Church. This is due to the January 1564 Diet of Segesvár (Sighişoara / Schäßburg) which initiated the religious debate, and to the following Protestant Synod of Nagyenyed (Aiud / Straßburg am Mieresch) held in April 1564, where the formal separation of Transylvanian Lutheranism and Calvinism occurred.<sup>3</sup> The Transylvanian ethnic and religious polarisation also became evident: the Saxons (Siebenbürger Sachsen) remained Lutherans, while “the church of the Hungarians” followed the Calvinist trend, being labelled as

<sup>2</sup> German Protestants have pursued the publication of Lutheran and Helvetic confessions since 1928 in five projected volumes, edited by Heiner Faulenbach and Eberhard Busch. See Lukas Vischer, ed., *Reformiertes Zeugnis heute. Eine Sammlung neuerer Bekenntnistexte aus der reformierten Tradition* (Neukirchen – Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988); Eberhard Busch et al., *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften 1/1 1523–1534* (Neukirchen – Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2002); Georg Plasger and Mathias Freudenberg, eds., *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften. Eine Auswahl von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005). For the edition of Hungarian confessions see Mihály Bucsay and Zoltán Csepregi, “Thesen des Pfarrkonvents in Nagyvárad (Oradea / Großwardein), 1544” and “Das Bekenntnis der Synode zu Erdőd von 1545” in *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften I/2. 1535–1549*, ed. by Heiner Faulenbach and Eberhard Busch (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2006), 429–438 (Nr. 32) and 439–448 (Nr. 33). See also Bucsay and Csepregi, “Das Abendmahlsbekenntnis zu Marosvásárhely (Neumarkt), 1559,” in *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften II/1. 1559–1563*, ed. by Heiner Faulenbach and Eberhard Busch (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2009), 97–115 (Nr. 52). Bucsay and Csepregi published the rest of the Hungarian religious documents: “Confessio catholica von Eger und Debrecen, 1562,” “Confessio brevis der Synode zu Debrecen, 1567,” “Confessio Cassoviensis, 1568” and “Confessio Varadina, 1569,” in *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften II/2. 1562–1569*, ed. by Andreas Mühling and Peter Opitz (Neukirchen – Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2009), 1–165 (Nr. 58), 347–401 (Nr. 62), 403–408 (Nr. 63) and 409–414 (Nr. 64).

<sup>3</sup> János Karácsonyi, “Erdély és a kapcsolt részek vallási állapotai 1526-tól 1571-ig [The Religious Situation of Transylvania and Its Attached Parts],” in *Az erdélyi katolicizmus múltja és jelene [The Past and Present of Transylvanian Catholicism]*, (Dicsőszentmárton: Erzsébet Könyvnyomda Részvénytársaság, 1925), 40. Cf. Jenő Zoványi, *A magyarországi protestantizmus története 1895-ig [The History of Hungarian Protestantism until 1895]* (Máriabesnyő-Gödöllő: Attraktor, 2004), 49–62; Sándor Szilágyi, *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek [Records of Transylvanian Diets]* 21 vols (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1897–1898), II, 187, 227, 231 (hereafter: EOE).

“sacramentarian” or even “neo-Nestorian”. This decision, however, had been preceded by councils, confessions, meetings and rowdy political events.<sup>4</sup> The fever of religious change is marked also by the fact that even the resolutions of the Lutheran Transylvanian Diet in 1558 still ardently protested against the “sacramentarian” trend.<sup>5</sup> This was a further sign that—after Lutheranism—the Helvetic line of Reformation was also loudly rapping on the gates of politics.<sup>6</sup>

The secular rigorousness which had been guarding the Catholic–Lutheran balance became loosened after Queen Isabella’s death on 15 September 1559. The education of the young reigning prince Johann Sigismund (János Zsigmond) became the responsibility of chancellor Mihály Csáky (1505–1572) and of Giorgio Blandrata (1515–1588), the prince’s personal physician, who was a Socinian thinker. With the decline of firm political control the Transylvanian Reformation gained new momentum. Although in seventeenth-century Transylvania religious matters were mostly a question of power, at the beginning of the Reformation it was the hesitant attitude of politics and this existence of a power vacuum which unequivocally favoured the expansion and development of Protestantism. Transylvanian society, despite all appearances living amidst religious debates, communicated not only at the level of the theological élite, but also at the level of the town as a religion-choosing community that was also actively engaged in these disputes.

