

# Stephen Kis of Szeged

## A Baranyan Reformer with a European Influence

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### Summary

*The introductory part of this article offers a concise overview of the Reformation in Baranya and Slavonia in the sixteenth century while also depicting the role of the reformer Stephen Kis of Szeged in the development and institutionalization of the Baranyan diocese of the Hungarian Reformed Church which included the contemporary Croatian regions of Baranya and Slavonia. The article analyzes the life and work of Stephen Kis of Szeged as a bishop, theologian, teacher and writer, along with his theological influence in Hungary and Europe for decades after his death, on the basis of original materials, Szeged's published theological writings and other relevant literature.*

Key words: Reformation, Stephen Kis of Szeged, Mate Scaricza, Bible, theology, Baranya, Slavonia, theological controversy.

### Introduction

The most productive period for proclaiming the gospel by Protestant preachers in Slavonia and Baranya under the Ottoman rule took place between 1540 and 1560. The appearance of the Lutheran teaching in Slavonia and Baranya was already discernible toward the end of 1530's at the estates of the Hungarian-Croatian Protestant noblemen Perenyi, who were ruling over Valpovo, as well as Nádasdy, the noblemen of Velika and Međurić. After the Ottoman occupation of Valpovo (1543), the Reformation spread more significantly in the former

bishopric of Pécs. Under the influence of the gospel, many Catholic priests<sup>1</sup> and Franciscans embraced the Reformation teaching and joined the Evangelical (Lutheran) Church, as well as the Reformed (Calvinistic) Church around 1550.<sup>2</sup> In southern Hungary, as well as in Baranya and Slavonia, along with the Roman Catholic Church, three other traditions developed: Lutheran or Evangelical, Calvinistic or Reformed, and the Radical (anti-trinitarian) tradition of the Reformation. The Evangelical tradition spread significantly in Hungary during the 1530's and 1540's, the Reformed tradition spread during the 1540's and 1550's, and the Radical tradition spread during the 1550's and 1560's.

At that time, eastern Slavonia and Baranya belonged to the Hungarian bishopric of Pécs which lost its spiritual leadership after the battle at Mohács because of the death of the majority of priests on the battle field. In the territory of eastern Slavonia and the contemporary Croatian region of Baranya, the Reformation progressed in a sequence of stages. For the purpose of this study, the two most significant and pervading stages will be selected out of a wider spread of the Reformation in southern Hungary.<sup>3</sup> In the first stage, toward the end of

- 1 Radoslav Lopašić mentions three groups of Catholic priests in Slavonia and Podravina in the 16th and 17th centuries. The first group are the Catholic priests who were inclined toward leisure and a life of comfort, neglecting their priestly calling. They were able to enjoy this only through friendship with the Turks. The second group are the priests who gave credence to the Holy Scriptures, embraced the Reformation teaching and reformed their parishes accordingly. The third group were the few priests who persisted in the Catholic teaching and remained loyal to the Roman Church (Lopašić, 1888, 115).
- 2 Although the seed of the Swiss Reformation in Hungary was sown in the 1540's, a more significant advancement of the Reformed tradition of the Reformation came in the 1550's. At the synod in Czegersk in 1557, the *Confessio Hungarica* was adopted, and became one of the primary Reformed confessions. However, the *Second Helvetic Confession* (1566) was accepted as the formal confession of the newly established Reformed Church in Hungary. The *Heildeberg Catechism* (1563) was adopted as well.
- 3 The sources for studying the Reformation in southern Hungary, especially in Baranya and Slavonia, include the writings of Michael Starin (Sztárai), Petar Kakony (Péter Kákonyi), Máté Skaricza (Matthaeo Scaricae Pannonio), Stephen Kis of Szeged, as well as the document *Articuli consensvs christianarvm (Articles of Consent of the Christian Churches)*. The letters of Michael Starin are an invaluable source of historical data, especially the letter referenced to Nikola Tukni from 1551; the letter of Mirko Ciger (Eszéki Szigeti Imre; Emericus Zigerius) to Matthias Flacius which Flacius had published in Latin, *Epistola cuiusdam pii concionatoris ex Turcia ad M. Illy. missa, quails nam status Euangelii et Ecclesiarum sub Turco sit indicans, cum Praefatione Illyrici* (Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger, 1549), and in German *Eine Schrifft eines fromen Predigers aus der Turkey an Illyricum geschrieben. Darinnen angezeigt wird, wie es dort mit der Kirche und dem Evangelio zugehet* (Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1550); the letter of Joannes Reyertthoy from Vienna referenced on October 10, 1551 to Heinrich Bullinger, a reformer from Zürich, about the reformed actions in southern Hungary; the letter of Samuelis P. Pathai, the pastor in Tholna and the former teacher in Lug, written on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, 1647 to Stephanum Benjamin Szilagy.

1530's, 1540's and 1550's, there was an intensive evangelistic push: a proclamation of the Word of God, an introduction to faith in Jesus Christ and acceptance of the Holy Scriptures as the authority for personal and family life. The proclaimers of the gospel gathered people together and founded communities of believers through personal witness, preaching of the gospel in public places, stores and markets, through musically arranged biblical narratives, theological discussions and dramatic presentations. In this period, Michael Starin was most prominent in proclaiming the gospel, and along with his coworkers, he reformed and established one hundred and twenty congregations in Baranya and Slavonia within seven years. This was done on both sides of the Danube and Drava Rivers: 50 congregations in Baranya and 59 in Slavonia (Marijanović, 2006, 24-26).

In the second significant stage, which encompassed the period from the 1550's to the 1570's, various beliefs were defined, church structures were formed, standards for church worship were designated, and an educational system was organized. A new superintendence was organized in that area with four districts (Lampe, 1728, 674). The first district (*Verefmartiensis*) included the area of Zmajevac, the second district (*Mohatfienfis*) encompassed Mohács, and the third district encompassed the area of northern Baranya (*Superioris Barovie*). The Slavonian parishes were grouped into a fourth district of Vukovar and Požega (*Districtus Valkoniensis olim Posegiensis*)<sup>4</sup> along with the head office of the district in Tordinci. It encompassed the area between the Sava and Drava Rivers and it represented the Slavonian Reformed Church (*Ecclesia Sclavonice Reformatae*), where Croats resided (*natione Sclavi*), and the preaching was conducted in Croatian (Lampe, 1728, 674). The first senior (elder) was Pastor Michael (*pastor ecclesie patrie Tordofalvensis*), born in Tordinci, a former friar of the monastery in Vukovar.<sup>5</sup>

