

Theses of the Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation

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HUNGARIAN USE OF WRITING IN TRNAVA IN THE 16TH CENTURY

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I. Antecedents of Research

Trnava (Nagyszombat/Tirnau/Tirnavia) has already played an important role in the history of the region centuries before the battle of Mohács. Due to the town's favorable geographic location, Trnava grew a significant trading city in the Middle Ages, as it was a free royal city paying no tax and customs, so many people moved into the settlement. The population growth of Trnava was further increasing after 1526, when many noblemen, craftsmen and a number of merchants fled from the parts of Hungary under Ottoman rule. The archival sources show that Trnava was the winner of the process when Hungarian settlements were restructured and the hierarchy of towns was reorganized in consequence of the defeat at Mohács. The city became a regional center beside Bratislava (Pozsony/Pressburg/Posonium) due to being near to Vienna (Bécs/Wien/Vindobona), having a strong economy and playing a central role in the hierarchy of the catholic church. Thus Trnava as a regional center hosted events having an effect on the whole country as diets and councils.

The interest in the history of Trnava dates back to the turn of the 19th and the 20th century. The first summary of the history of the city – including the history of the Early New Ages – was written by József Marton¹ in 1895 and a year later by János Zöld.² From the Slovak point of view, Štefan Kazimír³ and Jozef Šimončič⁴ were engaged in research of the history of Trnava in the second half of the 20th century. In recent times József Bessenyei carried out researches into the history of the city in the 16th century writing his book „*Menekültek*”⁵ („*Refugees*”) and many studies on this topic.⁶

¹MARTON József: *Nagyszombat*. Budapest: Légrády Nyomda, 1895.

²ZÖLD János: *Nagyszombat szabad királyi város történeti múltja*. Nagyszombat, 1896.

³KAZIMÍR, Štefan: *Účtovné knihy mesta Trnavy zo 16. a 17. storočia*. In: Slovenská archivistika. 1969/1. sz. 125–136. KAZIMÍR, Štefan: *Adalék a XVI. és XVII. századbeli árak és bérek fejlődéséhez*. In: Történelmi Szemle. 1976/1–2. sz. 167–210. KAZIMÍR, Štefan: *Nagyszombat szociális – gazdasági struktúrája a késői feudalizmus korában*. In: Világtörténet. 1976. 26. sz. 69–111. KAZIMÍR, Štefan: *Magyarország külkereskedelmi forgalmának színvonala a XVI. században*. In: Agrártörténeti Szemle. 1978. 20. sz. 382–394.

⁴ŠIMONČIČ, Jozef: *Štátny okresný archív v Trnave. Sprivodca po fondoch a zbierkach*. Bratislava, 1978. ŠIMONČIČ, Jozef: *Trnava okres a mesto*. Bratislava, 1980. *Dejiny Trnavy*. Zost.: ŠIMONČIČ, Jozef – WATZKA, Jozef. Bratislava: Obzor, 1988. ŠIMONČIČ, Jozef: *Mojej Trnave – K dejinám Trnavy a okolia*. Trnava: Vydal B-print, 1998.

⁵BESSENYEI József: *Menekültek. A kereskedelem helyzete Magyarországon 1526 után, Bornemissza Tamás és a budai menekültek működésének tükrében*. MTA Doktori Értekezés. Miskolc–Budapest, 2007.

⁶BESSENYEI József: *Baráti Fábián nagyszombati kereskedő kapcsolatrendszere*. In: *Urbs: Magyar Várostartörténeti Évkönyv 3*. Szerk.: Á. VARGA László. Budapest: Budapest Főváros Levéltára, 2008. 293–311. BESSENYEI József: *A nagyszombati Sánta Ambrus működése a Baráti Fábiánnal alakított kompániában és a családi kötelékben*. In: *Auxilium historiae: Tanulmányok a hetvenesztendős Bertényi Iván tiszteletére*. Szerk.: KÖRMENDI Tamás – THOROCZKAY Gábor. Budapest: ELTE Bölcsészettudományi Kar, 2009. 63–73. BESSENYEI József: *Szeged, Várad, Debrecen, Nagyszombat. Változások a Magyar Királyság kereskedelmi rendszerében Mohács után, különös tekintettel a hitelezésre*. In: *Tiszteletkőr. Történeti tanulmányok Draskóczy István egyetemi tanár 60. születésnapjára*. Budapest: ELTE Eötvös K.,

György Granasztói worked with the tax directories of the town kept systematically from 1579.⁷ Using the same sources, Mária Bott'ánková wrote an excellent work on the topography of Trnava.⁸ Gábor Németh worked with and published the testaments from Trnava in the 16th and 17th century.⁹ Zsuzsanna J. Újváry analysed the life and activity of the wealthiest citizen in the 16th century, Sebestyén Thököly, and drew a picture of the struggle of the Catholic Church and Protestantism of the time.¹⁰

