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RAGUSA AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE BALKAN MISSIONS*

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ABSTRACT: The significance of Ragusa (Dubrovnik) in the history of the Ottoman Hungary has been blank till the recent past. The rediscovery of the archives of the Republic of Ragusa by the Hungarians expanded the substance of knowledge to a large extent gained from the Roman archives, especially from the archives of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide and the Roman Inquisition. The Republic of Ragusa and the Balkan trade routes played a determining role in the maintenance of Catholic church structures in the European half of the Ottoman Empire. It was the archbishop of Ragusa who first mediated between the Apostolic See and the Balkan missions. The beginning of his role in the Balkan missions can be fully grasped from the documents of the volume that mainly preserved the correspondence of the late sixteenth century and is found in the archives of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide. The report of Archbishop Girolamo Matteucci published in this paper, dated in 1581, is outstanding, with the help of which the outward forms of the Ragusan intellectuals' missionary zeal in the Balkans during the sixteenth century are palpable. The report of the archbishop relied on the information of Tommaso Nadali, Ragusan physician who was active at the Polish and Ottoman court as well as in the Balkan Peninsula. He became a unique advocate of the papal anti-Ottoman policy at the end of the sixteenth century. Furthermore, Matteucci's report clearly reveals the struggle of the people of Ragusa against Protestantism in Ottoman Hungary. On the basis of other Ragusan sources as well as the reports of the Protestant reformers, it becomes apparent that the merchants of the city-state were considered to be the most serious enemies of the new Protestant doctrines in the territory of Hungary under Ottoman rule.

Key words: 16th century, 17th century, Tommaso Nadali, Ragusan archbishopric, Ottoman Empire, Ragusan merchants, pastoral work, Catholic missions

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The role of Ragusa in the history of Ottoman Hungary has until recently been a blank spot. Hungarian historians had long been unable to identify the Latin and Italian merchants whose names occur in Ottoman and Christian sources. A major breakthrough was made when the mission sources became accessible to the public in the 1990s, revealing that the merchants from that Adriatic city established substantial trading colonies in Belgrade and Timișoara. These merchant colonies provided the principal basis for Catholic mission organization in the area. The Roman archives, particularly those of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide (*Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*) and the Roman Inquisition (*Sacra Congregatio Romanae et Universalis Inquisitionis seu Congregatio Sancti Officii*), yielded much information, but Hungarian historians took an almost revolutionary step forward when they rediscovered the archives of the Republic of Ragusa. Consequently, what we already knew of the Ragusan role in church and cultural affairs has been complemented—and indeed radically revised—by new and in many respects primary findings concerning their commercial and social affairs. The resulting source publications, papers and monographs, rather than being an end product, have provided further lines of enquiry and represent the starting point for new research.¹ Here, I briefly summarize Hungarian research and, through an analysis from several different viewpoints of the document published below for the first time, I attempt to contribute to the rethinking of Ragusa's role in Balkan and Hungarian cultural history.

Ragusan merchants in the Balkans, and their priests

Ragusa's trading operations in Serbia and Bosnia, established in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, were part of an extensive commercial network built on medieval precedents in the Ottoman Empire. Ragusan merchants were even to

¹ Here I mention only three books: Antal Molnár, *Le Saint-Siège, Raguse et les missions catholiques de la Hongrie Ottomane 1572-1647*. [Bibliotheca Academiae Hungariae. Studia, vol. I]. Rome-Budapest: Accademia d'Ungheria in Roma, 2007; Antal Molnár, *Egy raguzai kereskedőtársaság a hódolt Budán. Scipione Bona és Marino Bucchia vállalkozásának története és dokumentumai (1573-1595). Eine Handelsgesellschaft aus Ragusa im osmanischen Ofen. Geschichte und Dokumente der Gesellschaft von Scipione Bona und Marino Bucchia (1573-1595)* [Források Budapest Közép- és Kora Újkori Történetéhez, vol. II. Quellen zur Budapest Geschichte im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit, vol. II]. Budapest: Budapest Főváros Levéltára, 2009; Antal Molnár, *Confessionalization on the Frontier. The Balkan Catholics between Roman Reform and Ottoman Reality* [Interadria. Culture dell'Adriatico, vol. 22]. Rome: Viella, 2019.

be found in Bulgaria and Albania. They had already appeared in Hungary in the second half of the thirteenth century, being particularly active in Syrmia and present in Belgrade, Kovin, Baia Mare, Buda and Székesfehérvár.² The story of Ragusan merchants in Ottoman Hungary starts with the capture of Belgrade in 1521. Quickly recognizing the new opportunities, Ragusan businessmen took over the Hungarian market in the 1540s, appearing in Buda in 1542, Pest in 1544 and Pécs in 1545. New markets also opened through the capture of Timișoara in 1552, where they established a trading colony that served as a base for expansion through Caransebeș and Lipova into the Principality of Transylvania and the Romanian voivodates. The locations of the Ragusan merchant colonies also determined the routes by which they traded with Hungary. The smaller market outposts in Hungary were connected to Buda, Timișoara, or directly to Belgrade. The latter, located at the intersection of trade routes, was the centre of all exports and imports to and from Hungary. The main routes were the Buda–Belgrade military road, the road to Belgrade from Pécs via Osijek and the road from Transylvania via Timișoara.³

Ragusan merchants played a key role in maintaining, and in some cases establishing, the framework of Catholic church life in the Balkan Peninsula. Ragusa was the last Christian station for every clergyman travelling from Italy to the Balkans. The Ragusans obtained permits for travellers entering the Ottoman Empire, and their merchants escorted the apostolic visitors and defended them before the Ottoman authorities. The religious and intellectual background to the role of Ragusans in church affairs rested on the intransigent Catholicism of the city-state. The extensive privileges they enjoyed in the Ottoman Empire provided the legal basis for their trading activity.

The Ragusan trading organization and its involvement in the church affairs provided Balkan Catholicism with a unique institutional and infrastructural basis. Consequently, when the Roman authorities started to organize Balkan missions, they looked to Ragusa as a natural source of support. The Ragusan Republic and its trading network became a pillar of mission organization. Ragusan caravans provided escort for the missionaries on their journeys, and they carried money and correspondence between the Ragusan centre and the

² Dušanka Dinić-Knežević, *Dubrovnik i Ugarska u srednjem veku*. [Monografije, knjiga 28.]. Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet u Novom Sadu, Institut za istoriju; Vojvođanska akademija nauka i umetnosti, 1986.

³ A. Molnár, *Le Saint-Siège*: pp. 32-50.

Balkan stations. The archbishop of Ragusa took part in Balkan mission operations as soon as the Propaganda Fide was founded in 1622, first providing occasional services, and later, after 1628, under official instruction as the Congregation's agent for Illyria, the term coined by the humanists for the West Balkan region (*Responsale della Sacra Congregazione de Propaganda Fide per l'Illyrico*). Besides the archbishop, several church institutions took part in running the Balkan missions, and the missionaries themselves came from the Franciscan and Dominican convents and the Jesuit residence in the city. The Jesuits in Ragusa had a special significance in this respect, because the superiors general of the order looked on the Ragusan residence as the base of the Ottoman mission.

The involvement of Ragusan merchants in church activities consisted mainly in the running of chapels in merchant colonies. The first mention of Ragusan priests in these outposts dates from the turn of the sixteenth century, just as the city was building its second trading empire in the Balkans. Ragusan historical tradition regards the chapel of Sofia to be the first Catholic chapel in the European lands of the Ottoman Empire. By the second half of the sixteenth century, nearly every larger Ragusan community had acquired a priest for itself. Visitation reports, travel accounts and Ragusan sources often mention local chapels in Skopje, Janjevo, Novo Brdo, Trepča, Novi Pazar, Prokuplje, Sofia, Adrianople, Provadija and Tarnovo. The earliest records of chaplains serving in the two trading centres of Ottoman South Hungary, Smederevo and Belgrade date from the 1530s. There were also Ragusan priests in the two other major towns in Ottoman Hungary, Buda and Timișoara. Apart from Belgrade and Smederevo (where members of the Bosnian Franciscan province were active), pastoral care was primarily provided by secular priests of the Ragusan archdiocese and by Ragusan Franciscans, Dominicans and Benedictines.