The most important and most sensitive topic of Protestant dialogue was the interpretation of the Holy Communion. Although it is outside the main focus of our present study, one has to observe that the main theological difference between Luther’s and Calvin’s view of the Lord’s Supper was deeply rooted in their respective Christological models: the former followed the Alexandrian, the latter the Antiochene tradition. Their answers

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<sup>4</sup> István Bitskey, *Hitviták tüzeiben [In the Crossfire of Confessional Disputes]* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1978). This work meticulously presents the atmosphere of the time, yet does not mention Marosvásárhely Confession (1559). Two subsequent Anti-Trinitarian confessions are worth mentioning, which are also linked to Marosvásárhely and Dávid Ferenc. See Jenő Zoványi, *Magyar protestáns Egyháztörténeti Lexikon [Hungarian Protestant Church-Historical Lexicon]* (Budapest: A Magyarországi Református Egyház Zsinati Irodájának sajtóosztálya, 1977). Cf. János Kénosi Tózsér and István Uzoni Fosztó, “Úrvacsoraviták 1557–1564 [Debates over the Lord’s Supper 1557–1564],” in *Az Erdélyi Unitárius Egyház története [The History of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church]* (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Unitárius Egyház, 2005), I, 133–145.

<sup>5</sup> See the decisions of the Diet between 27 March–3 April, 1558 in EOE, II, 93.

<sup>6</sup> Karácsonyi, “Erdély”, 39.

to the question whether the finite could indeed contain the infinite differed accordingly. Thus, the mode of the Lord's presence in the bread and wine was predetermined by their assumed Christological system, whether explicitly or not. Any discussion of the so-called "communion-debates" is therefore required to acknowledge this fundamental starting point, i.e. that the dispute over the Lord's Supper was ultimately a Christological issue. In this sense Transylvania was no exception. It is not at all accidental that the Helvetic trend became labelled as "neo-Nestorian".

While the Lutheran party clung to the principle of *ubiquitas* (omnipresence), the Helvetic interpretation, especially that of Heinrich Bullinger, became gradually publicized through Debrecen. It is precisely the year 1559 which proves to be the landmark in the wider acceptance of the new, Helvetic doctrine concerning the Lord's Supper. As a result, the positions of Transylvanian conservative Lutheranism were prejudiced in the most unexpected places, namely on the level of the Transylvanian theological élite, which accepted the Helvetic Reformation through German mediation. The conversions of Gáspár Heltai (Caspar Helth, 1510–1574) and Ferenc Dávid (David Hertel, 1520–1579) signalled the new changes of the Transylvanian Reformation regarding Holy Communion. The participation of the previously Lutheran Ferenc Dávid, first in the Nagyvárad (Oradea / Grosswardein) meeting (18 August 1559), and then as a supporter of the Helvetic trend at the Saxon council of Medgyes (Medias / Mediasch), corroborated the spiritual conversion which the bishop himself had also undergone.<sup>7</sup>

This, however, was not an isolated phenomenon of personal conviction change of a few. The mood swing of the people of Kolozsvár and Marosvásárhely cannot be ignored. According to historians, the debates on Holy Communion led to the mass seclusion of townspeople by means of issuing 'Holy Tickets'.<sup>8</sup> There was an immediate need for clarification in order to harmonize doctrine with practices as well as for preaching and liturgical reasons. This is precisely why the later Nagyenyed Council can be considered as an effect or consequence, through which a formal constitutional framework for the emerging Reformed Church was sought. It is therefore the confession of faith of the earlier (1 November 1559) Council held in the

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<sup>7</sup> Kénosi—Uzoni, "Úrvacsoraviták", 133–145, 140.

