

Confessional Identities and the Challenges of Modernisation: Jesuit Convicti and Reformed Colleges in the Kingdom of Hungary in the Age of Enlightenment¹

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Abstract: The Jesuit and Reformed school networks and the various boarding institutions behind them, and the changes they underwent, tell us much about 18th-19th century society of orders of the Kingdom of Hungary. In order to discuss the Enlightenment in Hungary – which was a part of the Habsburg Monarchy – it is necessary to describe the modernising measures of Habsburg Enlightened Absolutism, on the one hand, and the partly independent Hungarian cultural efforts of the Hungarian estates and nobility on the other. *Both government and religious policies and interests shaped not only education, but also the various types of boarding institutions that operated alongside the educational centres.* The paper aims to present a comparative analysis of two co-existing dimensions of the Hungarian educational system: the Catholic and Reformed institutional networks. First, the study presents the cultural context of Catholic and Reformed schooling and discusses the new challenges posed by the modernisation experiments of the mid-18th century. It then analyses the world of Catholic convicti and academies, as well as of Reformed colleges, adopting a comparative approach and placing the Hungarian characteristics in the context of European educational history.

Keywords: Hungary; History of Education; Confessional Identities; Jesuit; Modernisation; Colleges; Jesuit Convicti.

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1. Introduction

The study presents a strange parallel story in the history of education during the Enlightenment in Hungary. After outlining the context, it focuses on differences and similarities between the Catholic and Protestant versions of boarding schools of higher education, the *convictus* (or boarding institution) and the college, and discusses the influence of the long, persistent and profound existence of parallel worlds on the development of Hungarian society.

The study of the relationship and interaction between education and the Enlightenment is a fundamental problem of research on the history of education in the 18th century. The ideas of the Enlightenment followed very different paths of development in Europe of the last century of the *Ancien Régime*, in countries with a different level of socio-economic development and regions with diverse cultures and traditions. Accordingly, their reception by government or society also varied considerably. The most socially and culturally heterogeneous state formation in early modern Europe, where most nationalities and confessions lived side by side, was the Habsburg Monarchy of Central Europe, and within it the Kingdom of Hungary. This diversity also enhanced the variety of receptions of the Enlightenment.

In 1526, following the Ottoman conquest, the Kingdom of Hungary was divided into two and then three parts. Alongside the territory occupied by the Turks, the Principality of Transylvania and the Kingdom of Hungary were also established. The latter became part of the Danubian monarchy of the Habsburg dynasty, a typical composite state of the time (Koenigsberger, 1978). The monarchy united the lands of the Austria, Bohemia and Hungary, and its rulers also wore the imperial crown of the Holy Roman Empire throughout the early modern period. Lying in the collision zone between two empires, the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire, the Kingdom of Hungary occupied a special position in this structure. The geopolitical position of the country determined a unique developmental path for Hungarian society, significantly different from that of the Bohemian-Austrian hereditary provinces in many respects (Csepregi, 2017, Pálffy, 2021, Soós, 2021). From the aspect of our subject matter, the two most important features are, on the one hand, the preservation of the privileges and strong position of the nobility and, on the other hand, the continued presence of Protestant confessions in a state with a Catholic government. The development of Western Europe and the Hungarian state thus differed markedly: while in the increasingly centralised states of Western Europe the power of the estates *vis-à-vis* the court was reduced in the course of the 17th century, and the religious diversity of the individual regions also decreased, in the Kingdom of Hungary these processes had a smaller and more gradually felt impact.

The present paper aims to present a comparative analysis of two co-existing dimensions of the Hungarian educational system: the Catholic and Reformed institutional networks.² In the mainly German-speaking towns of the Kingdom of

² The paper is only concerned with the main areas of the early modern Kingdom of Hungary. We do not discuss Transylvania, as it was not united with the Kingdom of Hungary after the Ottoman Wars. From 1690 onwards, the Habsburgs became sovereign princes of Transylvania (a region also characterised by a very unique religious diversity). We also do not deal with the Military Frontier region in the southern (Balkan) part of the Kingdom of Hungary, although this was also a multi-

Hungary, the Lutherans also had strong congregations, but their educational system was less characterised by boarding schools; therefore, the Lutheran lyceums are not discussed here.

First, the study presents the cultural context of Catholic and Reformed schooling and discusses the new challenges posed by the modernisation experiments of the mid-18th century. It then analyses the world of Catholic convicti and academies, as well as of Reformed colleges, adopting a comparative approach and placing the Hungarian characteristics in the context of European educational history.

