

# The “Reconciliation-Related” Implications of Jubilees or the Interpretation of Interconfessional Rapprochement

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**T**HE 19<sup>th</sup> century brought about major economic as well as social changes throughout Europe, such as the fast industrialization of the leading cultured states and the birth of the modern cities, consequently overshadowing the rural areas, the establishment of the industrial working class and the nouveau riche class, as well as the stratification of society. New changes arose in political life, mainly brought about by the extension of political rights and the peoples’ pursuit for the establishment of free constitutional and national states. As a natural consequence thereof, the spiritual life also exhibited the defining characteristics of this age.

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Protestant churches had different reactions to the strong secularization. The age featured two kinds of religious developments: on the one hand, “the awakening movements” started, in which great emphasis was laid on the individuals’ religious experience beside the classic reforming principles, and on the other, they did not want to return to the old system but rather they looked for “modern” theological answers in the spirit of Romanticism.

At the dawn of the new age, the Christian denominations also stepped into the age of revival. During the Enlightenment, independent thinking became important for the modern man, establishing a world culture that tried to shake off church tutelage. New philosophical and theological approaches arose, somehow counterbalancing the well-established philosophy of the Enlightenment.

The Protestant churches were also affected by the fact that Christianity was set aside in the new society on its path towards secularization, as the new middle class no longer needed religious church life as much as before, if at all. In this new situation, either church awakening or traditionalism was visible in the religious life. The Protestant churches generally acknowledged that society had changed and the former were dissolved. Consequently, many congregation members started doing social work, helped the poor, established nursing homes etc.<sup>1</sup> For instance, this was the time when in Germany the domestic and foreign missions started.<sup>2</sup>

The background of the union-related efforts<sup>3</sup> was that in Germany the effects of the Enlightenment and Pietism weakened the attachment to the confessions of faith and the respect towards the church. What is more, according to the enlightened approach,

the dogmatic issues became completely redundant. Pietism somewhat shared the same opinion, as only “the state of the heart” mattered, and not the teachings of the creed. In this sense, if one got converted, the dogmatic differences did not matter anymore.<sup>4</sup>

Prussia radically reforming its statehood was at the core of this process.<sup>5</sup> One of the noble members of the dynasty, the Reformed Protestant Hohenzollern, Frederick William III (1797–1840), sought the reforms the most. He was a Reformed Protestant himself while his wife was Evangelical. In the ruler’s opinion, religion and dogma were different from each other, and as he deemed the latter insignificant, he sought to unite only the ritual of the two churches. The king did not wish to implement any dogmatic changes.

The 300-year jubilee of the Reformation was an opportunity for the interconfessional rapprochement of the Protestant churches.<sup>6</sup> Frederick William III would have wanted to unite them in 1817 on the 300<sup>th</sup> jubilee of the Reformation. For the worthy celebration of this anniversary, he also invited the Protestant churches of the country to complete the union since, in his opinion, the ruler had a say in the decision of the church, and since the service rules were part of external church governance, which pertained to the prince.

The ministers in Berlin led by Friedrich Schleiermacher decided prior to the publication of the prince’s declaration that they would seal the union on the anniversary of the Reformation in a common ritual (the breaking of the bread), i.e. by partaking of the sacrament. Consequently, on 30 October 1817 the ministers in Berlin, and later on 31 October the Berlin congregations as well as the Prussian court in Potsdam sealed the union. The provinces hailed the union although at first only a few congregations accepted the united rite. For example, we can mention that almost all congregations adhered to this united rite in Rhine-Westphalia while only a few in the other provinces.