The church administration and jurisdiction of the Ragusan trading colonies were subject to the archbishop of Ragusa, who appointed the chaplains and recalled them at the merchants' request. Providing pastoral care in the colonies was not always easy, because serving as a chaplain in the Balkans was not an attractive post for Ragusan priests. The Ragusan archdiocese, however, was experiencing considerable "overproduction" of secular priests and members of religious orders, and had insufficient benefices to support them, so there were always enterprising clergymen without a benefice, and monks blessed with a mission calling, who willingly, or for want of better, set off for Ottoman lands. The Balkan jurisdiction of the Ragusan archbishops clearly reflected the intertwining of church and state in the city: the colonies and trading stations

were component elements of the Republic, and although they officially never belonged to the archdiocese of Ragusa, the archbishop exercised certain rights over them.⁴

The archbishop of Ragusa and the Balkan missions in the sixteenth century

I would now like to examine Ragusa's role in Balkan Catholicism during the late sixteenth century, a period marked by the establishment of missions, in the light of one previously unpublished document.⁵ The letter from Archbishop Girolamo Matteucci of Ragusa (1579–1583) to Secretary of State, Cardinal Tolomeo Galli (*Cardinale Como*), confidant of Pope Gregory XIII (1572-1585) and the highest authority of the missions in the Holy See, has survived as part of a fascinating bundle of correspondence.⁶ The latter mainly comprises documents produced during the papacy of Gregory XIII, mostly letters to Cardinal Galli and some to the pope himself, and the drafts of Galli's replies, principally concerning Balkan, Constantinople and North African church matters. It was clearly because of their relevance to the missions that the letters passed into the archive of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, founded forty years later.⁷

⁴ On this I have written in greater detail in: A. Molnár, *Le Saint-Siège*: pp. 50-58, 334-336.

⁵ István György Tóth quoted from this document in an essay, but with several misunderstandings. The letter was not written by Tommaso Nadali but by Archbishop Girolamo Matteucci of Ragusa, although Nadali was his chief source of information. At the Şimand synod, 'Master Thomas' was not the leader of the Antitrinitarians who confronted the Catholic chaplain of Timișoara, Brother Domenico Giorgi. Master Thomas was in fact Nadali, who sided with the Dominican friar to defeat the Antitrinitarians, as is clear from the text. Nor did Domenico clash with Thomas at Reçaş. This was again Domenico Georgi, whom the faithful of Reçaş asked, in Nadali's presence, to supply a priest. István György Tóth, »Domonkos misszionáriusok a török kori Magyarországon és Moldvában (a Hitterjesztés Szent Kongregációja római levéltára iratai alapján)« [Dominican missionaries in Ottoman Hungary and Moldavia (based on documents from the archives of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith)], in: *A domonkos rend Magyarországon* [The Dominican order in Hungary], ed. Balázs Zágórhidi Czigány and Pál Attila Illés. [Művelődéstörténeti Műhely. Rendtörténeti konferenciák, vol. 3]. Piliscsaba-Budapest-Vasvár: PPKE-METEM-DRGY, 2007: p. 98.

⁶ *Archivio storico della Sacra Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o de "Propaganda Fide"* (hereafter cited as: APF), Rome, *Miscellaneae Varie* (hereafter cited as: *Misc. Var.*), vol. 1/a.

⁷ I have made extensive use of the documents in this bundle in my books quoted in note 3. Several letters from it have been published: István György Tóth, *Litterae missionariorum de Hungaria et Transilvania (1572-1717)*, vol. 1 [Bibliotheca Academiae Hungariae-Roma, Fontes, vol. 4]. Rome-Budapest: Accademia d'Ungheria in Roma, 2002: pp. 101-119, passim.

Several of the letters in this bundle are early and highly informative sources on the archbishop of Ragusa's enquiries regarding the Balkans. Archbishop Matteucci's correspondence with Cardinal Galli reveals crucial aspects of his relations with the Ottoman Balkans. Much of the archbishop's activity concerned the transmission of letters and money between Rome and the Balkan Peninsula. The archbishop's role as intermediary, formalized only in the 1620s, emerges from the documents as having operated smoothly in the previous half a century. Communication, then and later, was channelled via Ancona.⁸ With money sent from Rome specifically for the purpose, Matteucci supported the building works of the Bosnian Franciscans: in early 1582, he gave 100 scudi to the minister provincial, Grgo Masnović, to build a monastery in Modriča, and he was asked for an additional 100 scudi for the construction of the Velika friary.⁹ His mediation also included provision of holy oil (Chrism) for the Balkan Catholic chapels.¹⁰ The latter had a jurisdictional aspect, because the Chrism Mass, with its use of holy oil, is a symbol of the union of the priests of the diocese with their bishop, and thereby of the diocese parishes themselves. This aspect was confirmed by the papal privilege by which, in Ottoman-ruled areas outside the Republic, the archbishop of Ragusa could grant absolution in cases reserved for the pope. He could even permit marriage between relatives of the fourth degree, being obliged only to inform the Holy See.¹¹

The jurisdiction of the archbishop of Ragusa in the Balkans is also confirmed by his assignment of chaplains to the Balkan trading colonies, sometimes with approval from Rome, and in his frequent intervention in matters of church discipline. In 1585, with the permission of Cardinal Galli and the Franciscan minister general, he sent the Franciscan friar Francesco da Ragusa to Hungary.¹² Church discipline could hardly be enforced in Ottoman-controlled lands, and deviant priests could only be returned to Ragusa with the assistance of the merchants. Such were the cases of Brother Andrea of the Čiprovci Franciscan friary in Bulgaria and the Albanian don Alessandro, who brawled with Turks

⁸ Archbishop Matteucci went to great pains to convey the correspondence and remuneration of the two Balkan apostolic visitors, Aleksandar Komulović and Tommaso Raggio. *Misc. Var.* vol. I/a, f. 28r, 29r, 50r, 105r, APF.

⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 319r.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 252r.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, f. 32v-33r.

¹² *Ibid.*, f. 31r.

and kept a concubine.¹³ The chaplain of Silistria, Don Matteo, fumed at the sinful life of the merchants, but was warned to show more tolerance. In the meantime, the chaplain's own behaviour did not always set a good example. He once said mass shortly after having beaten up an Orthodox Christian, a serious misdemeanour of which he was ultimately absolved by the archbishop of Ragusa, with papal dispensation.¹⁴ In the understaffed Balkan dioceses, the bishops were almost as frequent sources of trouble as the clerical rank and file. Albanian bishops preferred to stay in Ragusa than among the Albanian hills. When the news of this reached Rome, as in the case of the bishop of Alessio in 1585, it was the duty of the archbishop of Ragusa to send a dilatory bishop to his residence.¹⁵

All of the many and diverse visions of how the Balkan missions should be organized shared a common demand for the foundation of a mission seminary in Ragusa. Archbishop Matteucci, like the several persons we shall encounter later, saw this as the only solution in dealing with the faltering supply of priests. In 1580, he informed Cardinal Galli that he had already sent three priests to Ottoman lands that year, real assistance in this regard could come only from a seminary under Jesuit leadership.¹⁶ This conviction was behind his significant efforts to bring the Jesuits to Ragusa.¹⁷ An even more interesting plan was to found a seminary for the Bosnian Franciscans in Ragusa. He envisaged this as a way of joining together the privileged positions of the Bosnian Franciscans and the Ragusans in the lands of the Ottoman Empire. This would mean bringing the Franciscans, who were tolerated in Ottoman lands, to Ragusa (or more precisely to the nearby localities of Ombla or Daksa). Since the Ottomans had granted the city many privileges, it seemed likely that they would allow novices from Ottoman lands to study in Dubrovnik. The plan bears the outlines of the narrower concept of Illyria, formulated in the following century: novices from Dalmatia, Croatia, Bosnia and (instead of Slavonia, which later joined as an independent realm) Ragusa would be sent to the Franciscan college in Ragusa.¹⁸

¹³ *Ibid.*, f. 32r, 252r.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 32rv.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 30r.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 99rv.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 116r-117r. On the history of the Jesuit mission in Ragusa between 1581 and 1585, see: Miroslav Vanino, *Isusovci i hrvatski narod*, vol. I - *Rad u XVI. stoljeću*. Zagrebački kolegij. Zagreb: Filozofsko-teološki institut DI, 1969: pp. 25-29.