2. The modernisation of education in Hungary in the period of Enlightened Absolutism

In order to discuss the Enlightenment in Hungary, it is necessary to describe the modernising measures of Habsburg Enlightened Absolutism, on the one hand, and the partly independent Hungarian cultural efforts of the Hungarian estates and nobility on the other. In the Habsburg Monarchy after 1765, in the spirit of catching up in the international competition between the great powers, comprehensive reform processes were initiated by the Habsburg government to improve the social, economic and cultural conditions of the conglomerate state (H. Balázs, 1997, pp. 3–20, Németh, 2018). From the early 1770s, Vienna extended its enlightened absolutist policy of modernising education, spiritual and ecclesiastical life to the Kingdom of Hungary (Ugrai, 2014, pp. 69–76). This led to some modernisation of only university of the country, which in the early modern period was located in Nagyszombat (today: Trnava, Slovakia), a Jesuit centre. After the dissolution of the Society of Jesus (1773), Maria Theresa (1740-1780) moved the university to Buda, the re-forming centre of the Kingdom of Hungary, and in 1784 to Pest. The university added a number of courses to its educational offerings and government control of the formerly church-run institution was strengthened, so basically the university reform familiar from the higher education institutions of the Habsburg Monarchy was carried out here as well. In addition, Maria Theresa built an intellectual base for technical higher education of European importance in Selmecebánya (today: Banská Štavnica, Slovakia), with the founding and generous support of the Mining Academy (*Bergakademie*) there (Kosáry, 1983, pp. 492–495).

The characteristics of the Habsburg educational policy, which were also present in the hereditary provinces, are also reflected in educational administration and the regulation of the curriculum. The remit of *Studienhofkommission* was extended to the Kingdom of Hungary and the school district directorates were established. The first *Ratio Educationis* (1777) followed the Austrian model as a comprehensive code regulating the entire education system of the time (Mészáros, 1981). (It was symbolically significant for the Hungarian nobility, proud of its religious autonomy, that the first *Ratio* was only in force in Hungary in this form, that Hungarian experts were involved in its drafting, and that it contained special passages on some content

confessional region, like Transylvania and Hungary. However, the area was not part of the Hungarian administration – it was directly administered from Vienna and did not have a developed network of educational institutions in the 18th century.

issues.) Joseph II (1780-1790) sought full imperial centralisation in order to reform the Habsburg conglomerate state and ignored the autonomy of the Kingdom of Hungary (Beales, 2013, pp. 477–525). In this way, all the decrees of Joseph's educational and ecclesiastical policy were extended to Hungary – causing a never-ending and enormous outrage among the nobility.

During the short reign of Leopold II (1790-1792), there was still a faint possibility that Enlightened Absolutism, in concert with the enlightened nobility, might have embarked on educational and cultural reform, but the parliamentary commission charged with drawing up a programme of national cultural modernisation was eventually disbanded without tangible results (H. Balázs, 1997, pp. 312–325.). The events of the French Revolution and the Freemasonry movements in Austria brought to light what was in fact a minor conspiracy, which led to Francis I (1792-1835) abandoning all reform efforts and implement a repressive policy of distrust towards Hungarians. An important part of this was that in the following decades Vienna made no substantial educational reform efforts regarding Hungary. The only exception was the publication of *Ratio Educationis II* in 1806, which was a kind of confirmation of *Ratio I* of 1777, this time exclusively for Catholic education (Mészáros, 1981). In any case, in Hungary there was no trace of the centrally inspired innovations (e.g., the introduction of the system of subject teachers in grammar schools, the establishment of comprehensive schools) which were reviving in the Austrian and Bohemian hereditary provinces until the end of the 1810s (Ugrai, 2014, pp. 134-138.). Until the end of the Hungarian Revolution in 1849, the Viennese government abandoned all modernisation efforts in Hungary.