- 4 Relying on Lampe (1728, 677), Fermeđzin (1878, 67) points out that along with some smaller places, the listed larger places had Protestant parishes in the district of Vukovar. These include: Osijek, Erdut, Korođ, Laslovo, Hrastin, Tomašinci, Bogdanovci, Miholjac, Podagrovci, Rakitinovci, Morosavlje, Varas, Marjanovci, Bzenica, Gjurgjić, Sirač, Dubica, along with eight unknown places. Bösendorfer, as well, while using information from Lampe (1728, 677), made a list of Calvinistic parishes in Slavonia, although slightly modified. These include: Vanja Luka (Banyaluka near Jajce), Besenica, Čepin with three congregations, Dalmad, Dop-sin, Dubrovnik, Dubica, Erdut, Osijek, Harastin, Jakofalu, Koprivna, Korogj, Kelgješ, Antin, Marijanci, Nebojša, Orozi, Petruša-Retfala, Antunovac, Sv. Gjuragj, Laslovo, Sarvaš, Zubovac, Selišće, Tomašinci, Tordinci, Novo selo and Vratka (Bösendorfer, 1910, 329). Lampe (1728, 677), however, made a list of 26 places in Baranya Minor (*Inferior Barovia*), as well as 19 places in the Vukovar district.
- 5 Some sources argue that the Franciscan Michael Tordinac, the then vicar of Tordinci, adopted Protestantism under much pressure and became the first pastor of the Reformed parish (Marković, 2003b, 113).

The influence of the Swiss Reformation in Hungary was discernible in the early 1540's. Already at the synod in Erdöd,<sup>6</sup> which was held in 1545, discussion was made about the direction of the Reformation in Hungary: the German Evangelical (Lutheran) or the Swiss Reformed (Calvinistic) direction. The majority of the participants at the synod adopted the *Augsburg Confession* and the German Evangelical tradition of the Reformation. However, in the 1550's, the influence of the Swiss Reformed tradition of the Reformation advanced significantly, especially among the Hungarians. At the synod in Czengersk in 1557, the *Confessio Hungarica* (Hungarian Confession) was adopted and became one of the earliest reformed confessions.<sup>7</sup> However, the *Second Helvetic Confession*<sup>8</sup> was adopted in 1567 as a formal confession of the newly established Reformed Church in Hungary. The *Heidelberg Catechism*<sup>9</sup> was adopted in 1563.

The relationships between the local churches in accordance with the Swiss Reformed synod model were arranged as late as the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup> Significant assistance was provided by Stephen Kis of Szeged in the region of

- 6 In 1545, twenty nine pastors gathered together in Erdöd and adopted the confession of 12 articles which was substantially in accordance with the *Augsburg Confession*. The second synod, held in Medwisch (Medias) in 1548 adopted the Confession of five towns (*Confessio Pentapolitana*) as the confession of five independent cities in northern Hungary.
- 7 Several confessions preceded the *Hungarian Confession*. 1) the Confession from Kološvar (Claudiopolis) (1559); 2) the Confession from Debrecen (1560-1562), which is known as the first Hungarian original Calvinistic confession; 3) the Confession from Tarczala and Tord (1562 and 1563). The Hungarian Confession was adopted in 1557 or 1558, and it was printed in 1570 in Debrecen.
- 8 The *Second Helvetic Confession* is, along with the *Heidelberg Catechism*, the most accepted and most authoritative Reformed declaration of faith. The *First Helvetic Confession* (*Confessio Helvetica prior*), which represented the faith of the Swiss Reformed cantons, was written by H. Bullinger, S. Grynaeus, O. Muconius and others who had gathered in Basel in 1536. The *Second Helvetic Confession* (*Confessio Helvetica posterior*) was adopted with minor modifications in 1565 in Zürich, according to the template provided by H. Bullinger from 1562. It was published on March 12, 1566, in German and Latin, and soon after it was translated into many other languages from French to Arabic. The Confession was also accepted by the Scottish people in 1566, the Hungarians in 1567, the French in 1571 and the Polish in 1578.
- 9 The *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563), which is the most popular catechism of the Reformed tradition of the Reformation, was published on impulse by Frederick III, the elector and ruler of Palatinate, who had assigned the Professor of Theology Zacharius Ursinus and the Municipal Preacher Caspar Olevianus from Heidelberg to compile a catechism to help solve the controversies between the Reformers regarding the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper (the Eucharist). The catechism which was printed in January, 1563, was divided into three sections with 52 weeks and 129 questions and answers. It was first printed in Croatian in 1935, and the second edition was printed in 2000 by the Reformed Christian Church in Croatia.
- 10 Synod (Greek: synodus, gathering, assembly) is a church assembly where discussions are made about church problems, decisions are made, and rules and regulations are adopted.

Baranya nad Slavonia, who was popular for his strategic deliberation along with his preaching and teaching.

## Biographical Information

The reformer Stephen Kis of Szeged (Stephen De Zegegin; in Hungarian, István Szegedi Kis; in Latin, Stephanus Szegedinus, Stephano Szegedino Pannonio, Stephani Szegedini) was one of the key reformers in Hungary, and his theological, pastoral and educational influence was discernible throughout Europe for decades after his death (Ráckeve, May 2, 1572).<sup>11</sup> He was born in 1505 in Szeged, and studied in Hungary (Szeged, Lippa, Gyula), in the universities of Vienna from 1535 and in Krakow from 1537 on. At that time, being a humanistic center, Krakow became a center for the spread of Reformation ideas as well.<sup>12</sup> In Krakow, as an excellent student, he learned Latin and Greek rapidly and properly, thus he was entrusted with teaching the Latin classics. In 1543, he studied at the university in Wittenberg where his teachers were the prominent reformers, Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchthon, Caspar Cruciger and Johann Major (Scaricaeo, 1585; 1756, 511). After his theological studies in Wittenberg, where he spent three years (Scaricaeo, 1585; 1756, 516), he returned to Hungary and worked as a teacher, theologian and educator, generally in the areas under the Ottoman

