

Benedict Kišdy: Founding Father of the University of Košice*

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Benedict Kišdy (Kisdy, Kiski, Kischdy), bishop of Eger and an important figure in the recatholicization of north-eastern Hungary, is one of the most important figures in the history of Košice in the early modern period. Kišdy's most memorable activity was the founding of the University of Košice, which had a long-term impact on the cultural and intellectual development of the city beyond the first intention of its founder, i.e. recatholicization. The present study analyses the place of Kišdy in historiography from the time of the Jesuits and the possibilities of using the biographical method in the case of Benedict Kišdy. An important role in Kišdy's life was played by his attitude towards Peter Pázmaň, Jesuits and Franciscans. The theoretical question of Kišdy's place among the most important personalities in the history of Košice is raised, which is partly answered by the still vivid commemoration and places of remembrance connected with Kišdy.

Keywords: Benedict Kišdy; Košice; Biography; Recatholicization; Diocese of Eger; Seventeenth century.

Introduction

The Jesuits were the pioneers of research on the (early modern) history of Košice. In the first third of the eighteenth century, they developed the initial framework for documenting the history of Košice. These works merge the historical concept with a geographical or topographical view, resembling modern travel guides in content. They consist of two main parts: first the origins of the city and second its description through the most important buildings and their history. In the historiography of Košice, the narrative approach replaced the previous method in the nineteenth century. This approach presents the city's history in a chronological manner. There is a tradition of specific schemes (chronicles of Košice history) in the historiography of Košice. These schemes have been rewritten and expanded over time, but still form the basic framework of the early modern history of Košice as presented in the historiography of Košice. Bishop Benedikt Kišdy (as written in Slovak, also appearing as Kisdy in Hungarian, Kiski in Latin and Kischdy in German), who founded the University of Košice in 1657, holds a significant place in the history of Košice due to his contributions.¹

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¹ Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, Országos Levéltár (hereinafter MNL, OL), fund Magyar Kamara Archivuma, E152, Acta Jesuitica (hereinafter AJ), Regestrata (hereinafter Reg.), fascikel (hereinafter fasc.) 1, folia (hereinafter f.) 15.

The Jesuit historiography

The history of Košice is chronicled chronologically, based on the significant events of the seventeenth century. This includes the Betlen (Bethlen) uprising, the martyrdom of three Catholic priests in 1619, Betlen's marriage to Catherine of Brandenburg in 1626, the execution of Peter Čásar (Császár) in 1632, and the military-political activity of Juraj Rákoci (Rákóczi) in the 1640s. The period between 1648 and 1660 in the history of Košice was dominated by the recatholicization efforts of Benedict Kišdy. Subsequently, the chronicle of Košice's history records the events of the 1670s, which were marked by violent recatholicization and the construction of Leopold's citadel in the southern suburbs of Košice. In the 1680s, Košice was occupied by the Kuruts under Imrich Tököli's leadership.

The historiography of Košice began with the Jesuits, who had a particular interest in emphasizing the significance of Benedict Kišdy for the city's history. Later, individuals from Košice's intellectual centre, represented by the Royal or Law Academy, Kišdy's university's successor, continued to develop the history of Košice. In the traditional scheme or basic concept of writing about the history of Košice in the seventeenth century, it is therefore natural that the university and Benedict Kišdy should be mentioned at the same time. It is worth noting that this scheme persisted even after the establishment of Czechoslovakia, as evidenced by the guidebooks on the history of Košice from the interwar period. Furthermore, it remained unchanged during the communist period of Slovak historiography. During this period, a new synthesis of Košice history with a new ideological interpretation could have displaced it from this scheme, or a completely new scheme oriented towards the economy, social differences and the consequences of political changes on the population could have been created. However, Ondrej Halaga (1956) did just the opposite and emphasized once again the importance of Benedikt Kišdy in the history of Košice and the University of Košice. As a result, Kišdy is now considered one of the prominent figures in Košice's modern history surveys, thanks to this tradition dating back to the early eighteenth century. Kišdy's involvement with Košice extended beyond the university and only came to a chronological end with it. Activities related to the seminary, convent, Chapter of Eger, Jesuits and Franciscans preceded it. Benedict Kišdy served as the bishop of Jager for a relatively brief period of twelve years in Upper Hungary.

The study of the early modern history of Košice dates back to the eighteenth century, when the first modern historical work on the history of Košice was written.² Apart from its relevance to our topic, the short work by the Jesuit John Babtist Trstánský (Tersztyánszky) on the old and new Košice (*Cassovia vetus ac nova*) from 1732 provides the fundamental framework for the (early modern) history of Košice. This work has been expanded and restructured in subsequent works based on it. In his writing on the recent history of Košice, Trstánský relied heavily on older works that focused on the history and topography of Hungary. These works briefly described the history of cities through their most important buildings, with the exception of an introductory section devoted to the very beginnings of the city. Trstánský added factual information to each section, but dedicated the most space to the history of the Jesuits' activities in the city. The author solely mentions Kišdy³ and neglects to give attention to the university. The focus is on the missionary and pastoral activities of the Jesuits, which

² TERSZTYÁNSKY, *Cassovia vetus, ac nova*.