By the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, the alliance between the monarch and the social elite to shape intellectual life in Hungary had thus broken down. After the Peace of Sathmar in 1711 – ending Rákóczi's War of Independence, which had been waged in parallel with the War of the Spanish Succession – Habsburg-Hungarian relations began to develop spectacularly (Szijártó, 2008). The Habsburg government, the Hungarian estates (especially the nobility) and the Catholic Church with its strong positions all played an important role in this consolidation. This alliance, which had made possible the shaping of intellectual life, weakened under Enlightened Absolutism and came close to disintegration, especially under Joseph II. Enlightened Absolutism still had advocates among the Hungarian nobility though: its birth in Hungary is usually associated with the literary appearance (1772) of György Bessenyei (1746-1811), who served in the Hungarian Guards of Maria Theresa in Vienna (Szilágyi, 2014), and the linguistic revival in Hungary, signalling a linguistic and national awakening and leading the country from Enlightenment to national romanticism, was led by Ferenc Kazinczy (1759-1831), who took up an official position at the school district administration in Kassa (today: Košice in Slovakia) during the reign of Joseph II, in order to promote the emperor's plan to organise joint Catholic-Protestant elementary schools.

Thus, the alliance broke up for a long time in the 1790s. The ideas of the Enlightenment (especially Progressive Enlightenment) could only be disseminated by members of circles distanced from or highly critical of Vienna, just like they did almost all the ideas of modernisation. This, in turn, influenced the implementation of reform plans: the ideas of renewing the national language and expanding the

use of the Hungarian language (press, literature, academy of sciences, etc.) were strengthened in opposition to the Emperor. In addition, the elements promising any kind of rise of the bourgeoisie or modernization were almost automatically linked and blended with the traditional demands of the Hungarian nobility. In this way, these ideas and movements became both conservative and radical in their tone – and at the same time they embarked on a separate path from the mainstream of Central Europe.

The successful reform initiatives of this period were mostly associated with a prominent organising figure of Enlightenment nobility: for example, Count György Festetics (1755-1819), who founded the Hungary's first agricultural college in Keszthely in 1797 under the name Georgikon and also organised literary festivals, respectively his brother-in-law, Count Ferenc Széchenyi (1754-1820), founder of the Hungarian National Museum and the Hungarian National Library (H. Balázs, 1997, pp. 304–307).

3. Lasting fault lines between confessions in Hungary

Another characteristic feature of the development of Hungarian society was denominational divides. In 1790, 55% of the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Hungary were Roman Catholic, 15.9% Reformed, 11.5% Orthodox (Greek Orthodox), 9.4% Lutherans, 6.9% Greek Catholic, and 1.3% Jewish (Balogh & Gergely, 1996, pp. 149). These are quite unique indicators of a diverse society in Europe. In addition, people of different religions often mixed with each other, and in 18th-century Hungary it was not uncommon to find settlements with two or three religions – and this mixing continued to increase steadily from the late 18th century on.

However, the legal status of Protestants was truly unique. Thanks to Joseph II's Patent of Toleration (1781), Protestants enjoyed ecclesiastical and educational autonomy, which was sanctioned by the Hungarian Diet in 1791. The Protestants, who had previously suffered from the Counter-Reformation and had been persecuted and oppressed to varying degrees, interpreted their autonomy in a broad sense. Thus, they almost completely turned against the will of the central government and were left out of the modernisation efforts (Mályusz, 1939). They did not introduce the normative approach developed by Johann Ignaz Felbiger (1724-1788), nor consider themselves bound by *Ratio Educationis I* and *II*, and they went their own way in all other educational matters. Moreover, they did all this without maintaining close contact with each other. Not only did the Lutherans and Reformed not cooperate with each other but, in fact, they implemented different practices from one diocese to another within a denomination. The Lutherans and Reformed formed their own national church organisation only in 1891, and for the previous hundred years they had been divided at the diocesan level, increasing the fragmentation of society (Ugrai, 2020). As a result of this latter factor, the influence of the large schools in the spiritual centres of the Protestant dioceses, the Reformed colleges and the Lutheran lyceums increased significantly.

The Reformed had three major complex colleges (i.e., offering both elementary and secondary education and academic level studies). Two of these (Debrecen and Sárospatak) were located in the eastern part of the country, and one (Pápa) in

the western part of the country, in the Transdanubian region. The Lutherans had a network of five or six lyceums (Sopron, Pozsony, Lőcse – Levoča, Eperjes - Prešov, Késmárk – Kežmarok and Bártfa – Bardejov in Slovakia) in Upper Hungary, mostly in towns that are situated in Slovakia today. Protestants were able to ensure the education of intellectuals in these institutions – and by peregrination, that is, visits to foreign universities. All the smaller institutions followed the curriculum of one of these colleges or lyceums (Szelényi, 1917). However, only the colleges and lyceums listed above had a larger catchment area and, as indicated above, only the Reformed colleges received a larger number of students in a boarding school type of education.