¹⁸ *Mi vien detto che Sua Santità una volta impiegò per un seminario nel monasterio di Veglia in Dalmatia bona quantità di danari, che poi non hebbe effetto. Piglio ardire di metterle in*

The pope and the Franciscan minister general approved the plan, and provided an annual grant of 200 scudi for the seminary. The fact that they also wished to entrust the training of the Hungarian Franciscans prompted the pope to raise the grant to 400 scudi.¹⁹ We do not know why the plan did not come to fruition, but in all probability, Ottoman suspicions gave rise to the resistance of the very cautious Ragusan Senate.

Ragusan intellectuals and the city's Balkan mission

The persons mentioned in the document published below are excellent points of departure for interpreting its content. Tommaso Nadali, Marin Temperica, and Brother Domenico Georgi embody three different types and levels of Ragusa's presence in Balkan church affairs.

The most interesting figure in the document is the archbishop's informer, Tommaso Nadali/Natalis (Toma Budislavić in Croatian name variant). Nadali was born in 1545 into a family which settled in Ragusa from the Nevesinje area in Herzegovina. He studied philosophy and medicine in Bologna and Padua and obtained doctorates in both (1572) before pursuing a career typical of Ragusan physicians. He worked in Ragusa at first, moved to Rome, and then tried his luck in the Ottoman Empire. Between 1575 and 1579, he was a physician at the court of Sultan Murad III, and as a reward for his services, which included the treating of the sultan himself, he was granted a Boban estate in Herzegovina. In Istanbul, he maintained close relations with the envoys of the Western states (mainly France and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany) and the Holy See. He returned

consideratione ch' in nissun parte potrebbe esser di maggior profitto alla christianità che qui torno a Ragusa, havendo quattro miglia lontano duoi luoghi attissimi Ombla et Daxa, prima perché questa relligione di San Francesco è antiquata et a un certo modo tolerata et osservata da Turchi, et la natione Ragusea, tanto de seculari come d'ogn'altra sorte, ha comertio libero fra loro in ogni loco più di nessun altra natione, città o loco di Dalmatia. Et circumcirca ha la Bosna et la Corvatia, nelle quali sono molti christiani et luochi di detti padri di San Francesco, et sono provincie poverissime et piene di calamità, et molti d'essi veniranno liberamente et senza sospetto alcuno ad imparare et a trattenersi a Ragusa o nel Raguseo, che non seranno tolerati da Turchi che vadin'altrove. Et però l'erettione d'un mediocre seminario qui di quattro o sei frati per ciascuna di queste quattro provincie, Dalmatia, Corvatia, Bosna et Ragusa con un poco aiuto del Nostro Signore sarebbe incredibile giovamento alla christianità et a questa relligione di San Francesco, nella quale surgerebbono tuttavia huomini di valore et s'andarebbe spargendo fra infideli maggiormente. Matteucci to Galli, Šipan, 6 October 1580. Misc. Var. vol. I/a, f. 116v, APF.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 31v.

to Ragusa in 1581, and then travelled to Poland, where he became the physician of Bishop Piotr Myskowski of Krakow. Both the bishop and Stephen Báthory, Prince of Transylvania (1571-1586) and King of Poland (1576-1586) held him in high esteem. Myskowski appointed him canon of Krakow (1583) and Báthory raised him to the Polish nobility (1585). He also distinguished himself in literary circles, and socialized with the members of the intellectual elite of Ragusa and Krakow. He wrote poetry, and several Ragusan and Polish authors dedicated their work to him. In 1586, he went to Rome in the retinue of Archbishop Jan Dymitr Solikowski, only to return to Ragusa again. In his home city he worked as a physician, and we know from a Senate decision that he cured the defterdar of Herzegovina in 1598. In 1606, because of his good relations with the Ottomans and local knowledge, the Ragusan Senate appointed him bishop of Trebinje. The pope confirmed the appointment the same year, upon the condition that Nadali be ordained priest and bishop within six months. He died in Naples in 1608, before assuming his episcopal seat.²⁰

Like many of his compatriot physicians, Nadali made judicious use of his privileged position to advance the interests of the Catholic Church. In Istanbul, he and the French ambassador, Jacques de Germigny, did much for the cause of settling the Conventual Minorites in Galata, and he later assisted them by providing useful advice and using his Ottoman contacts.²¹ In 1580 and 1581 he embarked on a long journey through Moldavia, Wallachia, Transylvania and Ottoman Hungary. That journey is documented in the letter published below, and he recalled it in a letter to Grand Duke Francesco de Medici of Tuscany: in addition to enquiring into general affairs of the provinces, he collected ancient

²⁰ Milan Rešetar, »Toma Natalić Budislavić i njegov "Collegium Orthodoxum" u Dubrovniku«. *Rad JAZU* 206 (1915): pp. 136-141; Jorjo Tadić, *Dubrovački portreti*. Beograd: Zadržna knjiga, 1948: pp. 348-368; Basilius Pandžić, *De dioecesi Tribuniensi et Mercanensi* [Studia Antoniana, vol. 12]. Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, 1959: pp. 95-96. For a recent, most thorough biography concentrating on his work in Poland and his relations with the Holy See, see: Danuta Quirini-Popławska, »Tommaso Natalis z Raguzy (Toma Budislavić 1545-1608), między Italią, Polską a Dalmacją«. *Balkanica Posnaniensia* 16 (2009): pp. 87-102.

²¹ He reported on this in a letter addressed to the Jesuit diplomat Antonio Possevino (Kielce, 8 August 1583). *Monumenta Poloniae Vaticana*, vol. VI. *Series Nuntiaturae Poloniae. Alberti Bolognetti nuntii apostolici in Polonia epistolarum et actorum Pars II. a. 1583*, ed. Edward Kuntze. Krakow: Nakładem Polskich Akademii Umiejętności, 1938 (hereafter cited as: MPV VI/II): pp. 477-478.

artefacts and coins.²² In Poland, besides his medical activities, he took part in the anti-Ottoman schemes initiated by the Jesuit diplomat Antonio Possevino and the nuncio, Alberto Bolognetti. An important link in the chain of European alliances conceived by Possevino was to be the joining together of Wallachia and Moldavia. In the course of his travels, Ragusan physician had established good relations with the two Romanian voivodes, Petru Cercel of Wallachia and Petru Șchiopul of Moldavia, having cured the former of a serious illness. Possevino wanted to benefit from these contacts by sending Nadali to the Romanian voivodates as a physician. There, he would scrutinise the situation and win over the two voivodes to the Catholic cause.²³ Possevino thus petitioned the pope for dispensation to enable Nadali, now a canon-physician preparing to be ordained as a priest, to continue his medical practice not only among those surrounding him but also among schismatics and infidels. Possevino harboured great hopes about his mission, holding Nadali, with his knowledge of Turkish, local circumstances and excellent human qualities, to be the best man for the task.²⁴ He probably accomplished his mission in the first half of 1584, and Possevino's report on Moldavia is almost certainly based on Nadali's information. It cannot be a coincidence that Possevino also highlighted the role of Ragusan

²² *Di puoi ho voluto vedere l'Ungheria, la Transilvania et altre provincie della Datia, dove ho raccolto alcune medaglie et altre anticaglie e bizzarrie che ho pensato potere piacere all'Altezza Vostra, e me ne sono tornado in patria per acomodare alcune mie facende...* Nadali to Francesco de Medici, Ragusa, 6 August 1581. D. Quirini-Popławska, »Tommaso Natalis«: p. 101.