<sup>8</sup> Kénosi Tőzsér János—Uzoni Fosztó István, "Úrvacsoraviták", 141.



castle of Marosvásárhely,<sup>9</sup> which unequivocally signals the acceptance and the spread of the Helvetic religious identity in Transylvania, influenced at the time by Bullinger. This was prefigured by Melanchthon's "media sententia" represented by Mátyás Dévai Bíró (†1545) and István Szegedi Kis (1505–1572), exemplifying an intermediary approach in which the signs of the Holy Communion—the body and blood of Christ—are present in the promise and not physically. Melanchthon's Transylvanian and Hungarian disciples clarified their views in Marosvásárhely, leaning towards the Helvetic approach, as a consequence of the wider European debate over the issue.<sup>10</sup> One needs to bear in mind that the ideas presented in the *Consensus Tigurinus* of 1549 between Calvin and Bullinger had undoubtedly reached the Transylvanian theologians. Furthermore, Melanchthon's irenic position may well have prevented the Hungarian Reformers to move towards Zwingli's more radical doctrine.<sup>11</sup>

The confession of faith this article discusses here can be considered as the joint *confessio fidei* of Transylvanian and Hungarian religious intellectuals, including Ferenc Dávid, Péter Méliusz Juhász (1532–1572) and other signatories who played key roles within the Hungarian Reformation. Furthermore, it is also the expression of a newer religious identity of Transylvanian Hungarians (and Germans becoming Hungarians). Méliusz, a preacher from Debrecen also contributed by continuing the work of his predecessor, the Transylvanian Márton Kálmáncsehi Sánta. Kolozsvár and Marosvásárhely offered the opportunity, whilst Méliusz's theological training proved suitable for the purpose. The accuracy of the German translation, which was published in 1563 in Heidelberg (in the same year as the *Heidelberg Catechism*) can be attributed to Ferenc Dávid.<sup>12</sup> In order

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<sup>9</sup> See Vilmos Fraknói, "A marosvásárhelyi hitvallás [*The Confession of Faith of Marosvásárhely*]," in *Magyar könyvszemle november–december* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1878), 277–282; Kiss Áron, *A XVI. században tartott magyar református zsinatok végzései [Decrees of Hungarian Reformed Synods Held in the 16th Century]* (Budapest: Magyarországi Protestáns Egylet, 1881), 44–53. Cf. Gábor Incze, "Az Urnac vaczoraiairól [*On the Lord's Supper*]," in *A reformáció és ellenreformáció korának evangéliumi keresztyén egyházi írói [The Evangelical Christian Church Writers of the Age of Reformation and Counter-Reformation]* (Budapest: Incze Gábor, 1938). Most recently Buzogány, "Marosvásárhelyi hitvallás", 45–56.

<sup>10</sup> Buzogány, "Marosvásárhelyi hitvallás", 20.

<sup>11</sup> Buzogány, "Marosvásárhelyi hitvallás", 39.

<sup>12</sup> *Beschluss und Form der Lehre vom Testament und Abendmal unsers Seligmachers Jesu Christi*, (Heidelberg: Johannes Mayer, 1563). Cf. Kathona Géza, "Méliusz Péter és életműve [Péter Méliusz and his Life-work]," in *A II. Helvét Hitvallás Magyarországon és Méliusz*

to fulfil his aim, Méliusz contacted Ferenc Dávid with the help of Gergely Molnár, the rector from Kolozsvár.<sup>13</sup>