The mainly Catholic state higher education was provided by the University of Pest, as well as 4 royal academies and 8 lyceums. In addition, in the first third of the 19th century there were about 60 grammar schools, two thirds of which were run by a monastic order. The Piarists were the most prominent one with 25 grammar schools, but the Benedictines, Cistercians, Franciscans and Premonstratensians also maintained several grammar schools (Kornis, 1927, p. 542). The Catholic school network extended throughout the country, a system which the Jesuit order began to develop from the first third of the 17th century. It is important to note that the monastic orders in the Kingdom of Hungary played an important role not only in education but also in science and Catholic Enlightenment: for example, astronomer Maximilian Hell (1720-1792), historian Károly Koppi (1744-1801), agronomer Lajos Mitterpacher (1734-1814) and linguist Miklós Révai (1750-1807) were all Jesuit and Piarist monks.

4. The Jesuit Convicti

From the early 17th century until its dissolution in 1773, the Society of Jesus played an essential role in the schooling of the early modern Kingdom of Hungary. By the mid-18th century, the order had schools of various levels in more than 30 towns: in 1741 more than 8000 students attended Jesuit grammar schools (Hets, 1938, pp. 17–18). Content and structure issues were, of course, regulated according to the principles of the *Ratio studiorum* (O'Malley, 1993, pp. 225–227). It must also be mentioned that in the early modern period, in the absence of an independent order, the Hungarian territories were part of the Austrian Jesuit Province.

The central element of the Jesuit educational system was the five-year secondary grammar school (gymnasium), which could be extended upwards or downwards. In the Kingdom of Hungary, grammar schools were typically expanded downwards in lack of an adequate small school network. There were four academies (Buda, Győr, Kassa, Zágráb – Zagreb in Croatia) and one university (Nagyszombat). These institutions always formed a coherent system with the local grammar schools.

The Jesuits operated two types of boarding institutions: the convictus and the seminary. The term convictus comes from the Latin *convivo* – to cohabit, to live together – which expresses the essence of the institution. The seminary was not just a modern seminary, but a kind of boarding school where clergy and lay students could live together (Hets, 1938, p. 42). The Society of Jesus in the Kingdom of Hungary did not only provide training for its noviciates, but also played a central role in the education of diocesan priests and other monks. In 1741, of the students in the

Jesuit school network in Hungary, roughly 800 were living in seminaries or convicti, which means that nearly 10% of the students were members of boarding institutions (Hets, 1938, p. 42). We only focus on the convictus here but it is important to note that in some sources the boundary between the convictus and the seminary is not entirely clear. The fundamental difference between the two types of institution is the noble nature of the convictus, where only students with a noble title could be admitted.

The convictus was a special institution of the Jesuit educational system, adapted to the needs of local society. Convicti were founded in the north-west (Győr, Nagyszombat, Sopron, Trencsén) and north-east (Lőcse, Kassa) of the country, as well as Buda, after being liberated from the Turks, and Croatia (Fiume, Varasd – Varaždin, Zággráb) (Hets, 1938, pp. 41–43, Kušniráková, 2011, p. 332). The convicti were located next to larger educational centres, i.e., academies and grammar schools attended by hundreds of students every year. The only exception seems to be Lőcse (today: Levoča in Slovakia), in the foundation of which the lutheran population of the town and the region played an important role, which the Jesuits tried to reach through the convicti. Although the political centre of the country, Pozsony (today: Bratislava in Slovakia) had the most populous Jesuit grammar school, a noble convictus was never founded there (Fazekas – Kádár – Kőkényesi, 2021). This is explained by the proximity of the Jesuit university towns of Nagyszombat and Nyitra (today: Nitra in Slovakia), with its renowned Piarist order.³

The establishment of Jesuit noble convicti was made possible by so-called foundations, donations from ecclesiastical and secular patrons: the interest was deposited and it thus ensured the operation of the convictus and the studies of a certain number of noble youths supported each year. Confessional and social considerations both played an important role in the establishment of the convicti in the 17th century. The Society of Jesus, the main vocation of which was evangelisation, saw an excellent opportunity in the noble convicti to communicate the Christian doctrine more effectively through boarding institutions. The convictus became an important institution for the Jesuit Order's contact with the nobility, enabling it to reach out to poorer or orphaned Protestant nobles. Importantly, the educational institutions run by the Society of Jesus were open to members of all social classes and all confessions, free of charge. On the other hand, feeding, clothing and housing the students required financial sacrifices from parents, especially if they or their relatives did not live nearby (Fallenbüchl, 1979). Seminaries and convicti were a solution to this problem, with the latter providing a socially segregated education for the noble order. The residents of the noble convicti were divided into two groups: provisions of the paying students, the so-called *alumni*, were paid for by the family, while the *convictores*, those in need of financial help, were supported by the foundation (Merkur, 1786, p. 337).