Certainly, there were also other places in which the union was sealed besides Prussia. For example, in August 1817 the Reformed Protestant and Lutheran churches united in the principality of Nassau (Wiesbaden) prior to the introduction of the union in Prussia. Their example was followed between 1817 and 1822 by the Grand Duchy of Hesse, in 1818 by the Bavarian Rhine-Pfalz and a part of the Hesse electorate (province of Hanau, 1822: University of Marburg, confessional situation unclear since the reorganization award of 1821), in 1821 by the Grand Duchy of Baden and the Principality of Waldeck, in 1820 by Bernburg, and in 1827 by Dessau (Köthen did not join the union but after 1880 it fostered relations with the united church of the rest of Anhalt, 1863: the three principalities united in one duchy).<sup>7</sup>

The 300-year celebration of the Reformation was authorized by the Chancellery of Vienna by the decree issued on 26 August 1817 provided nothing hurtful should be said about the other denominations on the jubilee.<sup>8</sup>

There were also both Catholic and Protestant voices who were so excited about the jubilee that they considered not only the Protestant unification feasible but also the re-unification of all Christian faiths. One of them was Sámuel V. Járdánházi,<sup>9</sup> who considered the idea of the re-union earlier in 1722, extending it to all Christian denominations. Despite the fact that only the related Hungarian manuscripts have been preserved, the

matter was discussed in quite large circles.<sup>10</sup> It is also known that Járdánházi was sentenced to four years of imprisonment for his non-Trinitarian views.<sup>11</sup>

Later, in the 1790s, public interest was also driven by this larger unionist movement. For instance, László Ábrahám suggested the union between Catholics and Protestants in his book titled *Christian Unity*. However his work was banned by the governor's council in 1793, and later by the government in 1794.

This kind of "merger" efforts became stronger especially around the 300-year jubilee of the Reformation. Opinions were spreading on both sides according to which the worthiest celebration of the 300-year old split would be if the Protestants would return together to "one fold."

In 1816, Mihály Steigel,<sup>12</sup> Evangelical priest in Rimabrézó, wrote the article "De unione protestantium cum romano-catholicis." Moreover there were also some Reformed Protestants who believed in the Catholic-Protestant union. Gedeon Deáky,<sup>13</sup> a Reformed minister, for instance, wrote a poem of praise to Pope Pius VII in Bratislava in 1814 in which he praised the pope living in French captivity for his fortitude. He also had his poem published in printed form. However, there were several Reformed ministers who expressed their disapproval about the poem, and anonymously attacked their peer. In this situation, András Péli Nagy,<sup>14</sup> the Reformed churchwarden in Bars, came to Gedeon Deáky's defense.<sup>15</sup>

The writing titled *Felelet azon elmékedésekre, melyek érdekeltek a protestánsoknak közelebb mult három évszázados ünnepléseket*<sup>16</sup> was published by a Protestant in 1818 against the aforementioned works. This response reflected the widely spread Protestantism-related belief of the time according to which it did not see the creeds as mandatory but rather it ensured the freedom of conscience irrespective of the creeds. Based on this idea, the author highlighted that the difference between Catholicism and Protestantism did not rely on the acceptance of more or fewer dogmas but rather in the imagined conceptual antithesis.<sup>17</sup>

In the very same year, an anonymous answer was published from the Catholic side titled *Jegyzetek azon feleletre, mely a protestánsokat harmadik százéves ünneplések s némely tartományokban történt egyesülések felől kiadott elmékedésekre . . . készítetett*, in which the author voiced the rigid Catholic viewpoint.

The literature published the following year reflected the aspirations towards the union and was permeated by love. András Pázmándi Horváth (1778–1839), a Catholic priest, translated into Hungarian the crypto-Catholic Johann August von Starck's<sup>18</sup> work written in German in 1787 on the union,<sup>19</sup> in which Starck overtly expressed his Catholic bias. Encouraged by Starck's work, András Rác, chaplain in Esztergom, published in Hungarian in 1822 the anti-Protestant book published by chaplain Ágoston Hille, in German in 1818.<sup>20</sup> Hille's work advocated in favor of the Catholic Church, disapproved of the Protestants for celebrating the 300-year schism and stated that "during the enlightened times wouldn't it be more appropriate and wouldn't it honor more the Protestants to celebrate the re-union or the union rather than the reformation or the improvement?"<sup>21</sup> What is more, it also recommended to the Protestants to accept the decisions of the Council of Trent and the pope's authority.<sup>22</sup>