²³ *Di costui ch'è di Ragusa et sa la lingua turca, et è amicissimo di Pietro et Petrasco, l'uno principe di Moldavia et l'altro hora della Valacchia, penso usar quando mi incaminerò coll'aiuto divino verso quelle parti. Et esso come è di ottima mente, farà quel che gli si dirà et sotto pretesto di medico vedrò se si potrà lasciarlo presso Petrasco con speranza che Vostra Signoria Illustrissima non si scorderà già di ottener la benedittione da Nostro Signore.* Possevino to Galli, Krakow, 20 August 1583. MPV VI/II: 505.

²⁴ *Però sappia che la mia petitione tendeva principalmente accioché mandandolo in Valachia et Moldavia a quei due vaiovodi che egli conosce, et sapendo egli la lingua turca, et essendo huomo da benissimo et di coscienza et mio amicissimo, desideravo ch'egli, sotto nome di medico, potesse stare appresso quei due vaivodi alcune settimane, et senza far strepito haver tutta quella luce che converrà di quelle parti...* Possevino to Galli, Krakow, 31 January 1584. *Monumenta Poloniae Vaticana*, vol. VII. *Series Nuntiaturae Poloniae. Alberti Bolognetti nuntii apostolici in Poloniae epistolarum et actorum Pars III. Fasc. I. (M. jan.-jun. 1584)*, ed. Edward Kuntze. Krakow: Nakładem Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności, 1939-1948 (hereafter cited as: MPV VII/III/I): pp. 48-49. Apart from those already quoted, correspondence documents related to the matter: MPV VI/II: p. 594; MPV VII/III/I: pp. 71, 168, 175, 188-189.

merchants in maintaining the Catholic church in Iași, where an old Hungarian priest had previously been employed.²⁵

In his will, Nadali left his fortune for the foundation of a seminary in Ragusa. After a long gestation, it was finally established in 1636. The seminary was primarily intended to supply priests for the Ottoman Balkans, making up for the deficiency experienced by the Ragusan archbishops. According to the letter published here, in a passage regarding this problem, Archbishop Matteucci claims that what deterred Ragusan priests from going to the Ottoman Empire was poverty. The archdiocese did not have enough money to maintain the Balkan priests. The reluctance of the Dubrovnik Republic to access the bequeathed assets resulted in a delay despite repeated urging from the Jesuit missionaries in the 1610s and the Propaganda Fide in the 1620s. It was eventually left to the archbishop of Ragusa to set up the seminary. To do so, he had to stand up to the clerical confraternity of Saint Roch, which managed and embezzled the legacy; the bishop of Trebinje, who had his eyes on the post of rector of the proposed college; and the Ragusan Senate, which saw the foundation as politically dangerous and prohibited the admission of young people from the Balkans. After a thirty-year struggle, the seminary opened its doors in 1637, but despite the ambitious plans to welcome young Catholics from the whole Balkan Peninsula, it admitted only six students from the diocese of Trebinje. The seminary did not accomplish even the lowest expectations. The idea of transferring it to Rome or Loreto did not get past the resistance of the Senate, and the seminary lingered on futilely until the early eighteenth century.²⁶

Nadali was thus able to obtain first-hand information on church affairs in Transylvania and the lands under Ottoman rule. He saw the significance of the re-Catholicization efforts of Prince Stephen Báthory and his foundation of a Jesuit college in Cluj-Napoca and a Jesuit residence in Alba Iulia through the

²⁵ *Monumenta Poloniae Vaticana*, vol. VII. *Series Nuntiaturae Poloniae. Alberti Bolognetti nuntii apostolici in Polonia epistolarum et actorum Pars III. Fasc. II. (M. junio 1584-maio 1585, appendix m. jan. 1584 - febr. 1585)*, ed. Edward Kuntze. Krakow: Nakładem Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności, 1950 (hereafter cited as: MPV VII/III/II): p. 436. Possevino and Nadali were initially aiming for the aid of Bartolomeo Bruti, a Venetian-born favourite of the voivode of Moldavia, in promoting the Catholic cause: *ibid.*, pp. 535-536, 565, 626-627.

²⁶ B. Pandžić, *De dioecesi Tribuniensi*: pp. 43-51; Bazilije Pandžić, »Trebinjska biskupija u tursko doba«, in: *Tisuću godina Trebinjske biskupije* [Studia Vrhobosnensia, vol. 2]. Sarajevo: Vrhobosanska visoka teološka škola, 1988: pp. 95-97; Ratko Perić, »Budislavićev pravovjerni zavod«. *Vrela i prinosi* 20 (1994/1995): pp. 29-41.

perspective of the sixteenth-century Jesuit missionaries: the Catholic church in Transylvania was a starting point and a gateway to missions in Ottoman lands.²⁷ In the vision of the Jesuit diplomat Antonio Possevino, evangelization would have started out from the Transylvanian colleges with the help of Ragusan merchants based in Timișoara towards the Romanian voivodates and Ottoman Hungary.²⁸ He also considered that the contact with the Romanian voivodates involving Ragusans based in Buda and Timișoara would be more efficient than the correspondence via the Polish route.²⁹

The other Ragusan mentioned in the letter is almost as fascinating a figure as Nadali. Marin Temperica was born in Ragusa in 1534 and worked as a merchant in the Balkans for twenty-four years, during which he mastered Turkish. Under the influence of a Jesuit missionary in Ragusa, Giulio Mancinelli, he entered the Jesuit Order in 1582. To realize his plan, he needed dispensation from the archbishop, which Matteucci mentions in the letter. The leadership of the order shared the archbishop's view of Temperica's future, and after a year as a novice in Rome, he had so impressed the superior general with his language skills and local knowledge that he was included in a group of missionaries who set out for Constantinople (also including the Italian Giulio Mancinelli and the French Honorat Casa). Temperica's greatest contribution to the cause of the Balkan missions was a report he compiled for the superior general, Claudio Acquaviva, in 1582. Drawing on his quarter of a century of experience, he outlined the possibilities for missions in the Ottoman Empire. After a description of the Balkan peoples, he noted the linguistic unity of the South Slavic world and proposed that missions be launched accordingly. The former Ragusan merchant observed that various dialects of the Slavic language were spoken in nine tenths of the Balkans and differed only in pronunciation. For effective mission work, according to Temperica, a Slavic literary language was to be created out of various dialects. It should not be based purely on the Dalmatian dialect. Considering that Ragusa was the

²⁷ A. Molnár, *Le Saint-Siège*: pp. 135-136.

²⁸ Endre Veress, *Antonii Possevini Societatis Iesu Transylvania (1584)* [Fontes Rerum Transylvanicarum, vol. III]. Budapest: Stephaneum, 1913: p. 199; MPV VII/III/II: p. 436. See also: Otilia Ștefania Damian, *Antonio Possevino e la Transilvania tra censura e autocensura*. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Academia Română, 2015: pp. 209-212.