During the 18th century, the growing state sought to extend its influence and control not only over education but also over the convicti. The beginnings of state

³ During the 18th century, besides the Jesuits, the Piarists also maintained convicti in the Kingdom of Hungary, of which Nyitra was the most important one, but they also had a convictus in Debrecen and one in Szentanna (today: Liptovská Anna in Slovakia), among others.

education date back to the Diet of 1715, which gave the monarch the right to supervise educational institutions and foundations (Márkus, 1900, p. 501). This was confirmed by the Diet of 1723, and the newly established government body, the Royal Governor Council, was also granted this function (Márkus, 1900, pp. 629–630). Thereafter, the new office for internal affairs played an increasingly important role in the coordination of education. Maria Theresa paid even greater attention to education, seeking to bring about a qualitative reform in the training provided by the convicti and also to take control of the foundations. In this way, scholarships became an important instrument of imperial policy (Khavanova, 2011). Gaining influence over the convictus was also of particular strategic importance because, despite several unsuccessful attempts to found them, for a long time there had been no knight academies (*Ritterakademie*) in the Kingdom of Hungary, although they were vital centres of noble education in Western Europe (Conrads, 1982). The Jesuit and later the Piarist grammar schools, and the convicti that operated alongside them, played an important role in the education of the Hungarian Catholic nobility. During the reign of Maria Theresa, the Viennese knight academies, especially the *Theresianum* and, from the 1760s, *Collegium Oeconomicum* in Szenc (today: Senec in Slovakia), maintained by the Piarist order, as well as the *Theresianum* in Vác likewise became highly important institutions for the education of the noble elite.

5. An example: the Jesuit Convictus of Nagyszombat

It is also worth briefly describing one Jesuit noble convictus in particular, an example that may provide a more precise picture of the processes outlined in general. The Society of Jesus was based in Nagyszombat, Hungary (today: Trnava in Slovakia), where it had a university, a grammar school, convicti and seminaries. Nagyszombat was not a populous town, it only had a population of about 7,000 even at the end of the 18th century (Danyi–Dávid, 1960 p. 368). However, its institutional system and the presence of the Archbishop of Esztergom and the Chapter in the city made it a town of national importance. In 1624, the noble convictus in Nagyszombat was founded by the Jesuit Péter Pázmány (1570-1637), Archbishop of Esztergom, with the support of Emperor Ferdinand II. The aim was to educate impoverished noble youths, since, according to the Archbishop, «the good education of youth ensures the full restoration of Catholic religion and piety.»⁴ During the 17th century, several seminaries were founded in Nagyszombat, among which two intermediate institutions are worth mentioning from the aspect our topic: the *Marianum* and the *Adalbertinum*, both referred to as convicti and hosting clergy and lay students until 1761, and the latter also popular among noble students (Kóhalmi, 1900 p. 4). This situation was changed in 1761 by the newly-elected Archbishop of Esztergom, Count Ferenc Barkóczy (1710-1765), who abolished the practice of housing religious and secular students together. After that, lay students were hosted only by the King's and Archbishop's Convictus and the *Adalbertinum* (Fináczy, 1899 p. 174).

The King's and Archbishop's Convictus continued to operate with some interruptions after its foundation. In the first half of the 18th century, the convictus

⁴ National Archives of Hungary A 57 (Libri regii) vol. 7. pp. 328-332.

was in a degraded condition, and it is no coincidence that a contemporary observer described the building as «a nest of ugly owls.» (Fináczy, 1899 p. 175). Maria Theresa had a new building built for the convictus (1754) and it became an important place of education for the nobility (and even the aristocracy), where students could learn sciences (geography and architecture), *exercitia* (dancing and fencing) and languages (French and German), which were absent from the curriculum of grammar schools and universities but were part of the curriculum of the nobility (Kőhalmi, 1900 p. 10). The students also performed their own school dramas and held debates, or co-called academies, which helped form a community and deepen the knowledge they had acquired. In addition, the school curriculum indicates that great emphasis was placed on the religious and Christian education of the pupils, with the help of the Congregation of Mary Immaculate.