³ *Ibidem*, 111.

may suggest the priorities of the first Society of Jesus. It is possible that the relationship to the founder of the university was not as essential to pastoral ministry as the already existing college founded and funded by King Ferdinand III. However, the monarch and the Jesuits are not extensively discussed in this scholarly work, except for the martyrs of 1619. The limited attention given to Kišdy is a result of the chosen conception and aim. John Akai published his work shortly after Trstanský (1743).⁴ Since it was devoted to the history of the Jesuits in Košice until 1640, Kišdy did not appear in it.

During the eighteenth century, no monographic work on the history of Košice was published, but in a brief overview of the topography of Hungary and the Hungarian counties from 1718 (i.e. before Trstanský), the Jesuit Michael Bombardi mentioned the university and its foundation by Benedict Kišdy, along with other religious buildings.⁵ Additional information on the history of Košice was provided by the Jesuit Ladislav Turóci (Turóczi), who studied in Košice and was also a professor for some time. In 1729, a work on the history of Hungary and its individual counties was published. The university and other pedagogical and formative institutes in Košice, run by the Jesuits, were mentioned briefly. However, there was a note about the foundation of the university by Benedict Kišdy.⁶ Despite Kišdy's merits for the foundation of the university, the Jesuits did not elaborate on his activities or personality in the above-mentioned works. Matej Bel then drew on the works of Bombardi and Turóci in describing the Hungarian counties, both in the conception of the manuscript on Abov county (1731)⁷ and in the informative survey of the Hungarian counties (1779),⁸ in which he mentioned the university among the most important institutions in the city, but without mentioning its founder. Similarly, in the geographic-historical lexicon of Hungary published in 1786 by Ján Mateja Korabinský, the author of the entry on Košice referred to Kišdy.⁹ In the late 1760s, Nicholas Schmitth published the third volume of the great history of the bishops of Eger. Benedict Kišdy was presented here not in the context of the history of Košice, but of the bishopric. For the first time, he was given more space in the form of a chapter devoted to his ecclesiastical career. Schmitth published transcriptions of documents related to his activities, including the purchase of a house for the Košice seminary.¹⁰

The modern historiography

During the next century of Košice's history, two important works on the city's past were written. However, factual information about Kišdy was not expanded until the end of the nineteenth century. Research on the history of Košice was interrupted after the dissolution of the Society of Jesus and only resumed at the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century. In the *Chronicle of Košice* (1860), John Plath,¹¹ a professor at

4 AKAI, *Initia Cassoviensis Societatis Jesu*.

5 BOMBARDI, *Topographia Magni Regni Hungariae*, 132.

6 TURÓCZI, *Ungaria suis cum regibus compendio data*, 262.

7 GYULAI, *Cassovia vetustissima*, 313–314.

8 BEL, *Compendium Hungariae geographicum*, 86. Bel mentions Myšla Priory (p. 88) as being owned by the Jesuits, which clearly was not true in the year of publication (1779), as the Jesuit order had already been dissolved.

9 KORABINSKY, *Geographisch-Historisches und Produkten Lexikon*, 290.

10 SCHMITTH, *Episcopi Agrienses*, 251–266.

11 FICERI, *Význam Plathovej kroniky*, 36.

the Royal Academy in Košice, mentions Kišdy at the moment of the foundation of the university,¹² as does Jozef Tutkó in the Chronicle of the History of Košice published a year later.¹³ The team led by Sam Borovszky expanded the factual information on Kišdy through their work on Abov county, adding details on the foundation of the university and other institutions, including Kišdy's role in the initiative.¹⁴ During the late nineteenth century, when histories of Hungarian gymnasias were commonly written, Professor Robert Farkas of the Košice Premonstratensian gymnasium produced a fundamental work on the history of the University of Košice (1895), in which, in addition to Kišdy's merits in founding the university, he devoted considerable space to Kišdy's life and activities before the "Eger period".¹⁵ In the following year, the fifth volume of a monumental encyclopaedia on important personalities in Hungarian cultural history was published, including a short but comprehensive entry on Kišdy.¹⁶