²⁹ *Et circa il detto breve et lettera [for the voivode of Valachia], se bene io m'ingegnerò di farlo penetrar in Valachia, qualhora vedrò che non debba intopparsi in qualche sinistro, nondimeno humilmente propongo a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima ch'io penserei esser molto spedito che per la via di Ragusi et Buda gli si mandassero altro simile breve et lettera. I Ragusei traficano ordinariamente in Buda et Temesvar contiguo alla Valachia*. Possevino to Galli, Krakow, 8 February 1584. MPV VII/III/I: p. 56.

gateway to the Balkans, he proposed that it should be seat of the seminary for the Balkan missions. The city's merchants moved freely through the empire and could easily escort Balkan novices to Dubrovnik. The letter indicates that Nadali and Temperica were in touch with each other as well as with the archbishop of Ragusa as members of a like-minded, Balkan-mission-oriented city elite, who had direct experience of life in the Ottoman Empire and who were inspired by the spirit of Catholic reform. In Constantinople, however, constant illness thwarted Temperica's grand plans, and he was recalled to Rome to study theology in 1585. On his way home, he stopped in Požega, where the faithful took a great liking to him and asked him to be their bishop.³⁰ When he died in Reggio in 1591, he was a member of the Sicilian province.³¹

Ragusan merchants and the Reformation

For Hungarian cultural history, the most important information in Matteucci's letter is undoubtedly the news of the Antitrinitarian synod of Šimand of 1581 and the theological debate held there. Initially, the peculiar religious policy of the Ottomans did not place any constraints on the developments set in train by the Reformation, nor did it specifically persecute the faithful of the old church. The vacuum created by the disappearance of the traditional secular and church elites—the landowners, town magistrates and church institutions—was filled by the South Slavic merchant class that was filtering in from the Balkans and by the re-constituted Hungarian merchant class. These merchants brought their priests with them, who were joined by Croatian-Bosnian Catholic priests and Hungarian Protestant pastors from the Kingdom of Hungary and Transylvania. The three main Reformation movements (Lutheran in the 1540s and 1550s, Helvetian after the mid-1550s and Antitrinitarians after 1569) spread almost unhindered in many rural towns and villages in Hungary, but met with significant Catholic resistance in some areas, particularly in South Transdanubia.³² Their efforts often failed, mainly in the beginning. In summer 1545, the citizens of Tolna clung to their old

³⁰ Đuro Bašić, »Elogia Iesuitarum Ragusinarum«. *Vrela i prinosi* 3 (1933): pp. 10-12; Josip Jurić, »Pokušaj "Zbora za širenje vjere" god. 1627. da kod južnih Slavena uvede zajedničko pismo«. *Croatia Sacra* 4 (1934/8): pp. 155-158; M. Vanino, *Isusovci*, vol. I: pp. 41-49.

³¹ Josephus Fejér, *Defuncti primi saeculi Societatis Jesu (1540-1640)*, vol. I. Rome: Institutum Historicum S. I., 1982: p. 248.

³² For most recent survey, see: Antal Molnár, »Reformáció a hódolt Magyarországon« [Reformation in Ottoman Hungary]. *História* 31 (2009-10): pp. 5-11.

faith and forced the Lutheran teacher Imre Zigerius to depart after a few weeks. Three years later, however, the community adopted Lutheran doctrines and were persuaded by Zigerius's successor to recall Zigerius to the town.³³ Similarly, desperate Catholic resistance was reported by the Lutheran preacher Mihály Sztárai: "It would be a long story, my dear Miklós, to relate how many clashes I have had with the pope's little priests during the seven years I have been preaching the word of God," complained the reformer in his famous letter of 1551.³⁴

The chief representatives of Catholic resistance were the Ragusan merchants. The first generation of reformers claimed that the Ragusans used their money and their close contacts with the Ottoman authorities to obstruct the dissemination of the new doctrines in Ottoman Hungary. The pastor of Zmajevac, György Prodanisinus, wrote to Wolfgang Musculus, professor of theology in Bern, about the 1550 Vaskaszentmárton Synod, complaining that the Catholics of South Baranya county were managing to remain in place through the support of the Ragusan merchants: "We are in bitter acrimony with the Roman Catholics, who are so much supported by the Italian merchants who ply their trade in this part of Hungary that we have much trouble and work, because they do not shrink from advancing their cause using money with the Turkish officials; in this way they divert the still-wavering faithful from the true path."³⁵ The Tolna preacher Imre Zigerius also saw the Ragusans as the main obstacle to the dissemination of the gospel in his report to Matthias Flacius Illyricus (1549): "... the godless Ragusans, your compatriots, who do business in the Turkish camp, are enemies of the gospel."³⁶

³³ Géza Kathona, *Fejezetek a török hódoltsági reformáció történetéből* [Chapters from the history of Reformation in the era of the Ottoman occupation] [Humanizmus és reformáció, vol. 4]. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1974: pp. 50-51; Mihály Bucsay, »Eszéki Imre levele Flaciushoz« [Imre Eszéki's letter to Flacius], in: *Tanulmányok és szövegek a magyarországi református egyház XVI. századi történetéből* [Studies and texts on the history of the Hungarian Calvinist Church in the 16th century], ed. Tibor Bartha. [Studia et Acta Ecclesiastica, vol. III]. Budapest: A Magyarországi Református Egyház Zsinati Irodájának Sajtóosztálya, 1973: pp. 908-909.

³⁴ János Karácsonyi, Ferenc Kollányi and József Lukcsics, *Egyháztörténelmi emlékek a magyarországi hitújítás korából. Monumenta ecclesiastica tempora innovatae in Hungaria religionis illustrantia*, vol. V. (1548-1551). Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1912: p. 544.

³⁵ Endre Zsindely, »Wolfgang Musculus magyar kapcsolatainak dokumentumai« [Documents on the Hungarian relations of Wolfgang Musculus], in: *Tanulmányok és szövegek*: pp. 980, 988. Etele Thúry, in his treatment of the Vaskaszentmárton Synod, mistranslated this sentence: Etele Thury, »Az 1550. évi vaskaszentmártoni zsinat« [The Council of Vaskaszentmárton in 1550]. *Protestáns Szemle* 25 (1913): pp. 475-476.

³⁶ G. Kathona, *Fejezetek*: p. 50.

The Ragusan Franciscan Seraphinus Pantanus came to Pest in 1565. His theological dispute with the Calvinist preacher of Ráckeve, István Szegedi Kis, which ended in humiliating defeat, is reported by Kis's pupil, the not entirely impartial Calvinist preacher Mate Škarica. Pantanus—as recorded in Szegedi's witty satirical poem—was “Italian”, which meant Ragusan. Compared with an average Catholic priest in Ottoman lands, he was highly educated, with an excellent knowledge of Greek and Hebrew. He brought a pile of books to Ráckeve to refute Szegedi's teaching. The preacher was also prepared for the dispute, and even invited the Catholics of Ráckeve to the church. Frater Seraphinus's erudition was found so badly wanting that his own flock, the Italians and the “Thracians”, slunk out of the church, obliging him to carry his books home without the help of the followers who had brought them. Szegedi wrote a dialogue essay out of the lessons of the dispute. Unfortunately, the text has not survived, but Skaricza makes a brief reference to its content: “From these it was naturally evident how recklessly and in how much disregard for true sense the bulk of papists still cling to their mass, to purgatory, to the annual feasts and similar lies, to the miscreations of the human mind, and take up firebrand and lance, because in their conceit they brandish weapons of iron, but against the power of the holy fighting spirit and crushing truth, these are weapons of reed and lead.”³⁷

All of the reports quoted were published in the propaganda pamphlets at the time, spreading news of the Ragusans' anti-Reformation activity throughout Europe. Flacius summed up the negative view of the Ragusans in the Reformation world: “The Ragusans are very rich merchants, like those of Nuremberg and Augsburg. They trade in the whole of the Mediterranean region, with Christian and Turkish partners. The fear that if they accept Christ, they will no longer be able to do business with the papists... If they cannot serve both Christ and Mammon, then—they think—it is better to serve Mammon and its assistants, the god of their bellies, and like our Mamelukes, they are very adept and industrious in their activity today. But it is a much greater sin for someone to deny the gospel who already knows, accepts and confesses it, than he who has never known it.”³⁸

The significance of the Ragusans in this respect stemmed from two principal factors. One, as emphasized forcefully in the reports, was their wealth and good relations with the Ottomans, through which they were able to influence the propagation of Catholic confession under the conditions of Ottoman rule. The

³⁷ G. Kathona, *Fejezetek*: pp. 105, 133.