The arguments above could not certainly remain without a rebuttal from the Protestant side either. In spite of the Hungarian censorship that could not allow for the publication of works featuring such a content, the Protestants' viewpoint was still not kept secret. Shortly after, a polemic work appeared titled *Felelet azon elméltedésekre, melyek érdeklették a protestánsoknak közelebb mult 3 évszázados inepléseket sat. Készült a szelidség országában. Nyomatott az alázatosság betűivel 1818*, in which the unknown author addressed the freedom of conscience, and defended the union of the Lutheran and Reformed churches that took place in Prussia in 1817.<sup>23</sup>

The series of polemic works continued the following year, too. The debate was triggered in January 1822 by Gábor Báthory, bishop of the Church District of Dunamellék starting with 1814.<sup>24</sup> Báthory published anonymously his two sermons titled *Az evangéliumi keresztényen tolerancia*. One of them emphasized that “it was impossible for the Christians to reach consensus in matters of religion,” and the other one that “setting aside the religious differences, the countrymen can live together peacefully.”<sup>25</sup> The booklet certainly stirred both parties, and four more editions were published a few months later. Some Catholics did not even pay attention to them but also agreed with his viewpoint.<sup>26</sup>

The Catholic prelates and the Royal Council of Governors did not like Báthory's viewpoint, as it was unimaginable for them that the different religions would “live together peacefully.” József Félegyházy found the tone of Báthory's letters offensive towards the Catholic Church whom Báthory called a “proselytizer” that “defied God Himself and nature with insufferable foolhardiness” and made their proselytes “pharisaic and irreligious.”<sup>27</sup>

Most Catholic priests were disturbed mostly because Gábor Báthory's sermons advocated against the fierce proselytism.<sup>28</sup> This disapproval was increased by Lőrinc Hohengger's<sup>29</sup> work *Zeichen der Zeit*. Hohengger expressed his belief that the Protestants were not worthy to religious freedom as they had broken away from their old creed.<sup>30</sup> Based on the charges brought by a Catholic bishop, the Royal Council of Governors challenged the censor of the Reformed Church District of Dunamellék for having the sermons published and asked for their author. Báthory did not even try to deny his authorship before the Royal Council of Governors but he probably defended himself. In spite of all that, the two sermons almost cost him his office, and he could not avoid the official reprimand.<sup>31</sup>

In the same year, Izidor Guzmics, a Benedictine abbot and professor of theology in Pannonhalma, published a book titled *A keresztényeknek vallásbeli egyesülésekről írt levelek az evangéliumi keresztény toleranciájának védelmezőjéhez*, divided into twelve letters in which he examined all of Báthory's statements, analyzing them from a Catholic perspective.<sup>32</sup> Behind the peaceful and mild tone of the book, it is obvious that Guzmics, opposing Báthory's views, exclusively saw the issue of the union within the “one and only redeeming church.”<sup>33</sup>

Báthory deemed it necessary to challenge this one-sided principle.<sup>34</sup> Thus, in the very same year, 1822, he published a sermon titled *Lehet-e, van-e egyedül idevezítő eklézsia? S ha lehet s van, hol van, melyik az?*, in which he detailed his views, remarkably close to Zwingli's approach. However, unlike Guzmics, György Fejér, Mátyás<sup>35</sup> and Ágoston Kováts did not answer him in further sermons.<sup>36</sup> János Ágoston's first reaction to Báthory's opposition regarding the conversions was an angry feedback, in which he

detailed the intentions of the Catholic Church not to give up any of the instruments of conversion.