In the 1760s, there were a total of 80 places in the two convicti, both on a foundation basis and with additional fees, which was an exceptionally high number (in 1761, 442 students were studying at the grammar school in Nagyszombat) (Kőhalmi, 1900 p. 7). In 1761, 37 students were scholarship holders of the King's and Archbishop's Convictus in Nagyszombat, about whom even the Hungarian Court Chancellery requested regular reports.⁵ The noblemen living in the convictus were a very heterogeneous group according to their social status and age, including so-called parvists (students below the grammar school level) and philosophy students, on the one hand, and noblemen, needy commoners and children of officials, on the other. For example, the son of the notary of the Locotenential Council, Ferenc Hatos (of the same name), was a pupil of the convictus foundation, as was the son of the Protestant Sámuel Klobusiczky (the convert Klobusiczky Jr.), as well as Baron Imre Révay, a future member of the Hungarian Noble Guard in Vienna.⁶ The convictus thus offered a service to noble classes of very different positions, where students could gain further knowledge in addition to their secondary school and university education, and could also develop closer contacts with each other.

Similarly to other institutions of the Jesuit convictus system, the convictus of Nagyszombat survived the dissolution of the Jesuit order in 1773. Subsequently, state control over Catholic education was strengthened: *Ratio Educationis* (1777) specifically covered the administration of the convicti (Mészáros, 1981). While the education of the nobility occupied an important strategic position in Maria Theresa's educational policy, Joseph II disagreed with the socially segregated educational practices of the privileged order, and in 1784 he, together with other noble academies of the Habsburg Monarchy, dissolved the convicti of the Kingdom of Hungary.

6. Reformed colleges

Of the three Reformed colleges, the schools in Debrecen and Sárospatak received a large number of resident students. The fate of the Reformed College of Pápa was very hectic in the period under discussion: in predominantly Catholic Western Hungary, it was subjected to severe pressure from Counter-Reformation in

⁵ National Archives of Hungary A 1 (Originales referadae) 1762. Nr. 217.

⁶ National Archives of Hungary A 1 (Originales referadae) 1762. Nr. 217.

the mid-18th century and had to close its doors. Although the school could continue to exist in the village of Adásztevel, near Pápa, only elementary and grammar school classes were allowed to function. Eventually, the institution moved back to Pápa in 1783. Due to intensive development, the college of Pápa was recognized as equal to those of Sárospatak and Debrecen in 1804, but the number of students did not increase significantly until the 1830s (Dienes – Ugrai, 2013).

The Reformed colleges of Debrecen and Sárospatak, however, were considered prestigious schools. Both experienced an almost explosive growth in student numbers after the Patent of Toleration: around the turn of the century, there were typically 1,100-1,500 students in Sárospatak and 1,500-1,700 in Debrecen but the numbers fluctuated erratically from year to year. In both places, the numbers peaked at the very end of the 18th century (Sárospatak had 1670 students on the school year 1797/98, while Debrecen had 1911 students in 1796/97). (Back then, colleges were complex schools, which means that within the walls of one institution there was a 1-2-year elementary school, a 6-8-year high school and an 8-year pastoral academy. The pastoral academy had a 4-year shortened alternative, offering training in law. The figures refer to the total student population of the college.)

Despite the subsequent 20-30% drop in numbers, it should be stressed that these are quite enormous figures, which were considered to be exceptional throughout the entire Habsburg Monarchy. In the academic year 1796/97, the largest grammar school in Vienna had 468 students, and the three Viennese grammar schools had only 1162 students altogether. The largest grammar school in Prague had 488 students and the three grammar schools in the Bohemian capital had 1039. The numbers of students in Sárospatak and, even more so, in Debrecen correspond to the combined secondary school capacity of the hereditary provinces with the most populous secondary school sector: in Lower Austria 1,339 students, in Moravia a total of 1,274, in Styria 465 and in Silesia 402 students were simultaneously enrolled in secondary schools. Only the Bohemian province had more students, a total 2,611 (Wotke, 1915, pp. 101-103)

Although with 30,000 inhabitants Debrecen was the largest town in the Kingdom of Hungary at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, the student population in Sárospatak also caused a great deal of turmoil. Sárospatak was a small, rural settlement in an economically stagnating region, with a population of less than 3,500. (Pápa had a population of nearly 9,000 at the time, and the town developed intensively in the following decades.)