The frequency of Transylvanian confessions of faith during this period betrays the intention to settle the identity-crisis of the new community, shaken by the conflict between Lutheran and Helvetic Reformation. The debate in Marosvásárhely was the moment when the Hungarian Reformed Church, following the Helvetic line, separated itself doctrinally from the Lutheran Church of Transylvanian Germans (Saxons). Both the place of venue and the phrasing of the confession are significant. There are indications that, while in 1552 the still mostly Catholic magistrates of the town might have banished the Evangelical preacher,<sup>14</sup> they were instead actively taking part in the debates caused by the Reformation.<sup>15</sup> It would become one of the strongholds of Helvetic Protestantism, as a result of the work started in 1557 by the preacher Máté Göcsi (†1585).<sup>16</sup> The continued success of Anti-Trinitarians made the Reformers in Transylvania and Hungary determined to create a common theological platform. Marosvásárhely (originally Székelyvásárhely) thus became the starting point of the Reformation of the Székely people.<sup>17</sup> The Helvetic Reformation of larger Transylvanian towns occurred between 1552–1559, creating an important theological basis for the continuation of Protestant mission towards inner Transylvania, i.e. Székely Land.

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*életműve* [The Second Helvetic Confession in Hungary and Méliusz's Life-work] (Budapest: MREZS, 1967), 143–144, 201.

<sup>13</sup> From the Saxon historian Schaesaeus. See Jakab Elek, *Dávid Ferenc emlékezete* [The Memory of Dávid Ferenc] (Budapest: Magyar Királyi Egyetemi Könyvnyomda, 1879), 41.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. József Pokoly, *Az erdélyi református egyház története* [The History of the Transylvanian Reformed Church] (Budapest: EREK, 1904), I, 77. Cf. Zoványi, *A magyarországi protestantizmus története*, 28.

<sup>15</sup> See “Borsos Sebestyén Krónikája: Világnak lett dolgairól írott krónika [Written Chronicle about the Events of the World],” in Mikó Imre, *Erdélyi történeti adatok* [Historical Data of Transylvania] (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, 1855), I, 173: “[on 11 August 1556] they were in a great toss about choosing a religion, because almost half of the town, its majority had accepted the new heresy, that of Blandrata”.

<sup>16</sup> József Koncz, “Göcsi Máté, the Very First Minister of the Reformed Church in Marosvásárhely (1552–1585), the Third Bishop in Transylvania (1579–1585),” in *Marosvásárhely és vártemploma* [Marosvásárhely and Its Fortress Church], ed. by Endre Medvigy (Budapest: Ráday Gyűjtemény, 1990), 80. Cf. Mihály Balázs, “Toroczky Máté Vásárhelyen [Toroczky Máté in Vásárhely],” *Keresztény Magvető* 2002/2–3. (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Unitárius Egyház, 2002) see in [http://kermagv.unitarius.com/regi/magvetok/2002/2002\\_23/2002\\_23\\_balazsm3.htm](http://kermagv.unitarius.com/regi/magvetok/2002/2002_23/2002_23_balazsm3.htm) (accessed: 2 September 2010).

<sup>17</sup> Géza Nagy, “Méliusz”, *Kálvinista jellemképek* [Calvinistic Characters] (Kolozsvár: EREK, 1930), 22.

The fact that the *Confession of Marosvásárhely* had been drawn up in Hungarian (and not in Latin, as one could have easily expected at the time) signifies not only a theological, but also a cultural-linguistic or even ethnic separation from the German-speaking Lutherans of Transylvania. Concerning its theological content it is hardly a coincidence that its German translation was sent to Heidelberg, where it was published in 1563.<sup>18</sup> In 1559 Zacharias Ursinus (1534–1584), the Reformed theologian and Catechism-writer in Heidelberg followed the Helvetic Reformation. In 1561, Frederick III (1559–1576) also decided in favour of the Reformed party at the conclusion of a local theological dispute, which had commenced at the beginning of his reign. The publication of the *Marosvásárhely Confession* and of the *Heidelberg Catechism* within the same year in Heidelberg has a double significance: it shows both the urgent need for instructional argumentation and evinces the clear spiritual connection between geographically distant, yet theologically close bodies of Reformation.