- 11 The biography of Stephen Kis of Szeged was written for the first time by his student and pastoral assistant Mathias Scaricza (1544-1591) and was titled, *Stephani Szegedini vita auctore Matthaeo Scaricaeo Pannonio*. Scaricza's text of Kis's biography was published in Basel in 1585 as a preface to the book by Stephen Kis of Szeged, *Theologiae sinceræ loci communes de Deo et homine perpetuis explicati tabulis et scholasticorum dogmatis illustrati (Standard Themes of the Theology of God and Humanity Explained by Tables and Illustrated with Scholastic Doctrinal Formulas)*, edited by Johann Jakob Grynaeus (1540-1617). Until 1608, this book by Kis, including the text by Scaricza, was issued in five editions. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Melchior Adam wrote 546 biographies on 2,815 pages and in five sections in Latin, edited in Frankfurt and Heidelberg (1615-1620): *Vitae Germanorum Philosophorum*; *Vitae Germanorum Medicorum*; *Vitae Germanorum Jureconsultorum et Politicorum*; *Vitae Germanorum Theologorum*; *Vitae Theologorum exterorum principum*. In the opus *Vitae Theologorum exterorum principum*, there is one chapter devoted to Stephen Kis of Szeged. In this article, I am using the text from the following edition: Adam Melchior: *Decades Duæ Continentes Vitas Theologorum Exterorum Principum, Qui Ecclesiam Christi Superiori Seculo Propagarunt Et Propugnarunt*. Frankfurt: Jonae Rosae vidua, 1653. Toward the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Alexander Sándor Ungváry published an excellent essay about Stephen Kis of Szeged titled, "Stephen (István) Kis of Szeged, a Hungarian Reformer During the Ottoman Occupation, 1505-1572," in the central, namely, the tenth chapter of his book, *The Hungarian Protestant Reformation In The Sixteenth Century Under The Ottoman Impact* (1989).
- 12 Kis and his associate students at the University of Krakow – Imre Ozorai, Mathias Dévai Biró and István Gálszéchi – later became influential leaders of the Reformation in Hungary.



Stephen Kis of Szeged according to artwork of Mate Scaricza. The artwork was published on the second page of Kis's book *Theologiae sinceræ loci communes de Deo et homine*, published in Basel in five editions from 1585 (<sup>2</sup>1588, <sup>3</sup>1593, <sup>4</sup>1599 i <sup>5</sup>1608).

government.<sup>13</sup> Petar Petrović (Péter Petrovics in Hungarian), the commander of Temisoara during the reign of Queen Isabela, invited him to serve as a rector of his school in 1548. When Ferdinand of Hapsburg took over Temisoara due to political changes, Petrović was succeeded by a Roman Catholic commandant in 1552, while all the pastors and teachers were banished from the town (1553). He stayed in Békés (Bekes, Bekesin) for several months, then he moved to Tholna by the invitation of the believers to be the principal of the school there. At that time, Michael Starin was serving as a pastor in the church in Tholna. This was one of

13 After his return from Wittenberg, he worked in Csanádon, where he was then banished by the king's Treasurer Georgius Frater. From 1545 to 1548, he worked as rector in Guyla (Scaricaeo, 1585; 1756, 516).

the “most glorious churches all the way to the Black Sea, where Danube mouths in it by the many deltas, enlarged by the many rivers” (Scaricaeo, 1585; 1756, 522). In Tholna, Szeged adopted the Reformed tradition of the Reformation (Zoványi, 1977, 583-584). For several months, he preached and interpreted the Scriptures occasionally while regularly working with the youth. There he got married to Elizabeth, his second wife, the widow of Ivan Beremeni, the woman “whom everyone rightfully praised and who was without comparison by appearance and conduct” (Scaricaeo, 1585; 1756, 523). After the wedding, Szeged accepted the invitation of the believers from Lug (Laskó in Hungarian), and by the recommendation of Michael Starin, Bishop of Baranya, he was ordained as pastor to the church in Lug (Scaricaeo, 1585; 1756, 523-524). At the ordination, as Scaricza reports, several other men were ordained along with Szeged. When he was forty years old, Szeged was appointed Bishop of Baranya and he was declared a doctor at the synod in Lug in 1554 (Scaricaeo, 1585; 1756, 523-524). He served in Lug for four years, from 1554 to 1558, during which time he also adopted three children: Ana, Sara and Izak. He was very favored by the people and well respected among the noblemen. He taught in the school and, according to Scaricza, “at home he taught people of the Church who were not so educated, who would come to him from everywhere. He was not prevented even by the slightest sickness, but rather used to teach even when the listeners could only hear and discern his voice out of his bed” (Scaricaeo, 1585; 1756, 524). He moved from Lug to Kamača (Kálmáncsa) in 1558, and then to Rackevo (Ráckeve, Kevin) in 1563.

He was persecuted because of his public activity: the bishop in the Catholic part of Hungary ordered for him to be tortured, and took his valuable library and the rest of his possessions (Scaricaeo, 1585; 1756, 516-517). The Ottomans imprisoned him in 1561 under the accusation that he was a spy. He was released in 1562 (1563?) when the Hungarian believers paid his bail in gold (Scaricaeo, 1585; 1756, 531; Unghváry 1989, 145).<sup>14</sup> Scaricza compares Kis with Christ’s athlete who can be equated to Joseph<sup>15</sup> or to Regul Atilla.<sup>16</sup> Scaricza points out, “He endured prison so undeservingly, which caused sorrow in many believers because of his numerous trials, and so long as Joseph, so boldly as Jeremiah, so holy as Daniel” (Scaricaeo, 1585; 1756, 534). After his release from the Ottoman prison, he worked as pastor of the Reformed Church in Ráckeve.

He experienced great pain and suffering even in his family life: he was married

14 For more details about Szeged’s imprisonments, tortures and releases, see Scaricaeo (1585; 1756, 527-537).

15 This refers to Joseph (from the Bible) who was sold by his brothers in Egypt.

16 Marcus Atilius Regulus was a Roman soldier and politician in the First Punic War and was later imprisoned and tortured in prison.

three times because he lost two of his wives and seven children in the plague (Unghváry 1989, 145). He married his first wife Ursulla in 1548. Only one son survived who later became a student at the University of Basel.