³⁸ M. Bucsay, *Eszéki Imre*: p. 910.

other aspect may be understood in the context of the Balkan mission prophecies of the early Reformation.³⁹ The planning of the Reformers in Hungary and Germany to convert the Balkan Slavs must have been frustrated by the Ragusans' solid Catholicism and resolute action. This was obviously the context in which Flacius compared them to the Mamelukes in his own camp, the Interimists and the Adiaphorists.⁴⁰

Highly relevant to these events was Archbishop Matteucci's final item of news concerning the Ragusan intervention at the Antitrinitarian synod in Šimand. This major centre of radical Reformation in the Partium was the location of the only known printing press in Ottoman Hungary. A market centre on the river Maros, its citizens were converted to the Antitrinitarian faith by a mission led by the preacher István Basilius, who set out for Ottoman lands after 1569. By 1570, a large community had adopted the Antitrinitarian doctrines.⁴¹ Pál Karádi, who became pastor of Šimand in 1570, is mentioned in the sources as having subsequently been the bishop of the Great Plain, so that in the early 1570s, Šimand was the seat of the Antitrinitarian bishop in Ottoman Hungary. In September 1570, a Calvinist-Antitrinitarian theological debate involving the Calvinist preacher Péter Melius Juhász and the Antitrinitarian preachers István Basilius and Pál Karádi, an important event for the mission, took place in Šimand. The fact that Karádi ran his printing press in Šimand, where he published pamphlets written by the Antitrinitarian mission of Ottoman Hungary, further added to the prominence of this town.⁴²

³⁹ On the ideas concerning missions, see: Géza Kathona, »A délszláv nyelv szerepe a 16. sz. törökmissziói váradalmaiban« [The role of the South Slavic language in the expectations of the Catholic missions to the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century]. *Theológiai Szemle* 2 (1959): pp. 423-426; Stjepan Krsić, *Počelo je u Rimu. Katolička obnova i normiranje hrvatskoga jezika u XVII. stoljeću*. Dubrovnik: Matica hrvatska – Ogranak Dubrovnik, 2009: pp. 75-121.

⁴⁰ The Reformation-historical background of Flacius's pamphlet: G. Kathona, *Fejezetek*: pp. 45-46.

⁴¹ Mihály Balázs, *Teológia és irodalom. Az Erdélyen kívüli antitrinitarizmus kezdetei* [Theology and literature. The beginnings of anti-Trinitarianism outside Transylvania] [Humanizmus és reformáció, vol. 25]. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 1998: pp. 33-45. One of the main sources on the Antitrinitarian mission, the monumental eighteenth-century history of the Unitarian church by János Kénosi Tözsér and Fosztó Uzoni, has come to light in recent years and provides much information on the Antitrinitarian communities in the South Hungarian Great Plain, including the history of Šimand. János Kénosi Tözsér and István Uzoni Fosztó: *Unitario-ecclesiastica Historia Transylvaniae*, vol. 1-2. [Bibliotheca Unitariorum, vol. IV/1-2], ed. János Káldos, introduced by Mihály Balázs. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2002.

⁴² Sándor Dörnyei, »A XVI. századi simándi nyomda« [The printing house of Simánd in the 16th century]. *Magyar Könyvszemle* 80 (1964): pp. 172-174; Mihály Balázs and János Káldos, »Karádi Pál nyomdája« [Pál Karádi's printing house], in: *Fata libelli. A nyolcvanéves Borsa Gedeon köszöntésére*

An indication of a shift in the relative strengths of the confessions in Temesköz and along the river Maros was that less than ten years later it was the Catholics rather than the Calvinists from whom the Antitrinitarians were facing opposition. The strengthening of Catholic positions in the South Hungarian Great Plain was clearly related to the consolidation of the Ragusan trading outposts in Timișoara. The first record of a merchant working in Timișoara dates from 1554, two years after the capture of the town. Settlement and trading activity on a substantial scale started only in the 1560s, when Timișoara joined Buda as an outpost of the Belgrade colony. The Timișoara merchants mostly traded on credit from Belgrade, and the less wealthy traders who settled in the town were often associates of their wealthier compatriots in Belgrade. By the 1570s, the Timișoara colony had become the most important base of Ragusan merchants in Hungary.⁴³

Just as the trading presence consolidated, so did the position of the Catholic Church. Timișoara was the end point of the first apostolic visitation in Hungary. It was where the visitor, Bishop Bonifacije Drakolica, died in 1582, as did his assistant, the Jesuit priest Bartolomeo Sfondrati, in 1583.⁴⁴ In the 1580s, the town became one of the targets of Ragusan Benedictine and Bosnian Franciscan missionaries.⁴⁵ The Dominican friar Domenico Georgi, who is mentioned in Archbishop Matteucci's letter, was active in Timișoara between 1581 and 1584 as chaplain of the Ragusan merchants. Georgi was typical of the Ragusan chaplains in the Balkan trading colonies. His activity was not confined to the Catholic chapel in the town, as he also served in the Catholic outposts in the area, using the power and money of the merchants to intervene on behalf of the endangered communities.⁴⁶ He regularly visited towns with Catholic populations that lacked a priest. In 1581, the faithful of Recaș begged the Dominican chaplain for a priest, as was witnessed by Nadali, who accompanied him. The report mentions Recaș, Lugoj and Caransebeș, which became the main centres of the Temesköz missions in the seventeenth century.⁴⁷

írták barátai és tanítványai [Writings in honour of Gedeon Borsa's 80th birthday by his friends and students], ed. Judit P. Vásárhelyi. Budapest: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, 2003: pp. 215-228.

⁴³ Bogumil Hrabak, »Dubrovački trgovci u osmanlijskom delu Panonije do 1570. godine.« *Zbornik Matice srpske za istoriju* 30 (1984): pp. 17-18, 26-35.

⁴⁴ A. Molnár, *Le Saint-Siège*: pp. 116-117, 136-139.

⁴⁵ Antal Molnár, »Missionari benedettini ragusei nell'Ungheria Ottomana.« *Rivista di Studi Ungheresi* 11 (2012): pp. 47-68.

⁴⁶ A. Molnár, *Le Saint-Siège*: pp. 54, 117-119, 137; I. Gy. Tóth, »Domonkos misszionáriusok«: pp. 92-95.

⁴⁷ A. Molnár, *Le Saint-Siège*: pp. 303-311; Antal Molnár, »Jezsuita misszió Karánsebesen (1625-1642)« [The Jesuit mission in Karánsebes]. *Történelmi Szemle* 41 (1999): pp. 127-156.

All this calls for certain reconsideration of the somewhat confusing information concerning Pál Karádi's expulsion from Şimand. Karádi was forced to leave Şimand in 1572, worked in Lugoj for a while, and then went to Timișoara to take the place of Benedek Óvári, who in turn moved to Şimand.⁴⁸ The event is recorded by an Antitrinitarian refugee from Heidelberg, the renegade Adam Neuser, in a famous letter of 1574: "Before I left the lands of the Transylvanian voivode, or rather prince, I went to a place called Lugusch, and lo, in that place I found the above-mentioned printer Paulus. He read the letters the superintendent had written to him, and then he related how those of the Vlach faith had banished him from the town. By giving gifts and making accusations before the pasha, they forced him and the people of his house to leave, and now he lives in Lugosch."⁴⁹

Who were these "Romanians" who petitioned the pasha of Timișoara to have Karádi removed from Simánd, and why did they do so? Neither György Zsigmond nor the rediscoverer of the letter, Antal Pirnát, have observed anything odd here,⁵⁰ Sándor Dörnyei and Mihály Balázs, however, in the essays cited here, have pointed out the problems inherent in this information.⁵¹ We do not know of any Protestant-Orthodox religious conflict in sixteenth-century Ottoman Hungary to have taken place before an Ottoman court. Nor does it seem probable that, at the time, along the banks of the Maros, a Romanian secular (merchant) elite or church organization

⁴⁸ Karádi served in Timișoara as the bishop of the Antitrinitarians of the Great Plain until his death around 1588. Around 1580 he was still also active in Şimand. Éva Haas, »Pál Karádi«, in: *Ungarländische Antitrinitarier*, vol. III, ed. Mihály Balázs [Bibliotheca Bibliographica Aureliana, vol. CCIV. Bibliotheca Dissidentium. Répertoire des non-conformistes religieux des seizième et dix-septième siècles, vol. XXIII]. Baden-Baden–Bouxwiller: Valentin Koerner, 2004: pp. 51-52.