During the first half of the twentieth century, Vojtech Wick was a leading historian of Košice, especially in the field of ecclesiastical history, and he presented Kišdy in several of his works.¹⁷ In 1956, on the occasion of the tercentenary of the founding of the University of Košice, Ondrej Halaga published a study on its history. He briefly summarized Kišdy's founding activity in Košice.¹⁸ During the period of creating syntheses and encyclopaedias of Slovak history and its personalities, Kišdy was included in the third volume of the *Slovak Biographical Dictionary*¹⁹ by the staff of Matica Slovenská. The source used for this entry was Szinney's lexicon. Subsequently, Kišdy is only mentioned in shorter articles dedicated to the university, the Hungarian-Latin Catholic songbook *Cantus Catholici*, Baroque art, or the work *Hungarian Simplicissimus* in Hungarian historiography and public writing.²⁰ The interest in both the university and Kišdy was revived in this country after 1989, on the 340th anniversary of the university's foundation. Kišdy's biography was presented by Peter Sedlák in a volume published on this occasion.²¹ Although there was no special contribution on Kišdy in the two collections published ten years later, his name was naturally mentioned in most of the contributions.²² The history of the University of Košice and theological education there has long been the subject of Cyril Hišem, and it was in this context that he presented his findings on Kišdy.²³

12 PLATH, *Kaschauer Chronik*, 135.

13 TUTKÓ, *Szabad királyi Kassa*, 146–147.

14 BOROVSZKY, *Abauj-Torna vármegye és Kassa*.

15 FARKAS, *A kassai kath. főgymnasium története*, 30–31.

16 SZINNYEI, *Magyar írók élete és munkái*.

17 WICK, *A jezsuita rend története Kassán*, 13–15; WICK, *Kassa régi temetői*, 146; WICK, *A kassai Szent Erzsébet dóm*, 99–101, 122; WICK, *Kassa története és műemlékei*, 128–129; WICK, *Kassa története*, 16.

18 HALAGA, *Z dejín Košickej university*, 526.

19 *Slovenský biografický slovník*, 85–86.

20 BELITZKY, *Nógrád megye története*, 206; HAUSEL, *Szécsényben született*, 24–26; LŐKÖS, *A Magyar avagy Erdélyi Simplicissimus*, 365–366; RIDOVICS, „Az emberi váltságának kúcsa”, 202; MIHALIK, *Felekezeti konfliktusok*, 123; SZILASI, „...Magyar Országának őtalmazójának...”, 349; *Magyar Katolikus Lexikon*.

21 SEDLÁK, *Život a dielo biskupa Benedikta Kišdyho*, 20–25.

22 HIŠEM – ELIÁŠ – FEDORKOVÁ, *350. výročie Košickej university*; MARINČAK, *Potvrdenie jezuitskej košickej univerzity*.

23 HIŠEM, *Teologické vzdelávanie a výchova v Košiciach*, 22–23; HIŠEM, *Teologické vzdelávanie na Košickej univerzite*.

The aim of this article is not to expand the factual base as it is presented in Schmitth's monograph on the Eger bishops in the eighteenth century and most recently summarized in the above-mentioned article by Sedlák, but to outline the possibilities of research and to highlight some aspects connected with Kišdy's life and activity. A brief analysis of selected works on the history of Košice proves the validity of including Kišdy among the personalities of Košice's history. Kišdy had a great influence on the ecclesiastical history of Košice and Upper Hungary, with whose territory his activities were connected at the height of his activity. In historiography, too, Kišdy is mentioned mainly in the history of Košice and the Eger diocese,²⁴ with the exception of the hymnal *Cantus Catholici*,²⁵ and only marginally in the history of Szécsény (Sečany) and the Novohrad region.²⁶ The importance of Kišdy's personality naturally requires a monographic elaboration, as he has so far only received attention in the form of short chapters. The present article falls somewhere in between in terms of scope and elaboration – I would like to develop the short biography into several thematic headings, which would be completed by a monograph at some point in the future.

Not only the beginnings of Košice's historiography, but also the beginnings of historiography itself are connected with personalities. History was described on the basis of its actions, and personalities were presented as its main actors. This oldest method of historiography has experienced its retreats and returns over the years, only to find its application again in more recent times. Meanwhile, in the conflict between the determinants – being the determiner and/or the determinant of history – a balance has been struck that has made it possible to see their impact on history with a sober perspective. Within the development of biography and the biographical method itself, several methods have been developed that corresponded to the concept of cultural history of the Annales school. Within this framework, individuals without much influence on history, but with preserved archival material, were also given space, which made it possible to reconstruct their lives as typical or atypical representatives of their social and professional group. Another great methodological contribution was the collective biography, which, despite the shortcomings of the statistical method in historical research (especially early history), have brought inspiring procedures and results to the knowledge of past society.²⁷

The biography and the application of the biographical method in the case of Benedict Kišdy

If we move to the environment of Košice (and Upper Hungary), we find that the application of the biographical method has its limits and sequence. If we consider the writing of history as a human construction (although history itself, in its elementary nature, rather resembles a natural landscape), it is impossible to ignore the foundations and the sequence of certain processes. Writing about the personalities in a city, without an elaborated history of the city itself, is like drawing a figure on a white canvas. The person/personality remains in a vacuum, without confrontation with its environment. A biography in such a case is not useless, it is just incomplete. Kišdy's greatest influence on the history of Košice is connected with the recatholicization of the city in the