Accommodating a student population of over 1,000 placed a heavy burden of organizational responsibilities on the heads of the institutions. Because of the rudimentary transport conditions and a busy daily schedule, the matter of daily commuting from even the neighbouring settlements could not be resolved, so access was only possible for local students. However, Sárospatak presents the researcher with astonishing data in this respect, too, since only 3-6% of the students at the grammar school and academy were from the town. By comparison, on average 45% of students in Catholic grammar schools in Western Hungary were of local origin, while in the Reformed College in Pápa about 30% of the students were locals (Sasfi, 2013, pp. 196-200). In the Debrecen college, the proportion of local students in the first five to six grades was around 90%, and in the upper grades the local/non-local

ratio gradually levelled out. At the academic level, there was a significant majority of students from further settlements (Rácz, 1995, pp. 35).

In these circumstances, ensuring residential accommodation was a key issue, not primarily in pedagogical but in organisational terms. At least part of the student population had to be accommodated within the school; otherwise, they might not have been able to stay, and the college would have lost students. An account from 1837 provides a fairly accurate picture of the figures for Sárospatak: only 13% of the 979 students registered, that is, 126 were accommodated in the dormitories of the college. The rest were living somewhere in the city: 853 people lived in 218 rooms of 95 accommodation providers. It is easy to imagine, then, the constant overcrowding that is unanimously highlighted in contemporary memoirs of all types of accommodation. In Debrecen, there were 53 small huts accommodating a total of 400 students. If we take the proportions of students living in the town and those staying in the dormitories, we can see that in Sárospatak 80% of the students had to find accommodation, while in Debrecen only 30-40% had to find a host in the town (Rácz, 1995, pp. 40-41).

Dormitories could only provide accommodation for students automatically but no meals or other provisions. It was in the mid-19th century that so-called feeding houses were established: from then on, students living in the dormitories were provided with food on a daily basis. The dormitory rooms were poor, badly heated and overcrowded. Although the need to increase the number of dormitory places and to improve the comfort of existing accommodation was often discussed, the school authorities were reluctant to invest in these costly projects. In Sárospatak, a prolonged construction project took place in the 1790s and 1840s, when most of the student rooms were moved into the new building. Although overcrowding was still prevalent, the new stone building housing the students was qualitatively different from the old ramshackle huts.

Historical memory connects the milieu of the Reformed colleges, and within it the phenomenon of boarding, with two topoi: the students' inclination to political and cultural activism, and the social effects of the boarding system. The former suggests that students formed a community that played an important role in the political radicalisation of the Enlightenment and the spread of national liberal ideas. According to this narrative, this was facilitated by the emergence of various student societies, reading associations, student newspapers, etc. Another advantage of the boarding system is its social function, meaning that the promotion of poor but talented students and the provision of housing for them contributed to increased social mobility. Both topoi are based on a simplification of existing contexts and may lead to incorrect conclusions.

There is no doubt that in the first half of the 19th century the Reformed played a much more important role in the anti-Habsburg battles of the reform era aimed at the development of the Hungarian national language and public life than their numbers would imply. The majority of the intellectual leaders of the reform era were educated in Reformed colleges, and it is usually possible to mention some episode or fact from their student days that is consistent with their more radical action later in life (for example, Lajos Kossuth, the leader of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, and Bertalan Szemere, the Minister of the Interior of the revolutionary government,

studied in Sárospatak, while the most well-known author of the revolutionary period, Mór Jókai studied in Pápa). It is also true that from time to time there were student societies with some of the later famous politicians among their members.

However, these student societies had little direct impact. They were generally short-lived, had few members and were far from being as radical as the memoirs suggest. Moreover, the members of these societies were not necessarily boarding school students; thus, the correlation between living in a dormitory and socio-cultural activity cannot be confirmed. In fact, the undoubted driving force behind the role of the Hungarian Reformed in the national development was not fuelled by the curricular aims of the colleges, nor by their formal structure (e.g., the permitted student societies), but the overpopulation and the almost unlimited autonomy that Protestant schools experienced after Joseph II's Patent of Toleration. And the combination of overcrowding and extensive autonomy produced a disorderly bustling. In this turmoil, the social and cultural demands of the Hungarian-born, impoverished, rural members of the nobility, who were averse to Habsburg modernisation and prone to radicalisation and who formed the social base of the colleges, could come to the fore. From this aspect, the student societies and initiatives, which were generally quickly disbanded or banned by the college leaders, were indicators of the already existing movements, not triggers or inspirations.