András Rácz was also a priest in the archdiocese of Esztergom who reacted to Báthory's writing on the spot in his article titled "Fennmaradjon-e a még továbbra is a közfal, mely a katolikusoktól a protestánsokat elválasztja. A szeretet szózatja mindazokhoz, akik a katolikus Anyaszentegyházat vagy nem, vagy rosszul ismerik." For this purpose, he based his answer on the aforementioned work by Ágoston Hille that he himself had translated, applying it to the Hungarian context.

In 1823, a Reformed minister who remained anonymous spoke up against Báthory, in a much milder tone, in his book *Mágnés . . . egy szó arra a kérdésre: Lehet-e, van-e egyedül idévezítő eklézsia?*, in which he urged his brethren to join the Catholic Church as the national interests prompted first and foremost this approach. For this viewpoint, some also presumed that the author of the notice was not even a Protestant but rather a Catholic.<sup>37</sup>

János Ágoston (1787–1863) responded to the *Mágnés* in the writing called *Megbővített mágnés*,<sup>38</sup> in which he suggested the Catholic Church without the "Hungarian national" attribute. Moreover, he explained leaving out the attribute by stating that the ancient religion of the Hungarian nation was the Catholic religion, and its unity was torn apart by two foreigners, namely Luther and Calvin.<sup>39</sup>

István Vámosi Pap (1790–1886),<sup>40</sup> minister in Veszprémvámos, also published a writing dealing with the union.<sup>41</sup> His writing stood out among the earlier unionist writers by being closer to the Catholics, although he agreed with Báthory. Moreover, Vámosi Pap considered Guzmics' suggestion feasible, with a few changes. Thus, he saw the union enforceable mainly in administrative terms, while dogmatically everyone could stick to their own.<sup>42</sup> Later, in 1823, he published a pamphlet titled *A vallási egyesülés ideája s ezen idea realizáltatásának eszközei* that had particular resonance. The pamphlet detailed his own ideas about the union. He argued that, setting aside all creeds and symbolic books, the faithful should enjoy freedom of conscience based on the Bible. Thus, there would be no Catholics, nor different Protestants, but only Christians. In the spirit of rationalism, he drafted a visionary plan for the reunification.<sup>43</sup> In his opinion, only the service and the church administration should be united, with the details thereof identified beforehand aspect by aspect and then definitively established by a joint committee. And these aspects would be enforced gradually by habit and training. This idea perfectly reflects his consideration and sympathy towards Catholicism. On the one hand, this pamphlet influenced the Protestant circles, and on the other, it urged the Catholic side to contribute.

One of the persons who commented on the pamphlet was László Cseh, sub-lieutenant of Tolna County, who as a lay individual was not afraid of the thought of giving up some parts of the service, and what is more, he considered that the Protestants could embrace the dogma of transubstantiation, i.e. the change of substance in the Eucharist.

Mátyás Kováts, a Catholic professor in Pest and later canon of Eger, joined the movement after having read István Vámosi Pap's book. In 1823, he wrote his book *Barátságos értekezés a Vallási Egyesülés Ideájának szerzőjével* suggesting a compromise. According to it, the Protestants should make dogmatic concessions and the Catholics rite-related ones. Nevertheless, he himself did nothing to decrease the existing gap. His church disapproved of Kováts because of his views.<sup>44</sup>



In the year 1823, another Catholic gave his opinion on the union besides Kováts, namely, Péter Balog<sup>45</sup> in his work *Reggeli gondolatok a keresztyén vallások egyesülhetőségéről*, in which he suggested that first, the two Protestant churches should unite, and then the altar communion and the acceptance of the papal primacy would follow.

András Péli Nagy also worded his opinions on the union in 1824, in his book *Egy szó a vallási egyesülést óhajtókhoz*, published in Esztergom, in which he considered that the union already existed if the Christians of different creeds and views loved each other.