The 1559 council of Marosvásárhely represents a remarkably important moment within the history of the Transylvanian Reformed Church. It is understandable that 1 November 1559 is considered the date of birth of Transylvanian Helvetic Protestantism, although the formal establishment of the Transylvanian Reformed Church took place only in 1564. The *Marosvásárhely Confession* became a basic document,<sup>19</sup> creating a spiritual unity between Transylvania and Tiszántúl (Debrecen and its environs). Putting it into the wider perspective of the famous Reformation documents, it is certainly connected not only with Calvin's *Institutes* of 1536, but also with the *Heidelberg Catechism* of 1563, which was rapidly accepted and used ever since by all Hungarian Reformed communities.

The intention of the council of Nagyvárad (Oradea / Grosswardein) held in August 1559 was to unify the Upper-Hungarian and Transylvanian Helvetic Protestantism. This "small council" ought to be regarded as an important precedent leading up to the council and *Confession of Marosvásárhely*.<sup>20</sup> The text was printed in 1559 in Kolozsvár in Heltai Gáspár's

<sup>18</sup> Zoványi, *A magyarországi protestantizmus története*, 60.

<sup>19</sup> See Gábor Sipos, *Az erdélyi református egyház múltjából* [From the Past of the Transylvanian Reformed Church]. [http://misszio.reformatus.hu/cm/cd/o2\\_erdely\\_tortenete/az\\_erdelyi\\_reformatus\\_egyhaz\\_multjabol\\_erdelyi\\_reformatus\\_egyhazkerulet\\_tortenete.doc](http://misszio.reformatus.hu/cm/cd/o2_erdely_tortenete/az_erdelyi_reformatus_egyhaz_multjabol_erdelyi_reformatus_egyhazkerulet_tortenete.doc) (accessed: 2 September 2010).

<sup>20</sup> "A kolozsvári egyház lelkészeinek és az erdélyi egyházakban helyesen tanító több lelkészeknek az Urvasoráról szóló helyes értelmök védelme [Defence of the Right Interpretation of the Lord's Supper of the Ministers from Kolozsvár and of More Correctly Teaching Ministers within the Transylvanian Churches]," in Kiss, *A XVI. században tartott*

printing house, who labelled it as written by “the Christian teachers from all over Hungary and Transylvania”, i.e. as being the work of preachers gathered from two separate countries.<sup>21</sup> The *Marosvásárhely Confession* represents the religious reconciliation of two Hungarian political entities, which for the moment settled the tensions between the Swiss and German trends satisfactorily, and attempted to offer an integrated, Transylvanian interpretation of the Lord’s Supper with a clear Helvetic emphasis.

In 1559 the council of Marosvásárhely had three achievements: first, that the two former theological opponents in questions regarding the Holy Trinity, i.e. Dávid and Méliusz were temporarily reconciled. Secondly, that the Lutheranism of Dávid and of Heltai was replaced by a Helvetic interpretation of the Lord’s Supper. Thirdly, the Transylvanian Helvetic Protestantism brought about a theological harmony in support of the new confessional identity.

The community of Hungarian ministers was united in defending the Helvetic doctrine, enabling itself to embrace the Reformation of Heidelberg and its Catechism a few years later. As recently observed, the teachings of the *Heidelberg Catechism* and of the *Marosvásárhely Confession* concerning the Lord’s Supper are consonant as of “having been cut off the same root”.<sup>22</sup>

In light of the above, the question of religious identity in Transylvania requires a broader interpretation. The fact that towns and regions were seeking for an identity should not be ignored. The formulation of the confession together with the clarification of differences between the opinions of the élite undoubtedly reached its aim. Nonetheless, the confession of faith bears the expression of the masses’ religious identity by the élite and on the one hand provides a starting point for the Protestant mission, whilst on the other hand promotes an active theological solidarity with Protestant Europe.

The *Marosvásárhely Confession* of 1559 is a unique achievement within the history of Reformation for various reasons. First, it was written and published in Hungarian and not in Latin, which betrays a clear reformatory intention, i.e. to make the Bible as well as the credal statements available to the public in their native tongues, thus integrating them into the

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*magyar református zsinatok végzései*, 47. Cf. Pokoly, *Az Erdélyi Református Egyház története*, I, 126.