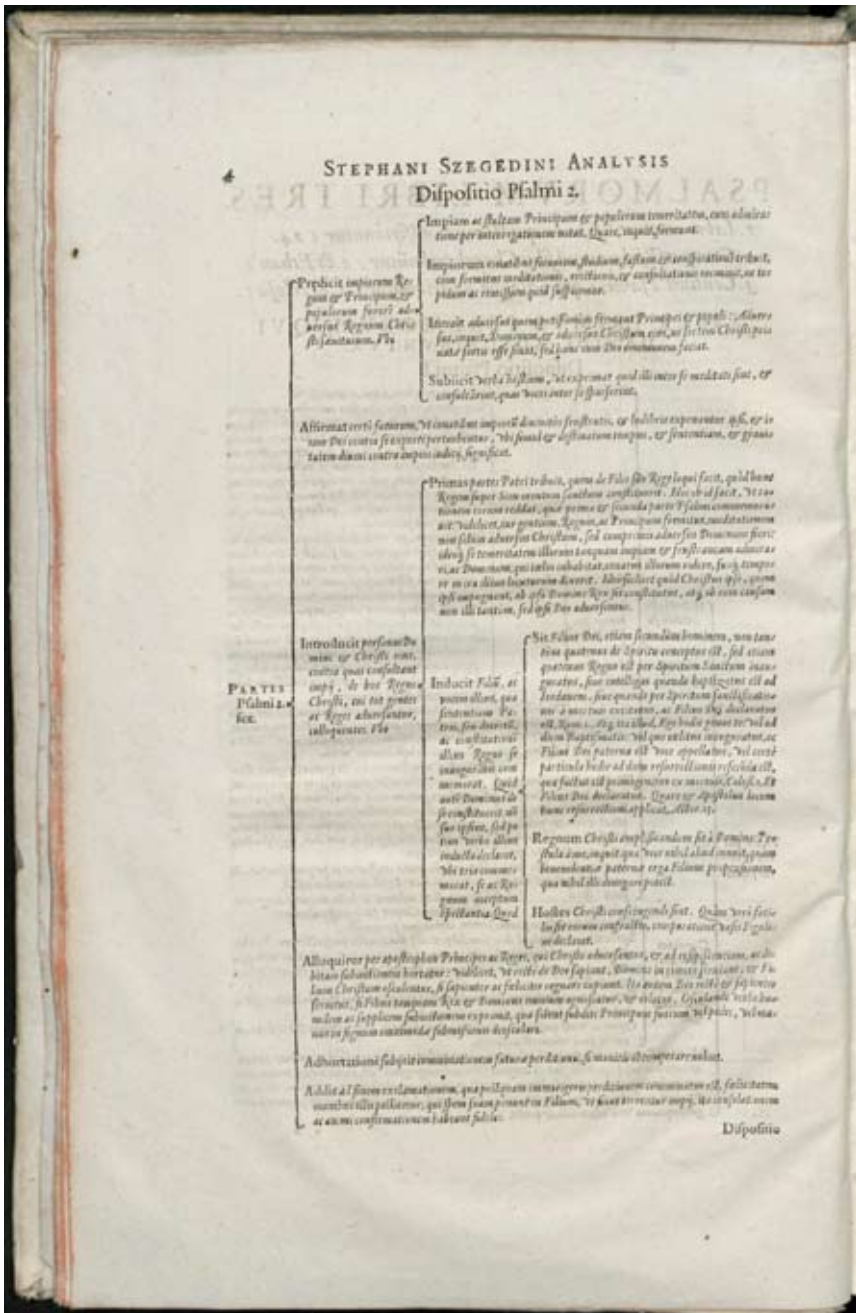
### **Pastoral and Teaching Activity**

Bishop Michael Starin was a proclaimer of the gospel who brought people to conversion to God in an apostolic spirit, gathering them into a community of believers and thus establishing many new churches. In the region of Baranya and Slavonia, he established 120 churches together with his associates. As a theologian, teacher and educator, Bishop Stephen Kis of Szeged enhanced the proclamatory work of Starin in Baranya and Slavonia. He devoted himself in his work to establishing the authority of the gospel and of those who proclaim it. He accomplished this task by building up the believers spiritually in biblical principles and truths, as well as by establishing social standards according to the teachings of the gospel. He believed that only a person that has been renewed by the gospel and by the Holy Spirit can live according to God's law and establish a new and righteous society.

In his work and writing, he endeavored to avoid theological controversies and persistent discussions. Mate Scaricza wrote that Kis attentively avoided religious conflicts whenever possible (Scaricaeo, 1585; 1756, 522-523, 539-541), and Unghváry (1989, 147) added to this the probability that his proficiently controlled church politics might have been rooted in biblical faith rather than in the confronted confessional beliefs.

Unghváry (1989, 147) thinks that when Kis accepted leadership of the church, a historical turn in the Hungarian history of the church happened by which the Constantinian model of permeation of the state and the church collapsed: the Cesaro-papal tradition of the Catholic Church was substituted by the Independent Reformed Church which started to develop a democratic value system based on the equal participation of pastors and laypeople in the life of the church. Together with his associate pastors, Kis endeavored to abstract and abandon all the things which had not been good in the past in order for the renewed Church to become again the Church that loves God's Word, teaches the Word and serves its people according to the Word. While in the West the Reformation started in the universities and urban centers, Kis was usually faced with rural populations in the countryside occupied by the Ottomans because the important cultural centers had been devastated during the continual wars. The proclamation of the gospel was advanced most often by traveling traders and more educated businessmen. Inasmuch as the western feudal model of society was abolished in the territory occupied by the Ottomans, the Reformation was advanced in that territory as





Review of Psalm 2. in the book *Tabulae analyticae*, published in Schaffhausen, 1592. Source: Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt.

a grass roots Christian fellowship, not like in Germany where Christianity was brought to the people from top down, according to the principle *cuius regio eius religio* by which worldly rulers determine the faith confession of their citizens.

Szeged was at the head of the Baranyan bishopric of the Hungarian Reformed Church in its crucial period of development and survival. Upon the adoption of the Reformed tradition of the Reformation in Tholna at the beginning of the 1550's (Zoványi, 1977, 583-584), he started to preach in Lug according to his convictions, where he had moved in 1554 and was elected the same year to be the bishop of the Baranyan bishopric (*Superintendentium Baroviensium*).<sup>17</sup>

The process of establishing the Reformed Church and of organizing the relations between the local churches according to the Swiss Reformed model in the Baranyan bishopric began in the 1550's and ended toward the end of the 1570's. Bishop Stephen Kis of Szeged was popular because of his preaching, teaching and his strategic deliberation. His works were influential in Europe even for decades after his death, especially in the Hungarian Reformed tradition of the Reformation. He wrote and composed the "Baranyan Canons" (Zoványi, 1977, 584) which was adopted by the title *Articles of Consensus of the Christian Churches*, four years after his death at the synod of the Reformed Churches of northern and southern Baranya in Kneževi vinogradi (Duke's Vineyards) on August 16 and 17, 1576. More than 40 pastors<sup>18</sup> gathered at the synod. Along with other themes, they discussed and adopted said document which was published in Latin in Papa on August 14, 1577 as *Articuli consensus Christianarum Ecclesiarum, quibus Universitas Fratrum subscripsit Herczegszeoleosini in Barovia*.<sup>19</sup> The document was translated by Nikola Šiklošac (Nicolao Siclosio) and published the same year in Papa in Hungarian as *Az Also es fölső Baronyaban valo ecclesiaknac articylvisi, mellyec Hercheg szölösön irattanac negyuen praedicatoroc ielön voltaban, melyeket mindyaion iouá hattanac anno Domini 1576. 16. Augusti*.<sup>20</sup> Mattheus Scaricza,<sup>21</sup>

17 The Reformed Church in Hungary was divided into five superintendencies, and Baranya and Slavonia together made up the fifth, namely, the Baranyan superintendence (*Superintendentium Baroviensium*), which was established in 1553. Its first superintendent was Michael Starin, the pastor of the church in Tholna.