⁴⁹ In 1774, Lessing published the letter from documents in the Herzog-August Bibliothek of Wolfenbüttel, with copious commentaries. Translations of its parts concerning Hungary were published by: György Zsigmond, »Neuser Ádám«. *Századok* 45 (1911): pp. 781-785, the quotation: p. 784. In the German original, the extract from the letter reads as follows: *Ehe ich aber aus des Weyda oder Fürsten in Siebenbürgen Landen kommen, und zog in den Flecken mit Namen Lugusch, da finde ich in selbem Flecken vorgemeldten Buchdrucker Herrn Paulum. Nachdem er die Briefe las, so ihm der Superintendent geschrieben, zeigt er mir an, wie er aus der Stadt Schiman vertrieben wäre von denen, so den Wallachischen Glauben. Dieselben hätten mit Geschenk und Verklagniß bey dem Bascha soviel zuwege gebracht, daß er hätte weichen müssen, und wohne itzund mit seinem Hausgesinde zu Lugusch.* Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, »Von Adam Neusern, einige authentische Nachrichten«, in: Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. VII, ed. Paul Rilla. Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1956: pp. 591-605, the quotation: p. 594.

⁵⁰ Antal Pirnát, *Die Ideologie der Siebenbürger Antitrinitarier in der 1570er Jahren*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1961: p. 124.

⁵¹ S. Dörnyei, »A XVI. századi simándi nyomda«: p.173; M. Balázs and J. Káldos, »Karádi Pál nyomdája«: pp. 220-221.

existed with such economic or institutional strength to proceed before the pasha of Timișoara against the pastor of a peasant community of a Hungarian market town. The first record of such action against the Bosnian Catholics by (Serbian, not Romanian!) Orthodox Christians in Temesköz dates from after the middle of the seventeenth century. These conflicts developed in a completely different context, and the purpose of the Serbian bishops was clearly the economic and jurisdictional subordination of the Catholics.⁵² The Reformation made only very modest progress among the Romanians in the sixteenth century. It is true, however, that the efforts towards a “reformed” Romanian church organization started out from the court of John Sigismund voivode of Transylvania, which had become Antitrinitarian. This mission vitality may have defined the character of the drive into the Partium after 1569, and just as the Transylvanian Orthodox Romanians resisted the Reformation propaganda, so the Orthodox faithful of the Partium may have been similarly unenthusiastic. Another detail to be considered is that it was in the area around Lugoj and Caransebeș that the Reformed Romanian church organization retained its positions over a longest period after 1571.⁵³

Nonetheless, we might reasonably question how interesting or dangerous a Hungarian Antitrinitarian printer, who published theological works for disputes with his Calvinist compatriots, was to Romanians who lived in Șimand and its surroundings. I find it hard to imagine that they could have given him the slightest thought, let alone spent a considerable sum to have him removed by launching proceedings before the court of the pasha of Timișoara. Indeed, who were the persons that Neuser referred to as “of the Vlach faith”? We may conclude from the examples we have seen and from the letter published here that the Ragusans, who are often mentioned in the sources as Latins or Italians, were much more likely to have had an interest in the expulsion of an Antitrinitarian missionary and printer from a town which probably already had a substantial Catholic population. They also had the ability to get what they wanted from the second highest government official in Ottoman Hungary. For the Heidelberg renegade Neuser, the Italianized Dalmatian cultural substratum could easily have been confused with that of the Vlach.

⁵² A. Molnár, *Le Saint-Siège*: pp. 308-309.

⁵³ Imre Révész, *A reformáció az erdélyi oláhok között* [Reformation among the Olahs of Transylvania] [Erdélyi Füzetek, vol. 2]. Debrecen: Debreceni Székely Társaság, 1938: pp. 13-16; István Juhász, *Reformáció az erdélyi románok között* [Reformation among the ethnic Romanians of Transylvania]. Kolozsvár: Grafika könyvnyomda, 1940: pp. 76-97.

The 1581 Antitrinitarian synod of Şimand mentioned in Nadali's report was probably connected with Basilius's visitation tour of the South Great Plain the previous year, when he is known to have arrived in Şimand. One effect of his tour was to strengthen local church institutions.⁵⁴ The synod was almost certainly convened by Bishop Pál Karádi and the Şimand pastor Benedek Óvári. Georgi and Nadali appeared at the synod as part of the Catholic defence efforts initiated by the Ragusans, and with their intervention prevented the Antitrinitarians from removing the Catholic priest of the neighbouring village of Măderat. They even persuaded the Ottoman authorities to banish and punish the Antitrinitarians. This event was partly the continuation and conclusion of a series of anti-Reformation operations the Ragusans started in the late 1540s, and partly the opening act of a new era, that of the Catholic missions, which in the following decades resulted in the consolidation of the South Slavic component of the Catholic confession and in a renewal of Catholic-Protestant conflicts, particularly in the area covered by the Jesuit missions. An interesting document of the first process as regards Şimand is a letter sent to Rome by the Croatian-speaking Catholics of Şimand and Pilu, via Brother Domenico, in 1584, supplicating the pope's assistance in the matter of the shortage of priests.⁵⁵ The dispute between the Catholics and the Antitrinitarians in Şimand clearly presaged the conflict between these confessions in the years following the foundation of the Jesuit mission in Pécs in 1612.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Mihály Balázs, »István Basilius«, in: *Ungarländische Antitrinitarier*, vol. I, ed. André Séguenny [Bibliotheca Bibliographica Aureliana, vol. CXXI. Bibliotheca Dissidentium. Répertoire des non-conformistes religieux des seizième et dix-septième siècles, vol. XII]. Baden-Baden – Bouxwiller: Valentin Koerner, 1990: p. 103.

⁵⁵ *Acta Bosnae potissimum ecclesiastica cum insertis editorum documentorum regestis ab anno 925 usque ad annum 1752.*, ed. Eusebius Fermendžin [Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum meridionalium, vol. 23]. Zagreb: Academia Scientiarum et Artium Slavorum Meridionalium, 1892: pp. 336-337.

⁵⁶ Antal Molnár, *A katolikus egyház a hódolt Dunántúlon* [The Catholic Church of the Ottoman Transdanubia] [METEM Könyvek, vol. 44]. Budapest: METEM, 2003: pp. 43-45.

*Source***Girolamo Matteucci, Archbishop of Ragusa,
to Cardinal Tolomeo Galli**

Šipan, 26 August 1581

The signature is autograph.

Summary of the document

Arriving in recent days was the Ragusan physician Tommaso Nadali, to whose virtues, the former archbishop of Ragusa, Vincenzo dal Portico, could attest. On his journey, he travelled through Bulgaria and Lower Mysia, crossed the Danube into Hungary and Transylvania, and then re-crossed the Danube and proceeded through Upper Mysia and Bosnia to Ragusa. In Transylvania, he awaited the arrival of Stephen Báthory, King of Poland (facilitated by the conclusion of peace with the Tsar), who had come to consolidate the situation in the province. He sought an audience with the King through the good offices of his chaplain from Zadar, a graduate of Padua, who has great authority before the King and has done much to help the Christians there. The people and the King greatly respect the Holy See, and they hope for the same from the new prince. For restoration of the churches at moderate expense, he recommended that the remaining costs be borne by the lords who cited this reason for not returning the seized church property.

In Simánd, the heretics held a synod to expel the parish priest of Măderat, near Şiria, who had admitted the Holy Trinity, but Nadali met the Ragusan Dominican friar Domenico [*Georgi*], the chaplain of Timișoara brought by the Ragusan merchants, and together they spoke up against the heretics, who fell into confusion, driving them away and punishing some of them. There is a great need for priests everywhere, especially in Recaș, where the locals, in Nadali's presence, asked Brother Domenico to supply them with a priest, otherwise they would be obliged to ask for a Lutheran, because they did not want to remain without a priest. There are several places in Transylvania without priests, particularly Lugoș and Caransebeș.