24 SUGÁR, *Az egri püspökök története*; HORVÁTH, *Az egri egyházmegye rövid története*, 5.

25 LAUKOVÁ, *Cantus Catholici v interpretácii*, 21–22, 28.

26 BELITZKY, *Nógrád megye története*, 206; HAUSEL, *Szécsényben született*, 24–26.

27 FEDORČÁK, *Biografia a biografická metóda*, 29.

religious sphere and with the founding of the university in the cultural sphere. However, neither the history of the city in the seventeenth century nor its ecclesiastical and religious history for this period has been compiled, and Kišdy's activity is only a part of it. Thus, research on individual topics precedes the development of larger syntheses on the history of Košice. Perhaps this inductive progression from the parts to the whole, forced by circumstances, will, after the whole has been completed, allow a return to the lower level of personalities and then to the even lower level of the little-known or unknown inhabitants of Košice who made their history (their own and the history of the city), such that the reconstruction of their work and life will take place in an already more familiar world of Košice history.

The authors of the historical works on the history of Košice mentioned at the beginning of this article automatically included Kišdy among the important personalities of Košice. In this context, it is appropriate to pause to define this category. Who is a personality and how can we define the meaning of personality in the context of the (Košice) regional history? For the history of Košice in the early modern period and especially in the seventeenth century, we encounter two problems. The influence of personalities on the (local) history (of Košice) was not only positive (in the eyes of contemporary society or contemporaries) or not positive at all. Moreover, almost none of the personalities of Košice history came from Košice or, with a few exceptions, spent more than a relatively short time in Košice. Nevertheless, we are talking about Košice personalities because, from the point of view of historiography, they significantly influenced the history of Košice. Nevertheless, the inclusion of individuals among the Košice personalities is more intuitive than systematic. For example, we do not include the Hungarian rulers, although their decisions and policies significantly influenced the life of the town. Even Peter Pázmaň (Pázmány, Pazmanus), who was active in Košice for a short time (in total spending more time in Košice than Kišdy or the leaders of the anti-Habsburg uprisings),²⁸ is not traditionally included among the personalities of Košice. This is probably because his activities in the city did not have such a significant impact on the history of Košice. However, although he did not directly influence the micro-history of Košice, his involvement in the Hungarian political and ecclesiastical scene indirectly brought about important changes in the history of Košice, both in the short and long term.

Other common features of the seventeenth-century Košice personalities include the fact that they were also personalities on the Hungarian scale, and their activity was mainly connected with political (politico-military) and religious conflicts (an exception being the poet Jan Bocatius, though he, as a representative of the city, was also involved in a conflict with the imperial court).

The selection of important personalities of the seventeenth century in Košice, and continuing up to 1711, consists of a list of names that is perhaps richer in well-known names than in other centuries: John Bocatius, Barbiano de Belgiojoso, Stephen Bočkaj (Bocskai), Peter Alvinci (Alvinczi), Gabriel Betlen (Bethlen), the three martyrs of Košice, Juraj Rákoci (Rákóczi), Benedict Kišdy, Imrich Tököli and Francis II Rákoci. They appear in this order in all publications on the history of Košice, starting with the earliest ones, such as Terstánský's *Cassovia vetus ac nova*. In the historiography, the reason or, as in the iconography of hagiography, the attribute for which these persons are Košice personalities is always given, and they never stand out separately without

28 ÖRY, *Péter Pázmány in Kaschau*, 73–102.

being directly connected to their work. For example, in the case of the leaders of the uprising it is the military events, and in the case of Kišdy it is the university. In addition to these most prominent personalities, there are many others, such as Francis Vešelényi (Wesselényi), Peter Pázmaň, Žofia Bátoriová (Báthory), who financed the construction of the Jesuit church and whose funds were probably used to build the Košice citadel, and Zuzana Balážová (Balassa), thanks to whom the noblemen's convent was built.

The basic elements of short biographical texts on personalities have long had a similar, almost encyclopaedic structure.²⁹ Typical are the prologue and the epilogue, between which is the core or active period, filled with the most significant activities of the personality under study. The prologue describes the conditions into which the personality under study was born and grew up. The religious and political views of their immediate environment, which they were automatically expected to adopt, are traced. As with many personalities, the period of Kišdy's study is a turning point. It is the time when the first personality changes take place, when one forms one's own attitudes, establishes contacts, develops new emotional bonds and, depending on one's luck or diligence, is directed towards a career. At the same time, it is the first period for which we have a little more information than for childhood. This is usually followed by a brief account of the career up to the highest office or rank, where the person under study usually did most of the historically recorded important work. The conclusion is usually brief and tells of the person's twilight period of inactivity, when either health or political circumstances forced them out of the social arena. A brief account of the death is usually the last part of the biography, unless it is followed by a brief summary of the person's importance to history and possibly a more detailed discussion of some part of the work to which the biographical text was only an introduction. Typical of this type of biography is a decidedly positive or even heroic portrayal of the individual.