18 For the list and the signatures of the pastors, see Milić (2006, 86-87).

19 For more details, see *Régi magyarországi nyomtatványok I. 1473-1600 (A list of early Hungarian printed works I., 1473-1600)*, 394 and Károly Szabó, *Régi magyar könyvtár (A list of old Hungarian books)*, II. 141.

20 See in *Régi magyarországi nyomtatványok I. 1473-1600 (A list of early Hungarian printed works I., 1473-1600)*, 394.

21 Mattheus Scaricza is also known by the name Matej Škarica, Matej Šarić Kevin, Máté Skaricza (Hungarian) and Matthaesus Scaricaeus, Matthaео Scaricaeo Pannonio, Matthae Scaricaei Kevini (Latin).

who probably participated at the synod but without the right to a signature, sent the Latin version of the document to his friend David Huszár Panonius, the pastor to the church in Papa, who published it.

It is not known when Bishop Stephen Kis of Szeged composed and wrote the template of the document *Articles of Consensus of the Christian Churches*, but it was probably during the 1560's. The fact that the document was only adopted in 1576 demonstrates that the process of organizing and institutionalizing the Reformed Church in Hungary took place very slowly. Namely, the Baranyan bishopric was founded in 1553, but the interrelations between the preachers and the pastors in the bishopric were only arranged as late as 1576. All the pastors who signed the document agreed to use the *Articles* as a guideline in serving God and people, as well as for arranging interrelations and the relations between the churches. By their signatures, they agreed to accept the retribution of the spiritual government if they were to violate the regulations of the document in any way.<sup>22</sup> According to the first article, the worldly government is denied the right to interfere in the leadership of the church in matters of faith.<sup>23</sup> The church is led by a superintendent<sup>24</sup> upon the consent of the elders,<sup>25</sup> especially for important issues (*Articles of Consensus of the Christian Churches*, 3). One of the most important themes in the *Articles of Consensus of the Christian Churches* is the pastoral ministry and the relation of the shepherd to the other ministries in the church. The pastoral ministry in the church is subject to the elders and their authority, while the shepherds in the churches must be obedient to the

- 22 The 47<sup>th</sup> article, the last article, of the document reveals the reason for signing the document: "Upon the public promulgation of the articles as well as their endorsement according to the standard of the faith, and after they please the pastors, we would like for everyone to sign them, so that later they would not presume to violate them witlessly. If anyone should violate them with an arrogant elevation, we have decided that he should be convicted by the spiritual government as a conspicuous enemy of the faith and as a rebel and violator of the good order."
- 23 "Since we belong solely to the only King and God as the supreme Head before all the other worldly rulers, therefore, all the worldly governments should be despised in the domain of the faith" (*Articles of Consensus of the Christian Churches*, 1).
- 24 The term superintendent comes from Latin and means overseer or bishop, and it is synonymous to the Greek term *episcopos*. In the Reformed Church, the bishop is elected by delegates of the church communities and he holds no sacramental or legislative authority (Milić, 2006, 58).
- 25 The Reformed Church throughout Europe, thus also in Baranya and Slavonia, was organized according to the presbytery system, according to which the elders or the presbyters (Greek: *prezbyteros* – older, elder) govern the church. The elders, or presbyters, are believers elected as a church committee in the local church, for the synod of the superintendence, or for the bishopric. The term elder in the *Articles* is usually used for the elders elected in the governing authority of the entire church (cf. Milić, 2006, 58).

elders (*Articles of Consensus of the Christian Churches*, 4, 5). Every shepherd was supposed to pass an exam of knowledge and conduct before the church (*Articles of Consensus of the Christian Churches*, 6). The pastor was expected to preach two sermons on Sunday and three sermons during the week at a convenient time when the people were free from agricultural and other work (*Article of Consensus of the Christian Churches*, 18). Along with the local churches, the reformers devotedly endeavored to organize schools as well.<sup>26</sup> Prominent in this area were Michael Starin with the school in Lug from 1544, and Stephen Kis of Szeged, who taught in Kneževi Vinogradi and defined the issue of the shepherd and the principal of the school in the *Articles*. Some schools were, as was the school in Zmajevac, at the gymnasium level. The principals of schools were subject to the shepherds (*Articles of Consensus of the Christian Churches*, 26).

## Published Theological Works

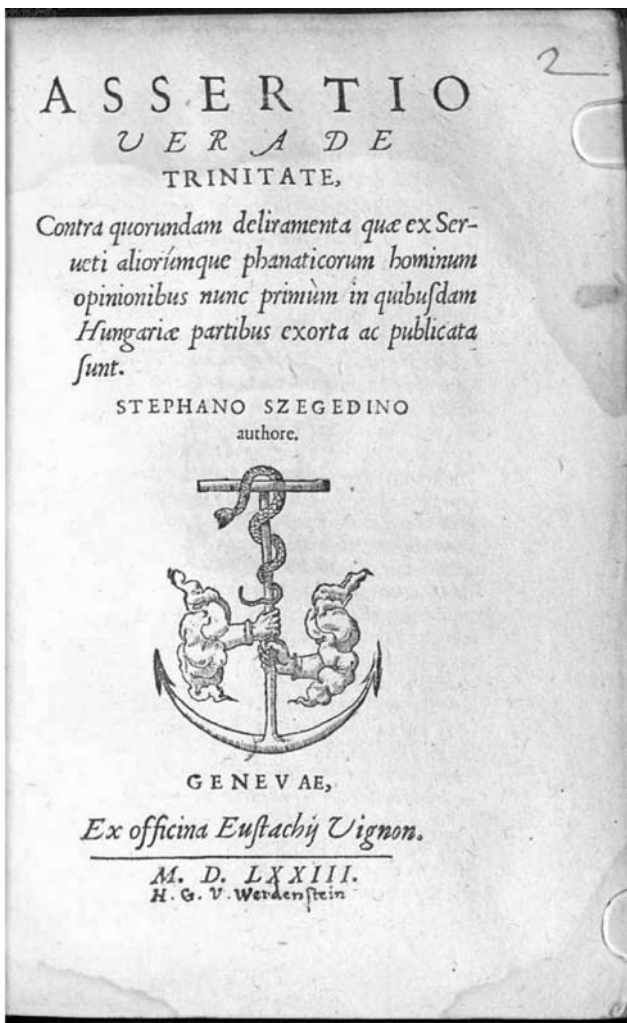
In addition to organizing and leading the church, Kis wrote extensively. Since all of his books were published postmortem, it is unknown as to when a certain manuscript was written and completed, but the publishing dates of the books can be followed.