Benjámín Szikszai,<sup>46</sup> a Reformed minister, also spoke up in 1824 about the existing union in the booklet *A róm. kath. és protestáns keresztyének közt fennálló unió*. In two dialogues, he contended that there was no need to debate on the union, as it already existed in the match between the essential, basic dogmatic aspects.

The two writings on the existing union by Szikszai and István Pap urged Guzmics to write a new work in 1824. The tone of the latter reveals that Guzmics' apparently unshakeable position had softened, i.e. he perceived the idea of the union as a merger. He hailed Szikszai, hoping that the Protestants would publish new creeds, catechisms and other religious books according to his conception, which would result in the unity of teachings and the establishment of a single church. In response, Szikszai published a second booklet in 1825. Then, in the following year, Guzmics argued again against Szikszai's new idea but the latter did not respond.

In the following year, Ferenc Kölcsey, who enthused about Catholicism from an aesthetic point of view, spoke up in his essay titled *Hít*, "remény, szeretet."<sup>47</sup> He viewed history through a Catholic lens but he also condemned the persecution of the Protestants. In general, he avoided tackling papal primacy especially because he deemed that all the dogmatic aspects on the matter could be set aside. Guzmics exuberantly hailed Kölcsey's writing but Gusztáv Szontagh (1793–1858), an Evangelical philosopher and captain to the royal and imperial court, sharply criticized the anti-Protestant Catholic manifestations in his essay published in 1829, bearing the same title as Kölcsey's. But he fell to the other extreme stating that reason was the only source of religion.

There were also voices in the Evangelical circles that looked favorably on the Catholic Church and the priests. Thus, Pál Edvi Illés (1793–1871), an Evangelical priest, praised the Catholic Church and the priests to such an extent that he managed to irritate the Protestant public opinion and also his own congregation in Nagygeresd, being consequently compelled to leave it.<sup>48</sup>

Moreover, on the topic of the aspiration towards the union, it is worth mentioning the quarterly paper published by János Horváth, bishop of Székesfehérvár, between 1820 and 1824, called *Egyházi Értekezések és Tudósítások*, whose editorial board also included Protestants. For example, István Kocsi Sebestyén, a Reformed professor in Pápa, Károly Rummy, vice-principal of the high school in Bratislava, as well as others.<sup>49</sup>

One of these contributors to the publication, the Protestant priest István Kocsi Sebestyén, also dealt with the Catholic-Protestant approach in his essay "Apologeticus" completed in 1825. But the paper circulated only in manuscript, being published only in 1848. We also know for certain that there are only manuscripts left of the "different hymns" that the persistent poet Gergely Édes tried to write "for the union of all different religions."<sup>50</sup>

**T**HE LONG dialogues published in writing in the 1830s were followed by changes brought by the joint Protestant fight against Catholic abuses. Thus, this period resulted rather in the alienation of the two churches. Consequently, the union of the Protestants with the Catholic Church proved to be entirely utopian. Subsequently, with the exception of an insignificant argument, no further mention was made about the union with the Catholics.<sup>51</sup>

The theologians who approached the re-union of the Catholic and the Protestant Churches with great optimism might have ignored the deep contrasts that had excessively sharpened during the centuries, and became strongly rooted in the practice of both churches. As mentioned before, the efforts towards union failed, and consequently the representatives who pleaded for the union realized that certain obstacles were insurmountable.

In conclusion, while the events at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century shattered the prospects of the Catholic and Protestant re-union, the celebrations of the jubilee tried to strengthen the union of the Reformed and Evangelical Churches whose living example is today the German Protestant Union of Churches.