The form of such a text in the case of Kišdy might be as follows: Benedict Kišdy was born in 1598 or 1599 in the town of Szécsény³⁰ in the county of Novohrad.³¹ He probably came from a middle-class background.³² He studied at the Jesuit gymnasium in Trnava and theology in Vienna and Rome. He was ordained a priest in 1622 and became the chaplain of the archbishop of Esztergom, Peter Pázmaň. Later he was a parish priest in Podunajské Biskupice and Šaľa. He was appointed canon of the chapters of Bratislava (1626) and Esztergom (1629) and in 1629 archdeacon of Hont. From 1631 he was prepost of Svätý Jur, from 1636 (according to another source 1638³³) prepost of Hatvany³⁴ and

29 VALENTOVIČ, *Základná štruktúra biografického hesla*, 310–315; ĎURANOVÁ, *Štruktúra biografického hesla*, 42–46; GRAJCIAR, *Biografické heslá v Encyklopédii Slovenska*, 316–320.

30 Szécsény was located in the territory occupied by the Turks from the middle of the sixteenth century and was the centre of the administration of the Turkish Sandžak. During the 15 Years' War (1596–1606), Hungarian troops occupied Szécsény in 1593, so by the time Kišdy was born, Szécsény was no longer in Turkish hands. BOROVSKÝ, *Magyarország vármegyéi és városai*.

31 Sedlak tends towards 1599, while Schmitth, Hausel and Belitzky mention 1598 with the comment that this is not certain. SEDLÁK, *Život a dielo biskupa Benedikta Kišdyho*, 20; SCHMITTH, *Episcopi Agrienses*, 251; HAUSEL, *Szécsényben született*, 24; BELITZKY, *Nógrád megye története*, 206.

32 Not much is known about his family or his childhood. It is usually said that he came from the middle class of the town's population; only Anna Ridovics disagrees, claiming that he came from a noble family. Sándor Hausel, on the other hand, concludes that nothing is known about his family. SEDLÁK, *Život a dielo biskupa Benedikta Kišdyho*, 20; RIDOVICS, „Az emberi váltásnak kúcsa”, 202; HAUSEL, *Szécsényben született*, 24.

33 SCHMITTH, *Episcopi Agrienses*, 255.

34 He was the prepost in Hatvan until 1650, when the canon of Esztergom, František Szentbenedeki, became the prepost. MNL, OL, fund Magyar Kancelláriai Levéltár – Libri regii, A 57, volume 10, p. 500.

from 1642 grand prepost of Esztergom.³⁵ The new archbishop of Esztergom, Imrich Lossy, appointed him vicar general. In 1644 he was appointed and consecrated bishop of Sriem, in 1646 bishop of Oradea,³⁶ prepost of Bratislava³⁷ and royal counsellor.³⁸ These bishoprics were occupied by the Turks. In 1648 he was appointed bishop of Eger and count of the counties of Heves and Solnok.³⁹ He died on 22 June 1660⁴⁰ in Jasov and was buried in Košice in the Franciscan church that served the Eger chapter. The most significant part of his activity belongs to the "Eger" period. He managed to transfer the Eger chapter to Košice before 1649.⁴¹ In 1649 he founded and materially provided a seminary in Košice. The Latin-Hungarian Catholic hymnal *Cantus Catholici* was published with his support in 1651. In 1657 he founded a university, which was confirmed by Leopold I in August 1660, two months after Kišdy's death.

Previous biographies of Benedict Kišdy have followed the traditional chronological principle. They were shorter texts, ranging in length from a chapter in a monograph to articles and encyclopaedic entries. In this way, Kišdy's biography has been reconstructed, but there has not yet been room for a greater development of his biography and thus for a more comprehensive use of the biographical method, which is not exhausted by a basic treatment of biography, just as the inclusion of dates and events is not yet history. The biographical method requires that the personality be anchored in relationships and connections with its historical environment. These explain and help the modern researcher to understand the actions and behaviour of the individual.

Kišdy's career and recatholicizing activities

In the case of Benedict Kišdy, in addition to the basic biographical sketch, we can trace a number of other themes, such as the social background from which he came. Military, ecclesiastical and administrative careers allowed the middle and lower classes to climb the social ladder quickly. Kišdy (and even Pázmaň) did not come from a distinguished family, but he was chosen for a high ecclesiastical post because of his education and abilities. The question of social origin, the course of the ecclesiastical career, the age reached at the time of episcopal appointment, and the comparison with the development up to 1526, before and after the actual application of the decisions of the Council of Trent (the beginning of the seventeenth century), create space for a comparative and collective biography, in which data on individual bishops would enter. In comparison, both Kišdy's career and his recatholicizing activities would gain their contemporary social dimension (context). Peter Pázmaň may also be a certain model for the further development of the biographical method. It was Pázmaň who was the most important, even the determining element in Kišdy's life. This was due to the fact that Pázmaň entrusted him with important functions in the Archdiocese of

35 The decision was issued by King Ferdinand III in 1644. MNL, OL, fund Magyar Kancelláriai Levéltár – Libri regii, A 57, volume 9, pp. 609–610.