Stephen Kis of Szeged was continuously confronted with the aggressive promotion of the anti-trinitarians who were against the Trinity.<sup>27</sup> In defense of orthodox Christianity, he wrote the argument, *Assertio vera de Trinitate, Contra*

26 Referring to the canonic visitations in Baranya in 1729-1810, Milić (2006, 200) writes that at the beginning of the 18th century there were active, previously organized Reformed schools in Kopačevo, Vardarac, Lug, Karanac, Kneževi Vinogradi, Kotlina, Suza and Zmajevac.

27 The anti-trinitarians belonged to a group of rationalists in the movement of the radical Reformation. This movement was represented in the 16th century by three larger groups: Anabaptists, mystics and rationalists. The Anabaptists valued the Bible most of all, especially the New Testament. They believed that the church does not need to be reformed, but rather be established on the ancient apostolic foundations. The mystics, or spiritualists, gave less importance to the outer, observable church, and more to the inner experience of the Spirit. The rationalists leaned on reason, thus bringing many of their trinitarian and Christological dogma of the old church under question. In the Hungarian territory, the trinitarians were lead by the humanist Ferenc David whose theological and humanistic views were directly opposed to the teachings of the Bible and to the Reformed tradition of the Reformation. He judged the Bible on the basis of reason, and he adopted only the teachings he regarded as having come out of the Bible and which could be understood rationally. Thus, he rejected the teaching about the Trinity, regarding it as a human consideration. Ferenc David founded the Unitarian Church in 1565 which started to spread from Kolozsvár throughout Hungary, especially into the east. The Council in Torda, which was held in January, 1568, voted for religious freedom for all the religious communities including the trinitarians.

*quorundam deliramenta quae ex Serueti aliorumque phanaticorum hominum opinionibus nunc primum in quibusdam Hungariae partibus exorta ac publicata sunt* in which he first introduces the anti-trinitarian teaching in an apologetic way, gives the reasons for its emergence, and then he outlines the biblical teaching about the Trinity. The work summarizes the biblical answer of Reformed Christianity to the anti-trinitarian disputation of the Trinity. Mattheus Scaricza, Szeged's student and associate, took the work, along with the rest of Szeged's writings, with him when he went on a research journey to Europe in 1569. He handed the



*Assertio vera de Trinitate*,  
Geneva, 1573. Source:  
Bibliothèque de Genève.

manuscript to the Calvinistic theologian Theodore Beza, Calvin's successor in Geneva, in 1570/1571, who printed it in 1573 after Kis's death (1572).<sup>28</sup> It is not known why Beza, of all Kis's works brought to him by Scaricza in Geneva, chose to first publish the argument, *Assertio vera de Trinitate*. It can only be assumed that Beza wanted to support the struggle of the Reformed Christians for the orthodox biblical understanding of the Trinity which had been brought under dispute by the anti-trinitarians in Hungary and Poland.

*Assertio vera de Trinitate* was printed on 188 pages. Along with the preface and the introduction from Kis and Beza, it has two parts. In the first part, from page 1 to 129, Kis argues about the holy Trinity in eleven chapters: De unitate Dei (The Unity of God); De essentia Dei (The Essence of God); De persona (God as Person); De Trinitate (The Trinity); De reali distinctione Patris, Filli, & Spiritus sancti (The Real Distinction Between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit); De nomine homousios (Regarding homousios); De duplici Christi generatione (On the Twofold Nature of Christ); De verbo seu Fillio Dei (On the Term Son of God); De vocabulo Dei, & quod Christi verus deus sit (On the Word of God which is Christ, the True God); De Spiritu (On the Spirit); De processione (The Creation). From pages 130 to 183, there are ten tables by which Kis presents and explains the teaching on the holy Trinity.

In Basel in 1584, three books written by Kis were published: *Speculum pontificum Romanorum*, *Spiegel des weltlichen römischen Bapsttum* and *Tractatus brevis de traditionibus quibusdam pontificum romanorum*. In Zürich the same year, the work *Queastiones de verbis Coenae Domini* was published in which Kis discusses the significance of the Eucharist and its role in the life of the Reformed Church. The work is a comparative study of the Lutheran and the Reformed understandings of the Lord's Supper.

With his work, *Speculum pontificum Romanorum*<sup>29</sup> (*The Mirror of the Roman Popes*), Kis joined the numerous reformers and theologians who taught and defended the succession of the proclaimed Word of God, namely, the succession of the apostolic teaching in the Church, and thus disputed the Roman Catholic teaching of the apostolic succession by the ministry of the pope and the bishops. This argument by Kis was published in four editions in Latin until 1604, (1584, 1586, 1592, 1602), while its prolonged edition, *Spiegel des weltlichen römischen*

28 Scaricza wrote that he did not support the printing of Szeged's *Assertio vera de Trinitate*, especially because of the letter sent to him by Szeged during his travels through Italy in which he besought him to explain the teaching against the Aryans in more detail (Scaricaeo, 1585; 1756, 550).

29 For the historical/theological analysis of this work, I have used the following issue: Stephanum Szegedinum Pannonium, *Speculum pontificum Romanorum: In quo Imperium, Decreta, Vita: Prodigia, Interitus: elogia, ...* Basel, Konrad von Waldkirch, 1592.

*Bapsttum* was published in Basel in 1584 in German. The book *Speculum pontificum Romanorum* is comprised of four units, most probably used by Kis as a template for his lessons, edifications and sermons.<sup>30</sup> These units, used in the book as independent documents, were compiled in one work by the skillful hand of Beza. In the first part, while investigating the historical events of the church, Kis reveals the historical development of the papacy and points out important sources, documents and events which fostered and anchored the primacy of the pope. As had many other reformers before him, he too compared the papacy and the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church with the Antichrist and his teaching. In addition, he offers a historical preview of the development of the Roman Catholic baptism and mass.