## Notes

1. Cf. Johannes Wallmann, *A pietizmus*, trans. Csaba Szabó (Budapest: Kálvin Kiadó, 2000).
2. Anne-Marie Kool, *Az Úr csodásan működik: A magyar protestáns küldmissziói mozgalom (1756-1951)*, trans. Mária Kisházy, vol. 1 (Budapest: Harmat, 1995), 67–100; Olga Lukács, “Early Protestant Missionarism in Romania in the Decades Following the Revolution of 1848–1849,” *Transylvanian Review* 14, 2 (2005): 111–122; Aladár Szabó, “A protestantizmus és a küldmisszió,” *Protestáns Szemle* 2 (1890): 800–812.
3. Cf. Olga Lukács, “The Irenical Impact of David Pareus’ Work on the Hungarian Protestant Churches,” *Transylvanian Review* 16, 3 (2017): 38–53.
4. Lajos Wurga, *A keresztyén egyház történelme*, vol. 1, *A reformáció előtti korszak . . .* (Sárospatak, 1908), 402–443, 551–558, 786–797; Jos Colijn, *Egyetemes egyháztörténet* (Sárospatak: Iránytű Kiadó Alapítvány, 1997), 243–258; cf. Wallmann.
5. The most important event was the establishment of the new royal ecclesiastical governance. According to this new approach, the king was no longer the head of the church in his capacity of head of the state but rather as the supreme governor entitled to the “summus episcopus” inherited position. The state church became royal church. Colijn, 283–284.
6. Gábor János Lányi, “A Reformáció interpretációi- a Reformáció ünneplésének története,” in *A Reformáció örökségében élve: A reformáció hatása a teológiai oktatásra*, edited by Gábor János Lányi (Budapest: Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem; L’Harmattan, 2018), 51–60.
7. Olga Lukács, *A felvilágosodás és a liberalizmus hatása az erdélyi egyházak kapcsolatára* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2016), 98–99.

8. Timea Benkő, “Harmóniás éneklés a reformáció 300 éves emlékünnepe Erdélyben,” in *A reformáció öröksége: Egyháztörténeti tanulmányok*, edited by Vilmos József Kolumbán (Kolozsvar: Kolozsvári Protestáns Teológiai Intézet, 2018), 22–35.
9. Sámuel V. Járdánházi, Reformed minister, minister in Piskó starting 1758 and in Harkány starting 1761. The church leaders confronted him in 1763 for his teachings on the sins and the Holy Spirit. Jenő Zoványi, *Magyarországi protestáns egyháztörténeti lexikon*, edited by Sándor Ladányi (Budapest: A Magyarországi Református Egyház Zsinati Irodájának Sajtóosztálya, 1977). See the documents on Sámuel Járdánházi’s case, about the preacher who committed heresy in the Trinitarian dogma. See: Géza Z. Kiss, “Egy kései unitárius per a Dráva völgyében: Adalékok Járdánházi Sámuel üldöztetéséhez,” *Somogy megye múltjából: Levéltári évkönyv* (Kaposvár) 20 (1989): 91–101.
10. Cf. Jenő Zoványi, *A magyarországi protestantizmus története 1895-ig* (Máriabesnyő–Gödöllő: Attraktor, 2004).
11. Protocol of the church district of Felsőbáranya 1758–1799, 260. Table of contents by Judit Szatmári in 2014. Sámuel Járdánházi was summoned to Pécs on 22 October 1770, and was sentenced and imprisoned in the presence of János Pápai senior, Gergely Borza vice-senior, János Karantsi, and assessor Ferenc Barátosi, then he was released on 14 May 1774, and he recanted his teachings several months later.
12. Mihály Steigel (Vyšná Slaná, 20 February 1769–Cserecs, 26 October 1829), Evangelical minister. He studied in Vyšná Slaná for a while. He also attended school in Dobšiná, Gemer, Levoča and Bratislava, for two years in the latter. Later he became a rector in Turá Lúka, and then in Tarnaszentmiklóson. He returned to Bratislava to continue his studies, then in 1790 he went to Kežmarok for the same reason. Starting 1791, he became a minister in Papča, then starting 1805, in Rimavské Brezovo. He drowned in the Rima in Cserecs.
13. Gedeon Deáky (Kömlőd, 1784–Tekovské Lužany, 31 October 1835), Reformed dean. He started his studies in Debrecen and completed them in Pápa becoming a senior official in 1808. He became a minister in Tekovské Lužany in 1817. The church district of Tekov elected him first secretary and council judge and then, in 1834, he became a dean. His work: *Tisztelet oltárja . . .* (Bratislava, 1814) (2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1815, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition 1817).
14. Born in Bajka in 1752 and died on 18 September 1830. He was curator of the church district of Tekov from 1790 until his death. He was also a member of the Council of Buda held in 1791. His work *A tisztelet oltárjának apológiája* is the best known, being a response to Gedeon Deáky’s work (Bratislava, 1815).
15. Cf. Jenő Zoványi, *A felvilágosodás története* (Budapest: Genius Könyvkiadó, 1922).
16. Zoványi, *A magyarországi protestantizmus története*, 219.
17. Ibid.
18. A theologian in Königsberg (1741–1816), author of several works on church history.
19. *Ueber Krypto-Katholicismus, Proselytenmacherey, Jesuitismus, geheime Gesellschaften und besonders die ihm selbst von den Verfassern der Berliner Monatsschrift gemachte Beschuldigungen, mit Acten-Stücken belegt* (Frankfurt am Main–Leipzig, 1787).
20. *Soll die Scheidewand unter Katholiken und Protestanten noch laenger fortbestehen?* The verbatim translation of the book is *Shall we still keep the wall separating the Protestants from the Catholics?*
21. Lajos Filó, “Unióvitály a hazai r. kath. és protestánsok közt 1822–27,” *Sárospataki Füzetek* 4 (11 July 1860): 486.