Slovak historians started to publish the particularly rich missives collection of the Archive of Trnava (Štátny Archív v Bratislave, Pobočka Trnava). Branislav Varsik published the earliest Czech and Slovak letters in a critical edition in 1956,¹¹ the first German missives' regestas until 1550 are to be read in the *Deutschsprachige Handschriften in Slowakischen Archiven. Von Mittelalter bis zur Frühen Neuzeit*.¹² Some Hungarian letters from Trnava from the 16th century were also published by Gábor Döbrentei in the series of *Régi magyar nyelvemlékek* in the middle of the 19th century.¹³

In the Archive of Trnava, there is a rich and partly published group of documents from the 16th century, which gave a firm basis to the start of our research and also holds a number of further sources and possibilities to achieve our principal aims.

2012. 199–208. BESSENYEI József: *Nagyszombat a Mohács utáni évtizedekben*. In: Urbs: Magyar Várostartörténeti Évkönyv 7. Szerk.: KENYERES István. Budapest: Budapest Főváros Levéltára, 2012. 253–262.

⁷GRANASZTÓI György: *A barokk győzelme Nagyszombatban. Tér és társadalom 1579–1711*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2004.

⁸BOTT'ÁNKOVÁ, Mária: *K topografii mesta Trnavy v 16. storočí*. In: Trnava, okres a mesto. Štúdie. Zost.: Jozef ŠIMONČIČ. Bratislava, 1980. 61–146. BOTT'ÁNKOVÁ, Mária: *Adalékok a 16. századi Nagyszombat helyrajzához*. In: Történelmi Szemle. 1981/2. sz. 262–267.

⁹NÉMETH Gábor: *Nagyszombati testamentumok a XV–XVII. századból*. Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, 1995.

¹⁰J. ÚJVÁRY Zsuzsanna: *Katolikus papot vagy prédikátort? (Nagyszombat város küzdelme a protestáns hitért az 1570-es években)* In: A Ráday gyűjtemény évkönyve 7. Budapest: [Ráday Gyűjtemény], 1994. 101–111.

¹¹VARSIK, Branislav: *Slovenské Listy a Listiny z XV. A XVI. Storočia I*. Bratislava, 1956.

¹²*Deutschsprachige Handschriften in slowakischen Archiven. Von Mittelalter bis zur Frühen Neuzeit*. Herausgegeben von Jörg MEIER, Ilpo Tapani PIIRAINEN und Klaus-Peter WEGERA. Band 1: Westslowakei. Walter de Gruyter-Berlin-New York, 2008.

¹³*Régi magyar nyelvemlékek*. Szerk.: DÖBRENTEI Gábor. Buda: Magyar Királyi Egyetem, 2, 3. köt. 1840, 1842.

II. Research Aims

During my research, I relied on the scholarly achievements of historians, linguists, and literary historians and aspired to achieve three fundamental aims.

1. Studying the beginning of Hungarian official use of writing on the basis of the earliest Hungarian documents in the Archive of Trnava.
2. Placing Trnava in the network of Hungarian settlements in the 16th century and follow the changes of its position. Analysing the citizens of Trnava with special respect to the political and economic elite. Exploring the most frequent topics discussed in the letters.
3. Publishing the earliest Hungarian letters from Trnava in a critical edition.

The majority of the letters were addressed to the judge or the town council so that I could follow the beginning of Hungarian official use of writing. In the first place, I focused on the historico-cultural, social- and political historical effects that helped to produce the first Hungarian official documents. In the first major unit of my work, I analysed the use of Hungarian language in the three different parts of the country focusing primarily on specialities and comparison. I examined in detail the official use of writing in Trnava and the point under what circumstances came the different kinds of documents (missiles, minutes, witness evidence, last wills, documents of guilds, delegates' reports) into life. Actually, I analysed the question about our national language studying when, why and in what kind of cases it first appeared. In addition to this, I tried to find out the representation of different ethnicities in the proportion of the town's official documents and study the effect of the changes in this proportion during the 16th century.

My second demanding task was to place Trnava in the network of Hungarian cities in the 16th century with the help of my sources, and to follow the changes of its position during the century and to reveal the causes of these processes. I paid special attention to the events having an effect on the whole country and taking place in Trnava, to the citizens – appearing most often in the letters – life and activity, to the information network of the town, to the spreading of Reformation and the fight between the Catholic Church and Protestantism, and to the most frequent topics appearing in the missiles.

My third fundamental aim was to publish the earliest (1527–1560) Hungarian letters from Trnava in a critical edition with philological and factual notes so that the missiles could serve as a basis of further research.