36 MNL, OL, fund Magyar Kancelláriai Levéltár – Libri regii, A 57, volume 9, pp. 705–706.

37 MNL, OL, fund Magyar Kancelláriai Levéltár – Libri regii, A 57, volume 9, p. 712.

38 MNL, OL, fund Magyar Kancelláriai Levéltár – Libri regii, A 57, volume 9, p. 689.

39 MNL, OL, fund Magyar Kancelláriai Levéltár – Libri regii, A 57, volume 10, pp. 105–106.

40 SEDLÁK, *Život a dielo biskupa Benedikta Kišdyho*, 20–21.

41 ZUBKO, Peter. *Dejiny Košickej kapituly (1804 – 2001)*. Prešov: Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 2003, s. 20.

Esztergom⁴² at a relatively young age, but also because Pázmaň was his inspiration. In terms of history and historiography, Kišdy stands in his shadow. A comparative biography, especially with Peter Pázmaň, would be very interesting precisely because of the many similarities. Kišdy, like Pázmaň, was fond of popular missions at a time when he was not yet a bishop. The way in which the pastoral ministry was carried out was modern in the context of the guidelines of the Council of Trent, as was the emphasis on education itself or on supporting the education of clergy and laity – through schools, catechesis and the press.

In connection with Kišdy's origins, it would be necessary to analyse his writings⁴³ and try to sketch his national profile. In this respect, I will only mention that his name is spelled differently in different languages, literature and archival documents, but he preferred Hungarian in his correspondence and also the Hungarian way of writing his name.⁴⁴ In historiography, however, we can find an attempt to prove his Slovak origin by referring to the originally Slovak environment of the small town of Szécsény in Novohrad, from which he came.⁴⁵ In order to create a complete personality profile, it would be advisable to deepen this issue with the help of genealogical research and documents of local provenance.

Another interesting aspect is the political sphere. Kišdy appeared briefly in the diplomatic service of the court and also in the political arena of the Hungarian Diet. Only a few years after Benedict Kišdy's death, an uprising was being prepared in the territory of Upper Hungary, i.e. in the territory of the Eger diocese, in which the archbishop of Esztergom, Juraj Lipaj, the captain of Košice, František Vešelény, and František Rákoci were to play a leading role. Regardless of this fact, it would certainly be useful to draw up a "political profile" of Benedict Kišdy, including his attitude to the Habsburgs. In the political sphere, the Hungarian Catholic elite of the time did not share the same views as the royal court. The assertiveness of the so-called national party in Hungarian politics during this period can be observed in several ways, including in the ecclesiastical sphere. For example, even among the Jesuits in Hungary in the 1650s there were tendencies towards greater independence from the Austrian province.⁴⁶

The success of recatholicization as Benedict Kišdy's main and most important activity depended directly and indirectly on his political activity and his contacts with political leaders at the provincial and regional levels.⁴⁷ Kišdy was one of the main figures of recatholicization in Hungary.⁴⁸ Like Pázmaň, Kišdy made direct contact with Protestant families in order to convert them and the serf population. In this respect, this activity was quite successful, but it would also be useful for the knowledge of the history of recatholicization if Kišdy's activity were treated in as much detail as possible.

42 MNL, OL, f. Magyar Kamara Archívuma, E152, AJ, Reg., fasc. 8, f. 312–315. RIDOVICS, „Az emberi váltságának kúcsa”, 202.

43 ELIÁŠ, Michal. Rukopisná literárna pozostalost ako prameň výskumu osobnosti. In: *Biografické štúdie*, 1972, roč. 3, s. 49–52. MATULA, Vladimír. Význam vydania listov Ľudovíta Štúra pre slovenskú historiografiu. In: *Biografické štúdie*, 1995, roč. 22, s. 191–196. MAŤOVČÍK, Augustín. Krčméryovská korešpondencia ako literárno-biografický prameň. In: *Biografické štúdie*, 2003, roč. 29, s. 158–164.

44 Archív mesta Košice, f. Magistrát mesta Košice, Odd. Schwartzenbachiana, č. 8392.

45 SEDLÁK, *Život a dielo biskupa Benedikta Kišdyho*, 20.

46 FEDORČÁK, *Jesuit Mission in Košice*, 55.

47 MNL, OL, fund Szepesi Kamarai Levéltár, E 244, Szepesi Kamara Regisztraturája, Minutae, pp. 38, 82, 84–85.

48 RIDOVICS, „Az emberi váltságának kúcsa”, 202.

As already mentioned, Kišdy was not active in Upper Hungary until his appointment as bishop of Eger, but on his arrival he acted quickly and energetically to speed up the recatholicization of the area. As a new person in the area, he had to establish contact or cooperation with as many influential people as possible.