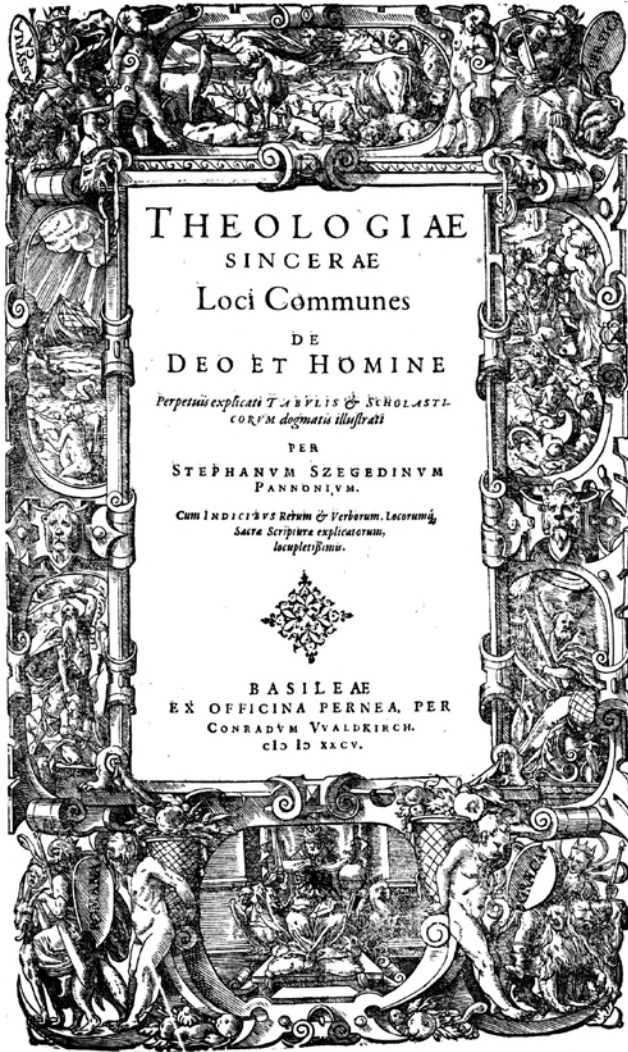
In the second part, he points out the immoral living of particular popes and explains the source and the causes of the spiritual and moral fall of the popes and the bishops. In so doing, he makes abundant use of the historical sources available to him. He considers materialism and the desire for power to be the source of the immorality of the popes and the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church. Considering the Holy Scriptures, Kis notes that some popes, such as Gregory I (604), remained faithful to the original Christian teachings. While deliberating and studying the popes and the papacy, Kis did not follow a chronological order, instead he grouped the popes with certain characteristics into groups, and then he devoted himself to explaining the specifics.

The third part contains an alphabetical index of concepts and phrases used in the history of the church with references as to where and when it was first mentioned.

In the fourth part entitled *Qvaestiones de traditionibus qvibusdam Pontificum elegantes*, he offers answers to four units of questions. In the first unit, there are thirteen questions and answers about the church of Christ (248-251), as well as 45 questions and answers about the papal church (252-270). In the second group, there are 54 questions and answers about the papal mass (270-282) and 20 arguments as to why mass is not biblical (282-285). The third group of questions is comprised of questions about the papal paradise (286-298), while the fourth unit is comprised of questions about purgatory.

Kis's most significant work is *Theologiae sincerae loci communes de Deo et Homine perpetuis Tabulis explicati et scholasticorum dogmatis illustrati* (*Standard Themes on the Theology of God and Humanity Explained in Tables and Illustrated with Scholastic Doctrinal Formulas*). This work was edited in five editions: in Basel 1585, 1588, 1593, 1599 and in one unmarked place in 1608. In this document,

30 This work predominantly offers only scarce facts used by Kis most probably as entries and agendas for his lectures.



*Theologiae sincerae loci communes de Deo et homine perpetuis explicati tabulis et scholasticorum dogmatis illustrati*, Basel, 1585. Source: Google books.

his practical methods of teaching and the theological overviews and systems of tabular and graphical presentation of the content are published.<sup>31</sup> The book has 572 pages (the edition from 1588 has 665 pages), and along with the preface by Johann Grynaeus (8 pages) and the bibliography of Stephen Kis of Szeged written by the feather of Mattheus Scaricza (17 pages), it is made up of four basic parts. In the first part (1-214), there are theological definitions, overviews and explanations

31 For this analysis I have used the first edition of the book from 1585.

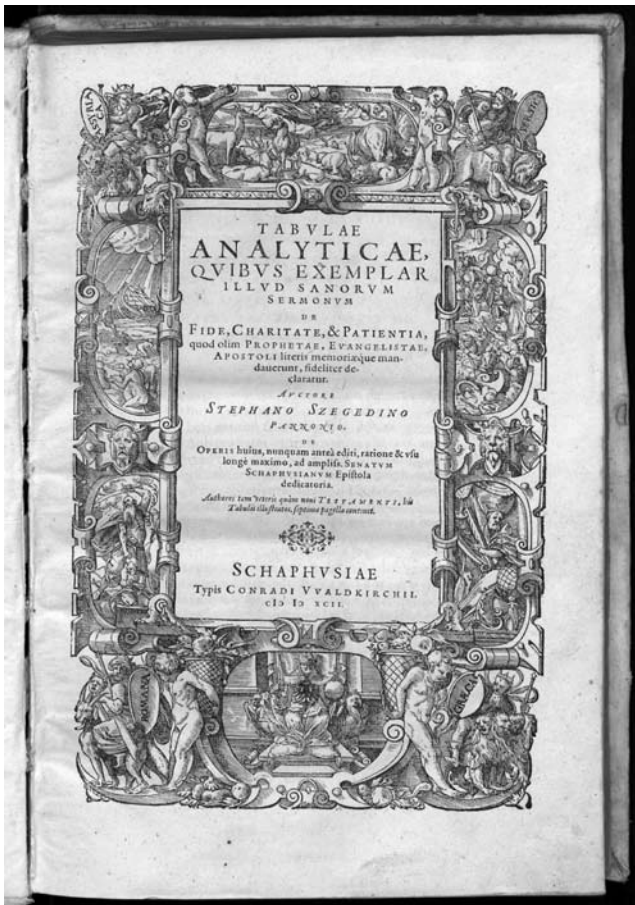


about God and his attributes. Kis wrote attentively in a biblical, subtle, simple, and easy to understand way for laypeople, about distinctions in the portrait of the triune God in the Old and New Testaments. The second part (215-410) is comprised of anthropological studies where the discussion is focused on humans – their origin, destiny, fallen nature, inability to redeem themselves by their own will and power – and on a person's acceptance of the salvation of Jesus Christ by which they are transformed into the image of God (*Imago Dei*) which was once lost through Adam's fall. The third part (414-467) is comprised of a sequence of biblical/ethical discussions which are crucial for everyday Christian living, for example: dreams, desperation, discrimination, images, lying, perjury, murder, blasphemy, hatred, greed, drunkenness, laziness, envy, squander, dress, dancing, vanity, sex, celibacy of the clergy, rebellion, division in the church, scandals, rape, ingratitude, etc. In the fourth part (468-504), Szeged discusses the papal (Roman Catholic) teaching which includes teachings on: angels, humans, predestination, free will, sin in general, original sin, the gospel, the sacraments, baptism, mass, clergy, confession of sins, forgiveness of sins, preaching, councils, tradition, the pope, excommunication from the church, the cult of the saints, purgatory, etc. The book ends with a detailed index of terms which is 25 pages long.