<sup>21</sup> Tibor Klaniczai, “Hungária és Pannónia a Reneszánsz korban [Hungary and Pannonia in the Age of Renaissance],” *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 91–92 (1987–1988), 6.

<sup>22</sup> Buzogány, “Marosvásárhelyi hitvallás”, 40.

theological discussion. Furthermore, it attempted to avoid any separation between the various trends of Reformation already present in Transylvania. Although its function was to reconcile the mainly Helvetic oriented factions with each other, it also attempted (albeit unsuccessfully) to mediate between the Swiss and Lutheran teachings about the Lord's Supper.

The main authors of this important historical-theological documents were Ferenc Dávid and Gáspár Heltai from Transylvania as well as Péter Méliusz Juhász and a few of his fellow-ministers from the region of Tiszántúl in Royal Hungary. The contribution of Méliusz must have been significant, since quite a few formulae within the *Confession* are very similar to some of the statements in his sermons uttered at Debrecen or in his published works. The *Marosvásárhely Confession* as a common achievement of various Hungarian ministers strengthened and furthered the tradition of theological collaboration amongst spiritual leaders who were living in remote areas of the one-time Hungarian Kingdom, even after its collapse which had taken place earlier, during the same century.

The theological input of this *Confession* is that it follows the more irenic and flexible line of Melancthon's teaching concerning the Lord's Supper. It is a clear sign that by the middle of the sixteenth century the Transylvanian Hungarian Reformers came to accept the Helvetic and Melancthonian interpretation. The following Hungarian–English bilingual edition is accompanied by annotating footnotes in order to explain the most important aspects of textual tradition and theological message. The Hungarian text follows the 1559 edition of Gáspár Heltai, with some minor orthographical adjustments.

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*Az Úrnak vacsorájáról való közönséges keresztyéni vallás*

Melyet a keresztyén Tanítók mind egész Magyarországból, s mind Erdélyből a Vásárhelyi szent Zsinatban tettek, és kiadták a Krisztus Jézus Szentegyházának építésére. M.D.LIX. Esztendőben, Mindszent Napján.

*A common Christian confession concerning the Lord's Supper*<sup>23</sup>

Composed in the Holy Synod of Marosvásárhely and published for the edification of the Holy Church of Christ by the Christian teachers from all over Hungary and Transylvania in the year 1559, on All Saints' Day.

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<sup>23</sup> The present annotated translation of István Pásztori-Kupán should be considered as being the definitive one in comparison to the text in James T. Dennison, Jr., ed., *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation: Volume 2, 1552–1566* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010), 134–139, which was published with a few errors and lacunae due to the inaccessibility of some relevant sources at the time.

## Table (cont.)

<p><i>A Krisztus Jézusnak testével és vérével való igaz Részesülésről, az Úrnak vacsorájában</i> Micsoda az Úrnak vacsorája?</p>	<p><i>Concerning the true partaking in the flesh and blood of Christ Jesus in the Lord's Supper</i> What is the Lord's Supper?</p>
<p>Az Úrnak vacsorája (amint szent Pál szól) a Krisztus Jézus Testével és Vérével való igaz részesülés, mely részesülés léssen a kenyérnek és a bornak vevőjétől, hitnek általa, mely hit az ígéletben a Krisztus Jézust hozzá kapcsolja, és teljes reménységgel és bizodalommal ragaszkodván ez ígérethez: „az én Testem tiérettetek halálra adatik, az én Vérem tiérettetek kiontatik”, részesül a Krisztus Jézussal és minden javával, melyeket szent halálával és vére kiontásával szerzett, tudniillik az örök boldogsággal.</p>	<p>The Lord's Supper (as Saint Paul says) is the true partaking in the flesh and blood of Christ, from the side of the recipient of the bread and wine through faith, a faith which connects Christ Jesus to him/her in the promise, whilst [the recipient] clings to this promise with full hope and confidence: “My body is given over to death for your sake, my blood is shed for your sake”<sup>24</sup>—[which means, that the believer] partakes in Christ Jesus and in all his benefits, that is, in the eternal happiness, which he [Christ] procured by his sacred death and the shedding of his blood.<sup>25</sup></p>
<p>Miképpen léssen ez a részesülés? Léssen igaz hitnek általa. Mert miképpen az ígéletet hittel vesszük, azonképpen az ígéletnek álatyát [lényegét]<sup>26</sup> és</p>	<p>How does this partaking take place? It happens through true faith. For in the manner in which we receive the promise by faith, in the same fashion</p>