Apart from the nobility, relations with the Košice magistrate were also important. From the point of view of the history of Košice, which became the place of his fundraising activities, it is good to point out the hospitable attitude of the magistrate, which could and did have various causes and should not be overestimated. It was mainly the pressure of the state authorities, the imperial court, the Hungarian Diet and the Hungarian, mainly Calvinist, nobility that forced the city's leaders to make religious concessions to Catholics and Calvinists at that time. In any case, Kišdy's contacts and cooperation with the magistrate were successful and, as far as can be reconstructed from the documents, free of conflict.⁴⁹

In the case of recatholicization itself, the question is how to measure its success and, at the same time, estimate as accurately as possible the share of individual personalities. One could describe the instruments and follow the changes that led to further changes (the conversion of a nobleman and the subsequent recatholicization of a parish, or the building of a seminary and the subsequent qualitative and quantitative improvement in pastoral care). In this regard, the appropriate choice of more effective instruments should be appreciated. Of these, the establishment of a seminary,⁵⁰ the foundation of a noblemen's convent and the publication of the hymnal *Cantus Catholici* probably had the greatest impact on promoting recatholicization. Kišdy proved in many ways to be a good observer and copyist of Pázmaň's work, which, moreover, had been successfully applied for several decades. It can therefore be said that what Peter Pázmaň was for Hungary and Hungarian Catholics, Benedict Kišdy was for Upper Hungary and Košice.

Kišdy, Jesuits and Franciscans

Although Kišdy supported the Jesuits, their settlement in Košice and the establishment of the college were relatively independent of Kišdy's activities. Kišdy initiated the foundation of the university⁵¹ to educate seminarians (and laymen) mainly from the nobility and bourgeoisie. It was the Košice seminary that was to be the most important part of the recatholicization, for despite the popular missions of the Jesuits and Franciscans, the conversion of the landowners would not have been successful without suitable diocesan priests to carry out pastoral work in the parishes. However, the pace of change was not dramatic. Although the establishment of the seminary in Košice clearly contributed to the recatholicization of the Eger diocese, in 1699 there were 119 diocesan priests in the diocese (with the exception of one county) and 15 monks who assisted in the pastoral work in the parishes. In 1700 there were 213 Catholic and 844 Protestant and Orthodox churches in the diocese in ten counties (excluding two). The seminary in Košice was insufficient and in 1700 a seminary was founded in Jágri.⁵² They were united in 1760.⁵³

49 MNL, OL, fund Magyar Kamara Archívuma, E152, AJ, Reg., fasc. 3, f. 98–101; fasc. 6, f. 217.

50 MNL, OL, fund Magyar Kancelláriai Levéltár – Libri regii, A 57, volume 16, p. 403.

51 MNL, OL, fund Magyar Kamara Archívuma, E152, AJ, Reg., fasc. 1, f. 22, 23; fasc. 13, f. 706.

52 MIHALIK, *Felekezeti konfliktusok*, 123.

53 SZECSKÓ, *Bozsik Pál*, 303.

While in the Slovak and especially in the Košice area, emphasis is placed on the establishment of the university and other pedagogical and educational institutions in Košice, for the history of Hungarian (and especially Catholic) culture (and the Hungarian language), Kišdy's support for the publication of the first Latin-Hungarian Catholic hymnal *Cantus Catholici* in Trnava in 1651 is of equal, if not greater, importance.⁵⁴ Its author was the Jesuit Benedict Szöllősi (Szöllősi, Szöllösi), as was the Latin-Slovak hymnal published four years later (1655) in Levoča. The Slovak Cancionale was not a translation of the Hungarian one, but as far as the textual part was concerned, they had 57 songs in common.⁵⁵ Szöllősi, who was of Slovak origin, was a priest among the Slovak believers in Košice in 1651, when the Hungarian Cancionale was published.⁵⁶ Szöllősi came into contact with Kišdy at this time at the latest, from whom he received the hymnal imprimatur and to whom Szöllősi dedicated the Latin dedication.⁵⁷ Kišdy's approval initially led some historians to believe that the songbook was printed in Levoča. Szöllősi may have obtained an imprimatur for the Slovakian hymnal from the archbishop of Esztergom, Juraj Lipaj, partly because the Hungarian hymnal was successful and well received in church circles.⁵⁸ In order for the hymnal to be accepted and associated with the Catholic hierarchy, Szöllősi did not put his name or any other name on the frontispiece of either hymnal, but only the name of the ecclesiastical authority that approved the hymnal. In addition, the name was emphasized by its size.⁵⁹ The Latin-Hungarian *Cantus Catholici* was published a second time in Košice in 1674 and again in Trnava in 1703.⁶⁰