22. Ibid., 481–483.
23. Ibid., 488.
24. Gábor Báthory (Solt, 26 January 1755–Nagykőrös, 12 February 1842) became a bishop in 1814 without any elections. In 1805, he was the minister to Parliament. He urged the construction of a church in Pest in 1830. He ended the short-time appointment and election of priests in his district. In 1838, he resigned from his office as minister to Parliament and moved to Nagykőrös from where he managed the duties of the district. The 1805 Pest edition of the Nagyváradai Biblia was published with his corrections.
25. Zoványi, *A magyarországi protestantizmus története*, 220.
26. Filó, 489.
27. József Félegyházy, “A hazai egységmozgalom a XIX. század első felében,” *Vigília* (Budapest) 37, 7 (1972): 471.
28. For example, in 1821, Sándor Rudnyai, archbishop and vice-primate of Esztergom, reported to the Council the conversion of 992 Protestants to the “one and only redeeming church” and that when Péter Klobusicki, archbishop of Kalocsa, was bishop of Szatmár, 452 converted to Catholicism. See Filó, 489.
29. Theologian and writer, born in Sopron in 1782. He was a teacher in Győr, then he became a canon.
30. *Beleuchtung der Berzeviczischen Schrift: Nachrichten über den Zustand der Evangelischen in Ungarn* (1825); *Bemerkungen über Friedrichs Briefe über die Lage d. evangel. Kirche in Ungarn* (1828).
31. Sándor Szilágyi, “Adalék az unió vitály történetéhez 1822-ben,” *Sárospataki Füzetek* 5 (1861): 616–628.
32. László Márton Pákozdy, “Unió és reünio törekvések Magyarországon,” *Vigília* 37, 7 (1972): 466.
33. Korinna Zamfir, *Katolikusok és protestánsok: Történelmi visszatekintés és teológiai párbeszéd* (Kolozsvár: Stúdium, 2002), 153–154.
34. Lajos Csóka, “Guzmics Izidor, a keresztény egység apostola,” *Szolgálat* (Eisenstadt) 45, 1 (1982): 50–57; Félegyházy, 472.
35. Reacted to Báthory’s writing by *Észrevételek ily czámmú prédikációk iránt: Az Evangéliumi keresztén tolerantzia két Prédikázióban előadva* (Budapest, 1824).
36. László Balázs, *A felekezetek egymáshoz való viszonya 1791–1830: Különös tekintettel az egykorú nyomtatványokra* (Budapest: Medoka Nyomda, 1935), 69.
37. Félegyházy, 472.
38. *Extended Magnet: An Expression of the Clear Truths That Could Become a Starting Point to All Christian Hungarians of All Denominations to Unite in the True, National Roman Christian Catholic Religion, in The Church Towards Happiness* (1823).
39. Zoványi, *A magyarországi protestantizmus története*, 221.
40. István Pap (Vámosi) (Ságvár, 24 September 1790–Nemesvámos, 1 July 1864), Reformed minister. In 1802, he enrolled to university in Páp, then in 1816, in Marburg. Upon completing his studies, he returned and became dean in the archbishopric of Veszprém. The censorship of the time prohibited the publication of his work on natural science.
41. *A vallási egyesülés ideája, s ezen idea realizáltatásának eszközei . . . Készítette egygy a vallási egyesülést mind vallási, mind polgári tekintetben, szívesen óhajtó református prédikátor* (Veszprém, 1823).
42. Félegyházy, 472.