III. Method of Analysis and Sources

There are numerous published and unpublished sources to study the beginning of Hungarian official use of writing as well as Trnava's and its inhabitants' history in the 16th century.

Some of the Hungarian missives from Trnava were first published in 1840 in the series of '*Régi magyar nyelvemlékek*' (*Earliest Hungarian Written Records*) volume 2 and 3 by Gábor Döbrentei. These letters have a special value as some of them have already disappeared from the archive but the transcriptions are available for the posterity.

The earliest Slovak and Czech missives were published more than a hundred years later, in 1956 by Branislav Varsik. This work is of primary importance from my point of view since according to the use of languages that time it was common to write an answer to a Hungarian letter in another language, thus for example in Czech or Slovak. Moreover, Varsik's book also contains the missives written by the town, as these letters have disappeared since then. The earliest German letters' registars are also published until 1550.

Tax registers from 1529 are also of high value. These documents were systematically kept from 1579 until 1711 with the same standpoints and arose historians' interest already at the end of the 19th century. The first tax registers from Trnava were published by László Fejérpataky in 1885,¹⁴ then Štefan Kazimír worked with these documents when studying the changes in the incomes and prices of the 16–17th century. The tax registers are also the basis of Mária Bott'ánková's study on the topography of Trnava in the 16th century, and György Granasztói's work on the social space and society in the city in the Early New Ages.

The registers of the thirtieth customs duty help defining Trnava's economic position. These documents from 1542 were studied and published by Győző Ember,¹⁵ the documents of the trading guild were studied and published by Emil Békési.¹⁶ Gábor Németh published the testaments of Trnava in the 16–17th century. There are only 37 last wills from the 16th century; notwithstanding these documents are primary sources of economic and social life as well as of material culture. Council registers (*Liber protocollum fassionalis* 1546–1607), registers of debts (*Obligationes* 1529–1795), official papers of citizens (*Deputationalia* 1530–1699), registers of testimonies (*Inquisitiones* 1540–1599) and a number of other documents are unpublished but relevant sources from our point of view.

¹⁴FEJÉRPATAKY László: *Magyarországi városok régi számadáskönyvei*. Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1885.

¹⁵EMBER Győző: *Az újkori magyar közigazgatás története Mohácstól a török kiűzéséig*. Budapest: Budapesti Irodalmi Intézet, 1946. EMBER Győző: *Külkereskedelmünk történetéhez a XVI. században*. Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó, 1958. EMBER Győző: *Magyarország nyugati külkereskedelme a XVI. század közepén*. Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó, 1988.

¹⁶BÉKÉSI Emil: *A nagyszombati kalmár cég szabályai 1547. és 1604-ből és régi jegyzőkönyve 1556–1651-ből*. In: *Történelmi Tár*. 1883. 169–176.

IV. New Scientific Results

The discussed documents are heterogenous and can be studied from many standpoints. According to my aims, I divided my work into three main parts. In the first one I focused on presenting the beginning of Hungarian official use of writing, in the second I studied the new pieces of information about the history of 16th century Trnava, the lives and activity of citizens frequently mentioned in the documents, the themes of the letters, while in the third part we published the earliest missives from the Archive of Trnava.

When analysing the beginning of Hungarian official use of writing I demonstrated that in those letters which are written to the judge or to the city council of Trnava our national language was used in cases of a private character. The topics of these missives are most often debts of a little sum of money, guarantee, threatening with arrest, the short-term and little sum of loans and exchanging harsh words. Studying not only Hungarian but also German, Slovak and Czech missives I came to the point, that national languages were used for the first time in private cases and cases of a minor importance from the point of view of the whole country. Hungarian language appeared in other types of documents of the Archive just decades later and was generally used only at the end of the 16th century.

In the second major part, I analysed Trnava's role in the network of Hungarian settlements and how it changed during the 16th century. The basis of my findings was analysing the activity and network of the town's elite, presenting the events taking place in Trnava and having an effect on the country as a whole, and illustrating the town's information network. I found that the numerous refugees escaping from the Ottoman expansion and settling in Trnava substantially contributed to the economic strengthening of the town using their capital relations. The town grew into the second biggest settlement – behind Bratislava – from an economic point of view during the 16th century, giving a basis to the cultural and ecclesiastical flowering under archbishop Péter Pázmány in the next century. Fastening the town walls, increasing the number of guards, building the strong fortress Nové Zámky to protect the region, and being tolerant of citizens belonging to different ethnic groups all contributed to the growth of the population in Trnava. The town became a cathedral city as the archbishop of Esztergom (Strigoniensis) moved there in the middle of the century, this action also contributed to the town's leading position. I analysed this process step by step demonstrating that moving to the town was not a single action but a long series of events resulting in the archbishop of Esztergom spending most of his time in Trnava.