Kišdy's relationship with the Franciscans is a special chapter. Although the Jesuits had a great influence on his intellectual formation and he worked with them in Košice, it is his contacts with the Franciscans and their spiritual heritage that appear several times in his life. It was probably the Franciscans who had great influence on him in his childhood.⁶¹ At that time, around 1610, they resumed their activities in Szécsény, where there was an abandoned medieval Franciscan monastery. Although Kišdy spent most of his life outside the Novohrad region, he maintained contact with the Franciscans in Szécsény.⁶² The Franciscans also sent him to the church school in Trnava.⁶³ This fact and this assumption shed new light on Kišdy's preference for the abandoned Franciscan church in Košice, where he placed the Eger chapter.⁶⁴ He had the main altar built in the church in 1657 (not the present side altar, which now bears his episcopal coat of arms)⁶⁵ and wished to be buried in the crypt of the church under the main altar, which

54 HAUSEL, *Szécsényben született*, 25–26; RIDOVICS, „Az emberi váltáságnak kúcsa”, 202; SZILASI, „...Magyar Országának őltalmazójának...”, 349.

55 LAUKOVÁ, *Cantus Catholici v interpretácii*, 21–22, 28.

56 RUŠČIN, *Cantus catholici*, 39.

57 SZŐLLŐSI, *Cantus Catholici*, (Dedicatio).

58 RUŠČIN, *Cantus catholici*, 45.

59 Ibidem, 46.

60 SZINNYEI, *Magyar írók élete és munkái*.

61 HAUSEL, *Szécsényben született*, 24.

62 BELITZKY, *Nógrád megye története*, 206.

63 HAUSEL, *Szécsényben született*, 24.

64 GALLA, *Ferences misszionáriusok Magyarországon*, 188.

65 RIDOVICS, „Az emberi váltáságnak kúcsa”, 202.

he was.⁶⁶ Francis II Rákoci, the leader of the last anti-Habsburg uprising, also came to pray before this main altar, which Kišdy had financed during his stay in Košice in 1707,⁶⁷ from the captain's house, which stands approximately opposite the church.⁶⁸ In addition to the main altar, Kišdy also commissioned a pulpit in 1657.⁶⁹ In 1654, Kišdy, together with other political and ecclesiastical leaders of Hungary, contributed to a collection for the Franciscan buildings in Győr.⁷⁰

Remembering Benedict Kišdy

Benedict Kišdy's funeral was also included in the famous work Hungarian *Simplicissimus* (1683). Daniel Georg Speer, in chapter 29, in an episode related to Eger, describes the transport from Jasov, where Kišdy died on 22 June 1660, and the placing of his coffin in the crypt of the Franciscan church a short time later. Speer does not mention him by name, but only as bishop of Eger.⁷¹

Benedict Kišdy is also present in Košice through the place of his memory. In 1665 the Jesuits who were in charge of the seminary named it *Kisdianum* (*Seminarium S. Ladislai Kisdianum*).⁷² Later, one of the streets of Košice was named after him. In the Hungarian period of Košice (*Kisdý Benedek utca*) it was today's *Mojmírova* street, and today the street running through the courtyard of the residential complex at the corner of *Komenský* and *Tomášikova* streets is named after him.

Conclusion

There are other interesting points in Benedict Kišdy's biography that will hopefully be filled in by extensive future research. The aim of this article was primarily to lay the theoretical foundations, which could undoubtedly be further developed methodologically, in order to facilitate the direction of much-needed scholarly research on this important figure in the history of Košice. The article outlined how the biographical method has been used so far in the case of Benedict Kišdy and what possibilities there are for its use. The personality of Benedict Kišdy can be used mainly to describe the history of recatholicization, the history of the Eger bishopric or the history of the University of Košice through his actions. However, the interest in this personality should neither begin nor end with the interest in these "larger themes". These themes are also the way through which previous researchers have almost invariably reached Kišdy. Starting from the opposite side or perspective, we would begin with his own characterization, move on to his interaction with his environment, and come back to trace the changes brought about by this interaction and how he dealt with the experience of different roles in different periods of his life. This approach would imply a focus on the person. In conceptions of the history of Košice, Kišdy has long had his own place, along with boundaries of interest that he has not yet left. At the same time, Košice has shaped and continues to shape the space in which the memory of him, his place in historical memory, has been created. At the same time, it was here

66 Ibidem.

67 Ibidem.

68 DUCHOŇ, *František II. Rákoci a jeho Košice*, 54.

69 RIDOVICS, „Az emberi váltságának kúcsa”, 202.

70 NÉMETH, *Adalékok a szentferencrendiek*, 100.

71 LŐKÖS, *A Magyar avagy Erdélyi Simplicissimus*, 365–366; SPEER, *Uhorský simplicissimus*, 183–184.

72 RIDOVICS, „Az emberi váltságának kúcsa”, 202.

that his profile in the history of recatholicization and the history of education was created. This has allowed us to trace the formation of this historical memory and the construction of Kišdy as a Catholic hero of recatholicization. The hero is always a social construction, and the creation or birth of the hero is a process in which historiography plays an important role.

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