The social function of housing is also easy to misinterpret. In the second half of the 18th century and at the turn of the century, colleges divided students into three social categories. The most populous group was the so-called *ordinarius* or commoners. A commoner could be a nobleman or not a nobleman, the son of a clergyman or a teacher. The social elite of students were the children of wealthy landed gentry (but not necessarily aristocrats). They were called *herulus* or gentlemen. The lowest group were the *famulus* or servants, the poorest students. Those in the lowest classes paid differentiated tuition fees, and talented poor students received other benefits as well.

Traces of institutional support for those in need may be found but it would be a mistake to exaggerate this or to link it closely to boarding. The Reformed colleges helped poor students to study mainly by classifying them as servants of a gentleman student. In this way, in the dormitories of the college, as well as in the town, accommodation was generally shared by a gentleman student, a few commoners and one or two servants living together. Instead of being allocated on the basis of need (a certain social support function would then have been evidenced), the already scarce student accommodation was thus distributed from the richest to the poorest, with a conscious concern for social heterogeneity. In addition, the internal norms of the cohabiting groups clearly outlined the old feudal structures: a servant could ensure that he had a roof over his head by heating, cleaning, doing the laundry for his roommates, and by polishing the gentleman student's boots and preparing his food. This system did not promote social mobility – quite contrarily, it ensured indoctrination into the established structures of order and wealth and the uncritical acceptance thereof.

7. Conclusion

Education and the school system are mirrors of the state of a society – the Kingdom of Hungary in the modern era is no different in this respect. The Jesuit and Reformed school networks and the various boarding institutions behind them, and the changes they underwent, tell us much about 18th-19th century society of orders. In the case of both denominations, the school reflected the existing social order, but through its operation it contributed not only to the preservation of existing structures, but also to the possibility of social mobility for certain classes. The number of students in both systems signal a considerable and steadily growing social demand for education, which can be explained both by demographic growth and state-social development.

The growing need for education was faced in distinctly different circumstances and was served differently by Catholics and Reformed. Although the number of students in the Reformed colleges increased dramatically by the end of the 18th century, this only led to the growth of the three traditional major centres (Debrecen, Pápa and Sárospatak). This was obviously linked to the experience of the counter-reformation efforts of the previous centuries and the resulting strategy: the logic of concentration of resources. By contrast, the Catholic school network, which had a protected status, operated a steadily expanding system. Until 1773, most institutions were maintained by the Society of Jesus, but the Piarist order also showed dynamic growth. The difference is striking and may well be explained: the Catholics, protected and supported by state power, were able to implement a much more balanced growth strategy.

Accordingly, Jesuit grammar schools and Reformed colleges faced different challenges in many respects in terms of student accommodation. The Jesuit school network also included regional and national educational centres, but the majority of the grammar schools served the educational needs of the local community and did not need to organise student accommodation on a systematic basis. In contrast, all three Reformed colleges had a large catchment area, which made the accommodation of students a much greater problem. While the Jesuit school network provided accommodation for roughly 10% of the students, the Reformed colleges, especially Debrecen and Pápa, could provide accommodation for nearly half of their students. In the larger educational centres, the Jesuits were able to accommodate their students in seminaries and convicti, the institutional boundaries of which, and the noble nature of the convicti, were consolidated in the 18th century.

The policies of the Habsburg government had a major impact on the schooling of both denominations and the functioning of their boarding institutions. In the case of the Reformed, the Patent of Toleration led to a considerable increase in the number of students and thus to growth in the number of students living together, whose housing conditions deteriorated. In the case of the Jesuit system, the state directly intervened in the organisation of education on several occasions. Thanks to Maria Theresa's reforms, the noble convictus system underwent a comprehensive reform, and the institutional network was significantly renewed both internally and externally in the 17th century. As a result, the convictus was able to transmit knowledge that effectively complemented the requirements of the grammar school or university

curriculum, making it an attractive destination for a wide range of noblemen. Reformed colleges, on the other hand, could not offer such additional advantages to their resident students: unlike Jesuit convicts, they did not enhance the elite character of the content of education, but rather focused on the transmission of established norms and thus on the stabilisation of the social structure.

Of course, it must not be forgotten that, despite all the differences, living together and ‘resonating’ with the school had a very strong community-forming and identity-building effect, not least in terms of building up a network of relationships – both on the Jesuit and the Reformed side. This is perhaps one of the reasons why historical memory attaches such importance to boarding institutional forms, even if it is difficult to directly document their benefits.

8. References

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