The basis of our research, the collection of 16th-century missives from Trnava is, first of all, a rich source of everyday life. The letters are mainly missives trying to find an answer to problems of its citizens, but there are a number of documents dealing with cases affecting the whole country as well. The missives in connection with debt – especially if the debt was of a bigger amount or it was

hard to collect it – illustrate the circumstances of the origin of so-called „round” debts (when there was a chain of debtors and debts), missiles about standing security for somebody such as the testaments, put a light on the connection of debtors and those who stand security for the debt. Studying the circumstances of arrest I came to the conclusion that irrespective of whether somebody was involved in the debt or not or just lived in the same settlement as the debtor, they could have been arrested. Social or economic status, sex did not count, however, administered punishments were relatively rare, and the way people were kept suggests that in the majority of the cases arrest can be considered as a threat.

Documents dealing with slander, libel, and physical insult illustrate the difficulties in the process of administration, unsettled financial cases, causes and circumstances of violent actions. They serve as a valuable source of many topics from being in low spirits to not paying the thirties customs duty. I demonstrated that the sum of money to be paid if committing different types of crimes according to *Tripartitum* (code of law in Hungary being published in 1517) did not prevent people from perpetrating them.

Missiles written by women are of special value as there were only a minority of women who could read and write in the 16th century. When studying their letters and other types of documents in connection with them, it is clear that women worked not only at home doing housework and bringing up children, but they also played a significant role in production, trading and managing the estate. Wives substituted their husbands for their professions if it was necessary, looked after lands, ran guilds, were in charge of administration; suggesting that spouses worked together in everyday life as well. Women were often heard as witnesses on the court their testimonies were equivalent to men.

There were three diets (1535, 1545, 1547) and numerous councils (provincial council in 1561, diocesan councils in 1560, 1562, 1564, 1566) held in Trnava demonstrating that the town was a centre of the region. It often lended different kinds of special objects as well as craftsmen to settlements nearby. The town's leading position was confirmed by an extensive and widespread information network. I tried to lay the stress on new pieces of information from the letters, which usually meant different bits of new findings of everyday life in the 16th century.

We published the earliest – until 1550 they belong to the earliest Hungarian linguistic records – Hungarian missiles from Trnava in a critical edition, enclosing those letters which cannot be found in the archive now, but have already been published. I compared and modified the already published letters to their editions, marked the differences in the transcriptions and wrote explanatory and philological notes. As a conclusion, I can state that I analysed and published a new group of documents from the 16th century from the Archive of Trnava thus contributing to further research. The systematic publication of the earliest Hungarian missiles from Trnava can be continued after 1560 as well as the analysis of the studied documents from the different point of views. I hope that historians and literary historians can benefit from our work in the future.

V. Publications on the Topic

1. BAKONYI Zsuzsanna: *Nagyszombat város követei az 1567-es pozsonyi országgyűlésen*. Fons 2015/4. sz. 429–447.
2. BAKONYI Zsuzsanna: *Majd' három évtized a város élén: Kalmár Imre Nagyszombat bírása (1547–1576)*. In: *Serpentarius viginti quatuor stellis decoratus: Baráti ajándék Farkas Gábor Farkasnak*. Szerk.: EKLER Péter – VARGA Bernadett, Budapest, 2015, 7–8.
3. BAKONYI Zsuzsanna: *Arestatio: hatékony fenyegetés vagy végrehajtott büntetés? Esettanulmány a 16. századi nagyszombati misszilisek tükrében*. Tavaszi Szél 2015. konferenciakötet IV. 337–350.
4. BAKONYI Zsuzsanna: *Érdekszövetség alispán és város között. Galántai Esterházy Ferenc levelei Nagyszombat városának (1578–1599)*. In: *Acta Acad. Agriensis, Sectio Historiae XLII*. 2014. 129–142.
5. BAKONYI Zsuzsanna: *Nők a nagyszombati gazdaságban. A 16. századi nagyszombati misszilisek tanúsága*. In: *Micae Mediaevales II. Fiatal történészek dolgozatai a középkori Magyarországról és Európáról*. Szerk.: PÉTREFI Bence – VADAS András – Mikó Gábor – Jakab Péter. ELTE BTK Történelemtudományok Doktori Iskola: Budapest, 2012. 177–187.
6. BAKONYI Zsuzsanna: *Adalék a 16. századi írásbeliségünkhöz (1541–1552 közötti magyar nyelvű misszilisek Nagyszombatból)*. Gesta, Miskolci Történész Folyóirat. Miskolc, 2005. I–II. 3–7.
7. BAKONYI Zsuzsanna: *Nagyszombat felemelkedésének gazdasági okai*. MicroCAD2002 Nemzetközi Tudományos Konferencia. Miskolc, 2002. 1–6.