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Lk. 22:19–20.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. with Question 75 of the Heidelberg Catechism: “How are you admonished and assured in the Lord's Supper, that you are a partaker of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross, and of all his benefits? *Answer:* Thus: that Christ has commanded me and all believers, to eat of this broken bread, and to drink of this cup, in remembrance of him, adding these promises: first, that his body was offered and broken on the cross for me, and his blood shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes, the bread of the Lord broken for me, and the cup communicated to me; and further, that he feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life, with his crucified body and shed blood, as assuredly as I receive from the hands of the minister, and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, as certain signs of the body and blood of Christ.” <http://www.ccel.org/creeds/heidelberg-cat.html> (accessed: 2 September 2010).

<sup>26</sup> The Hungarian term “állat” in this case does not mean “animal”, but rather “állapot”, i.e. “state” or, as in most of the similar cases in the relevant sixteenth century theological literature, “essence” or “substance”.

Table (*cont.*)

gyümölcsét, mely a Krisztus Jézusnak érettünk megtöretett Teste és bűnünk bocsánatáért kiontatott Vére, hittel kell vennünk. És ez mi módon legyen, rövid beszéddel így magyarázzuk meg.

Az Isten akarván beteljesíteni minden ő ígéretit, melyeket eleitől fogva az emberi nemzetnek tett vala, adá érettünk az ő Fiát. És az emberi testet érettünk felvén, halált szenvedé a mi üdvösségünkért. Mind megtestesülése mind halála miérettünk lón, és ennek minden haszna miénk lón, úgyannyira, hogy az ő Testének felvétele lón oka, hogy a mi testünk mindenestől fogva el ne vesszne. Halála és feltámadása lón oka, hogy örökké éljünk. Testesülése azért, halála és feltámadása nekünk örök életünk.

De hogy ennek a jótételnek emlékezeti a mi elménkben és lelkünkben ki ne esnéjék, szerzé a végvacsorát a Krisztus, melybe külső jegyek által emlékeztet az ő jótéteményiről, és egyszersmind, hitnek általa, e jókat közli az ő híveivel, nemkülönben mint közölte a végvacsorán az Apostolokkal.

we also have to receive by faith<sup>27</sup> the essence and fruit of promise, which is the Body of Christ Jesus broken for our sake and his Blood shed for the forgiveness of our sin. How this happens, we shall explain in a short discourse, as follows.<sup>28</sup>

God, willing to fulfil all his promises he had made to the human race from the beginning, gave his Son for our sake. And taking on the human flesh for us, he suffered death for our salvation. Both his incarnation and death happened for our sake and all its benefits became ours to the extent that the assumption of his Body became the reason for our own body not to perish altogether. His death and resurrection became the reason for us to live eternally. Therefore, his incarnation, death, and resurrection are our eternal life.

Nevertheless, in order that the remembrance of this benefaction not to fall out from our minds and souls, Christ instituted the last supper, in which he reminds [us] of his benefactions through external signs, and, simultaneously, he communicates these goods to his believers through faith, in the same manner as he communicated them to the Apostles during the Last Supper.

<sup>27</sup> See e.g. the following passage from Chapter 21 of the *Second Helvetic Confession*: "By this sacred rite the Lord [...] feeds us with his flesh, and gives us his blood to drink, which, being received spiritually by true faith, nourish us to eternal life". <http://www.ccel.org/creeds/helvetic.htm> (accessed: 2 September 2010).

<sup>28</sup> This and other similar signs suggest that the *Confession* may well have emerged from sermons concerning the Lord's Supper.



