The Jesuit college in Cluj-Napoca will be very useful, and the same is true in Alba Iulia, the seat of the prince, where there are two priests who preach continually.

Brother Domenico has started to announce the feasts to the people, and may be reproached only for a bit of avarice, for which reason it is to be feared that he may be loath to tolerate the arrival of other priests.

Marin Temperica of Ragusa wishes to join the Soldiers of God, and has requested a letter of dismissal from the writer of this letter, and Cardinal Guastavillano and Mr Giacomo have also written to him on this matter. Nadali has greatly praised him, he has excellent knowledge of Turkish customs and he has a very good reputation in Ragusa. The archbishop Matteucci will be pleased to send him his dismissal. He recommends that he practice the language with an associate so that in a year's time he may be sent to Turkish lands, to where he will also soon send a priest from Ragusa. The priests here are all poor. Those who have nothing do not want to go there, and the others must also be aided by donations. If the archdiocese had the means, it would help, because it sees the great need. He emphasizes the need to establish a Dalmatian seminary, because there is no better means of increasing and retaining the faithful than a priesthood in the native language, and this language is in use in many provinces.

APF, *Misc. Var.* vol. I/1. f. 273r–274v.

Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Monsignore,
mio Signore et Patrone sempre Colendissimo.

Li giorni passati tornò da Constantinopoli un messer Tomasso Nadali Raguseo populano medico di bona consideratione et tinto di molte virtù, delle qualità sue monsignore Portico⁵⁷ ne potrà dar raguaglio, et havendo fatto la strada della Bulgaria et Missia inferiore, passò il Danubio in Ungaria et poi in Transilvania, tornandosene per il medemo Danubio per Missia superiore et la Bossena. Referisce che soprastandosi in Transilvania sin'all'arrivo del re di Polonia⁵⁸ (che si faciliterà et affetterà seguendo la pace, che se dice, col Moscovito⁵⁹) per asodare bene il stato di quella provincia, sia bene di valersi presso quel re d'un suo capellano Zaratino⁶⁰, ch'ha studiato in Padua, essendo di molt'auttorità presso quella maestà, et poter dare molto giovamento al cristianesimo in quelle parti. Et poiché nel populo è gran devotione et tanto nel detto re è molt'osservanza verso cotesta Santa Sede, et il medemo si spera nel novo principe di Transilvania.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Archbishop Vincenzo dal Portico of Ragusa (1575-1579) was transferred by the pope to the diocese of Foligno, and after 1581, he held various offices in the Papal States.

⁵⁸ Stephen Báthory, Prince of Transylvania (1571-1586) and King of Poland (1576-1586).

⁵⁹ Báthory led a campaign against Russian tsar Ivan IV between 1579 and 1581.

⁶⁰ I have been unable to identify the Báthory's Zadar-born chaplain.

⁶¹ He refers to Stephen Báthory's nephew Sigismund Báthory, later prince of Transylvania, who succeeded his father Christopher Báthory (d. 27 May 1581) as voivode.

Lauda che si tenga modo di proponere temperamento di risarcire le chiese con mediocre dote o assegnamento, concedendo il remanente delli beni ecclesiastici a quelli signori et baroni del paese, che gli retengono, scostandosi per quel rispetto di non restituire gli beni ecclesiastici usurpati dalla Chiesa Romana.

Che facendosi nella città di Simandra⁶² in Ungaria un sinodo d'heretici per cacciare via un sacerdote parocchiano di Maghiaretto⁶³ apresso Vilagusc⁶⁴, che tenea la Trinità, imbattendosi esso messer Tomasso con un fra Domenico da Ragusa⁶⁵ delle ordine di San Domenico, parochiano di Tamisfar⁶⁶, condotto dalli mercanti Ragusei, esporno in modo che gli heretici restorno confusi, cacciati et alcuni castigati.

Che per tutti quelli luoghi è bisogno di sacerdoti, et particolarmente nel Recas⁶⁷, dove gl'habitanti in presentia del medemo messer Tomasso dissero a detto fra Domenico, che gli provedesse d'un sacerdote, che altrimenti sereborno constretti a valersi d'un Luterano, non volendo stare senza prete, parendogli di vivere senza capo. Et il medemo bisogno essere in molt'altri luoghi di Transilvania, et specialmente in Logosvar⁶⁸ et a Sebis⁶⁹, luoghi circumvicini, vivendo per inopia di pastori more bellaurum.

In Colosvar⁷⁰ il collegio dei reverendi padri jesuiti farà gran frutto et molto progresso, et medemamente in Alba Giulia⁷¹, sedia del principe, dove duoi d'essi attendono a predicare continuamente.

Che detto fra Domenico havea cominciato a denunciare le feste al populo et a dar qualche forma, biasmandolo solo d'un poco d'avaritia, et per questo rispetto teme che mal volentieri soporti avvicinemento d'altre persone religiose.

Si trova hora costì un messer Marino Tampariz⁷² Raguseo, ch'essendosi risoluto di darsi alla militia del Signore, mi ricerca di dimissoria, havendomi

⁶² Șimand, Simánd, Romania

⁶³ Măderat, Magyarád, Romania

⁶⁴ Șiria, Világos, Romania

⁶⁵ Domenico Giorgi OP, chaplain of Timișoara.

⁶⁶ Timișoara, Romania

⁶⁷ Recaș, Rékas, Temesrékas, Romania

⁶⁸ Lugoj, Lugos, Romania

⁶⁹ Caransebeș, Karánsebes, Romania

⁷⁰ Cluj-Napoca, Kolozsvár, Romania

⁷¹ Alba Iulia, Gyulafehérvár, Romania

⁷² Marin Temperica SJ (1534-1591), Ragusan merchant and later Jesuit missionary in Istanbul.

per ciò scritto l'illustrissimo et reverendissimo signore cardinale Guastavillano⁷³ et l'eccellentissimo signore Giacomo⁷⁴. Il sopradetto messer Tomasso lo lauda molto per bontà et per esser huomo informatissimo del procedere et costumi turcheschi, et qui n'ho buone relationi. Io gli mandarò la dimissoria tanto più volintieri. In tanto piglio ardire di mettere in consideratione a vostra signoria illustrissima et reverendissima che con un compagno della lingua si faccia costi essercitare, acciò con un spatio d'un anno si possa mandare in quelle parti, dove io in breve inviarò un sacerdote da Ragusa attendendolo a sgrossare. I preti qui sono tutti poveri, quelli ch'hanno niente di fermo, non vogliono andare et gl'altri bisogna aiutarli con l'elemosine. Dio sa che se l'arcivescovato havesse il modo, non mancherei in ciò, quanto mi persuade il gran bisogno.

Tutto per avviso a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et Reverendissima et [per informare quei signori]⁷⁵ che qui si continua a pregare continuamente Dio per farli pietosi per [tantissima]⁷⁶ opera dell'eretione del seminario dalmato, non essendovi migliore instrumento all'augumento et mantenimento dei fedeli, che degli huomini di questa lingua, che scorre per tanti regni et provincie.

Et per fine humilissimamente le bacio le mani, pregandole da Dio Signore ogni contento.

Di Giuppana, li 26 d'agosto MDLXXXI.

Di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima et Reverendissima

devotissimo et obligatissimo servo
Hieronimo arcivescovo di Ragusa⁷⁷

[Address:] All'Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Monsignore, mio Signore et Patrone sempre Colendissimo, il Signor Cardinale di Como. Roma.

[In another hand:] 81/26 agosto. Arcivescovo di Ragusa.

⁷³ Cardinal Filippo Guastavillano (d. 1587), nephew of Pope Gregory XIII.

⁷⁴ Not identified.

⁷⁵ Two words illegible due to a tear.

⁷⁶ Uncertain reading due to a tear.

⁷⁷ Signature is original.