43. Cf. Imre Révész, *A keresztyénség története* (Kolozsvár: Minerva Irodalmi és Nyomdai Műintézet, 1923).
44. Félegyházy, 473.
45. Converted to Catholicism from the Reformed high school of Sárospatak.
46. Benjámin Szikszai, born on 19 January 1772 and died on 5 March 1828. He studied in Debrecen where he started attending high school in 1788 and became a public teacher in 1794. He left the country in the summer of 1798 but in the following spring he moved to Kaba and then in April 1803 to Makó as a minister.
47. Zoványi, *A magyarországi protestantizmus története*, 223.
48. *Vallástüredelem példája a legújabb időkben, melyeket e f. század második negyede kezdetére ajándékkal gyűjtött* (Budapest, 1826).
49. Félegyházi, 473.
50. Zoványi, *A magyarországi protestantizmus története*, 223.
51. Olga Lukács, “A ‘reunió’ vitája a Reformáció 300. évfordulójának küszöbén,” *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai: Theologia Reformata Transylvanica* (Kolozsvár) 61, 2 (2016): 77–89.

### Abstract

#### The “Reconciliation-Related” Implications of Jubilees or the Interpretation of Interconfessional Rapprochement

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Protestant churches had different reactions to the strong secularization. Consequently, many congregation members started doing social work, helped the poor, or established nursing homes. The 300-year celebration of the Reformation was authorized by the Chancellery of Vienna by the decree issued on 26 August 1817, provided nothing hurtful would be said about the other denominations on the jubilee. There were also both Catholic and Protestant voices who were so excited about the jubilee that they considered not only the Protestant unification feasible but also the re-unification of all Christian faiths. This kind of “merger” efforts became stronger especially around the 300-year jubilee of the Reformation. Opinions were spreading on both sides according to which the worthiest celebration of the 300-year old split would be if the Protestants would return together to “one fold.” The arguments above could not certainly remain without a rebuttal from the Protestant side either. In spite of the Hungarian censorship that could not allow for the publication of works featuring such a content, the Protestants’ viewpoint was still not kept secret. The long dialogues, published in writing in the 1830s, were followed by changes brought by the joint Protestant fight against Catholic abuses. Thus, this period rather resulted in the alienation of the two churches. Consequently, the union of the Protestants with the Catholic Church proved to be entirely utopian. Subsequently, with the exception of an insignificant argument, no further mention was made about the union with the Catholics. In conclusion, while the events at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century shattered the hopes of a Catholic and Protestant re-union, the celebrations of the jubilee tried to strengthen the union of the Reformed and Evangelical Churches whose living example is today the German Protestant Union of Churches.

### Keywords

Catholic and Protestant re-union, unification of all Christian faiths, jubilee of the Reformation, Protestant Union, Protestant Church