*Theologiae sincerae* has become the encyclopedia of Reformed theology which has been used for decades by theologians, preachers, pastors, and believers in Hungary and throughout Europe. In it, through tables, Kis graphically and simply presents complicated theological themes and contents, first defining them, and then explaining and supporting them with arguments and Bible quotations. In so doing, he utilized the works of the leading Swiss and German reformers.<sup>32</sup>

The work *Tabulae Analyticae, Quibus Exemplar Illud Sanorum Sermorum De Fide, Charitate, & Patientia, quod olim Prophetarum, Evangelistarum, Apostolorum litteris memoriaeque mandauerunt, fideliter declaratur* was published in four editions: Schaffhausen 1592; London 1593; and Basel 1599 and 1610. The work was printed on 379 pages. The dedication was subscribed by the printer Conradus Waldkirsch on August 26, 1592. The preface was entitled *In dilucidis Psalmorum & Prophetarum Dispositiones Stephani Szegedini, Patris in Christo ac Mecænatissimum fui, perpetua gratitudine colendi, &c.*, and it was written by Mattheus Scaricza (Mattheus Scaricæus Kevinus). The book is comprised of analyses and an interpretation of particular texts of the Old and New Testaments. The first 75 pages are dedicated to the interpretation of the Book of Psalms. Next, he interpreted the prophetic books: Isaiah (77-132), Daniel (133-159), Ezekiel (160-188), Jeremiah

32 Ungváry (1989, 156) alleges that Kis used the works of Reformed theologians like Wolfgang Musculus, Heinrich Bullinger, Theodor Beza, Petrus Martyr Vermigli and of the Lutheran theologian Philipp Melancthon.



*Tabulae analyticae*, Basel, 1592. Source: Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt.

(189-269) and Lamentations (270-281). The second part of the book contains a very concise biography of Jesus Christ (282-284) and a general overview, chapter by chapter, of the Gospels of Matthew (284-302) and John (302-320). The New Testament topics include an overview of eight great and far-reaching sermons: the sermon of the Apostle Peter at Pentecost (Ac 2:14-36), his sermon after the healing of the lame man (Ac 3:12-26), Stephen's sermon prior to being stoned (Ac 7:2-53), as well as five sermons of the Apostle Paul: the sermon in Antioch in Pisidia (Ac 13:16-41), the sermon in Athens (Ac 17:22-31), the valedictory to the elders in Ephesus (Ac 20:17-38), the speech before Felix (Ac 24:10-21), and the speech before Agrippa (Ac 26:1-29). The third part of the book includes an interpretation of the thirteen epistles of Paul and the Book of Hebrews, which he also ascribed to the Apostle Paul. The book ends with an interpretation of the Epistle of James,

First and Second Peter, as well as First John and the Book of Revelation.

Kis's works were published in several editions after his death, mostly in Basel, and some in London, Schaffhausen, Geneva and Zürich. The book *Speculum pontificum Romanorum* which was published in four Latin editions, was translated into German and published in 1594 in Basel as *Spiegel des weltlichen römischen Bapsttum*. The book was most probably translated into English and published in 1604 with the title *The Antithesis Betweene the Voyce of Christ and the Pope Whereby is Shewed that the Pope is Antichrist*.<sup>33</sup>

## Conclusion

Stephen Kis of Szeged, a reformer, theologian, teacher, pastor, bishop and writer, lived for a short period of time (1554-1558) in the Croatian-Baranyan village of Lug, already known for a decade at that time as a Reformation center, where the proclaimer of the Gospel, Michael Starin, came from and then spread the Reformed and biblical teachings throughout Baranya and Slavonia. Kis accepted the pastoral ministry in Lug during the crucial period of the establishment and development of the Reformation in Baranya and Slavonia. He participated at the synods of the churches of Baranya and Slavonia, and while at the synod in Lug in 1554, he was appointed as bishop (superintendent) of Baranya. Even upon leaving Lug and accepting the pastoral ministry in Kálmáncsi (1558) and Ráckeve (1563), as a bishop of the Baranyan bishopric, which included the Hungarian region of Baranya as well as the Croatian Baranya and Slavonia, he also cared for the churches and the believers in the contemporary Croatian part of Baranya. His vision and suggestion for arranging the relations in the bishopric was accepted by his fellow pastors in Kneževi Vinogradi four years after his death, and it was adopted as a document called *Articuli consensus Christianarum Ecclesiarum, quibus Universitas Fratrum subscripsit Herczegszeoleosini in Barovia* (*Articles of Consensus of the Christian Churches*), known as the "Baranyan Canons" and "The Canons from Kneževi Vinogradi."

His style of teaching was to focus on the people he taught, and while his methods of teaching were very practical and useful to students and theologians, it was also for pastors and preachers of the Word of God. His practical and encyclopedic writing style has made him popular in theological circles in Hungary and Europe. Besides biblical and theological discussions, his works included ethical, religious, legal

33 I discovered the information about the title in the book of John Brinsley *Ludus literarius, or the Grammar Schoole* (London, 1917, p. 359), and it reads: *The Antithesis betweene the voyce of Christ and the Pope whereby is shewed that the Pope is Antichrist*. However, since Brinsley does not mention the title of the original in Latin, I am not sure to which of Szeged's work he is referring.

and social themes. He made a great effort to prepare basic Reformation literature for his listeners and readers, and also for the purpose of using it to influence the spiritual and intellectual life of both his and the following generations. His works were published in repeated editions for decades after his death.

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*Translated from Croatian by Ljubinka Jambrek*

Stanko Jambrek

## **Stjepan Kiš Segedinac: Baranjski reformator europskoga utjecaja**

### Sažetak

Uvodni dio sadrži sažeti prikaz reformacije u Baranji i Slavoniji u šesnaestom stoljeću te naznačuje ulogu reformatora Stjepana Kiša Segedinca u razvoju i institucionalizaciji Baranjske superintendencije (biskupije) ugarske Reformirane crkve, koja je obuhvaćala i današnje hrvatske pokrajine Baranju i Slavoniju. U članku se, na temelju izvorne građe, Segedinčevih objavljenih teoloških spisa i relevantne literature, analizira život i djelovanje biskupa, teologa, učitelja i spisatelja Stjepana Kiša Segedinca te njegov teološki utjecaj u Ugarskoj i Europi desetljećima nakon njegove smrti.