

Mysteries around a Late 18th Century Hungarian Voltairean Satire¹

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Keywords: Josephinism, anticlericalism, tolerance, political novel, satire

Abstract: The paper undertakes to analyze the philological problems and to recreate the literary historical context of a Hungarian satire translation published in 1786, a copy of which is today kept in the Special Collections Department of the Lucian Blaga Central University Library Cluj. It narrates and completes with new data the history of this rare book, preserved nowadays only in a few copies, focusing on the circumstances of its publication, its author, genre, structure, and reception.

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The old card catalogue of the Lucian Blaga Central University Library of Cluj contains an entry which, by the title it contains draws the readers' attention to a most probably interesting book: *Zakkariásnak a' pápa titkos író-deákjának az austriai tartományokban lett vallásbéli meg-világosításról, Romából költ levelei az ő lelki barátjaihoz. Ki-adattattak egy eretnek-által. Fordítottak olasz-nyelvből. 1786. Eszt.* (The Letters of Zachariah, the Pope's Secret Scribe Written from Rome to His Spiritual Friend about the Religious Enlightenment which Took Place in the Austrian Provinces. Published by a Heretic. Translated from Italian Language. Year 1786).² Our research has proved that it is worth making investigations related to this book not only in order to complete the scanty data figuring in the imprint, but also because the Hungarian literary history has not yet outlined the context of this work. The present paper therefore undertakes to present this interesting document in Cluj University Library – nowadays considered a rarity. Because the late 18th century book leads us to the book culture of the Enlightenment, the investigation will offer

¹ The author is grateful for the financial support provided from programs co-financed by The SECTORAL OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT, Contract POS DRU 6/1.5/S/3 – “Doctoral studies, a major factor in the development of socio-economic and humanistic studies”.

² The shelfmark of the book is: 40 577. The old catalogue next to it also contains the card of the book's German version: *Briefe aus Rom über die Aufklärung in Oesterreich von Zakkaria, päpstlichem Geheimschreiber, an seine geistlichen Freunde. herausgegeben von einem Protestanten. Aus dem Italiänischen. Frankfurt und Leipzig, 1785.* Its shelfmark is: 29186. Though literature refers to our Hungarian text as a translation, it is not our aim to discuss it in this paper from the perspective of translation theory and history.

not only philological and literary historical data, but also information on the history of reading and the history of mentalities.

What the imprint conceals

On the inside front cover of this octavo format old print¹ the bookplate label of the Transylvanian Museum's Library from 1859 can be seen, therefore the book belonged to the collection of the Transylvanian Museum Society before it entered the University Library. On its title page a stamp with the inscription *Csicso Keresztur*² marks its former location, and two notes reveal its former owners: *Mich. Bodoky* and *Torma Joseffé 1820* (Joseph Torma's). On the basis of the stamp we may justly conclude that the University Library's copy could have belonged to the book collection alluded to in Elek Jakab's biography of the journalist Sándor Szacsvay. Jakab mentioned that he used the documents referring to Sándor Szacsvay owned by Sándor Mike, Head of the General Royal Transylvanian Gubernial Archives in his biography, which also discusses the book we are interested in. Jakab reported that a part of these documents "having come back to me in a marvellous manner – are at my hands; my father-in-law left them to my dear wife and myself [Elek Jakab], and later the person in question ceded them formally; the rest, along with Sándor Mike's and Elek Jakab's library and manuscript collection came partly to the possession of the Unitarian secondary school of Székely-Keresztúr [Cristuru Secuiesc, RO], and partly of the Transylvanian Museum Society."³

The imprint of the book gives only the year of publication (1786) and tells that the text is a translation from Italian; however the author, the translator and – as in the case of several other publications in the age – the printing office as well as the place of publication are not named. According to Zoltán Trócsányi, the lack of the place of publication (or false imprints) in most 18th century prints can be accounted for by the fact that the publishers wished to avoid the interference of the censor; a minute examination, however, can reveal whether the publication was issued in Hungary or abroad. Hence this (as far as we know only) Hungarian edition of *The Letters of Zachariah*, according to Trócsányi, on account of its well cut, slender letters, as well as the cutting of the letters *ö* and *ü* (in which the diacritical mark is not placed between the two points, but on the first: *ű*), must have been printed abroad, for this letter type is not known by any other Hungarian print of the age.⁴

¹ Gedeon Borsa, "Gyakorlati tudnivalók a régi nyomtatványokról" (Practical Information on Early Prints), in *Bevezetés a régi magyar irodalom filológiájába* (Introduction in the Philology of Early Hungarian Literature), ed. Emil Hargittay (Budapest: Universitas, 1997), 7–19, 12. The small format reflects the publishing practice according to which popular publications, meant to be held in hand while reading, were usually printed in smaller formats (*octavo, duodecimo*). *Ibid.*, 7. According to Borsa the expression *early print* nowadays internationally and almost uniformly signifies documents from before 1801.

² Village in North-Western Transylvania, present-day Romania; its official name is Cristești Ciceului. (Translator's note.)

³ Elek Jakab, "Szacsvay Sándor I.", *Figyelő* XI (1881): 161–174, 162.

⁴ Zoltán Trócsányi, "A XVIII. század magyar nyomtatványainak meghatározása" (The Definition of 18th Century Hungarian Prints), *Magyar Könyvszemle* 3 (1938): 193–278, 203–204, as well as Trócsányi, "Miért nem jelentek meg szépirodalmi művek Magyarországon a

Who is the translator?

The publication is mentioned in Géza Petrik's bibliography, but the place of publication is also missing. However, Petrik offers important additional information with reference to the translator, about whom, as well as about the author, the imprint says nothing. All we can find out from the title page is that the letters were "Published by a Heretic. Translated from Italian Language" ("Ki-adattattak egy eretnek-által. Fordítottak olasz-nyelvből"). Petrik commented in parenthesis: "[By Sándor Szatsvay]".¹

József Szinnyei's biographical lexicon goes further down this road. It mentions *The Letters of Zachariah* twice: the author on the one hand attributes the work to Sándor Noszlopy, stating that it is his only work; on the other hand, he counted it among Sándor Szacsvay's works.² Szinnyei based his attribution on Tivadar Noszlopy's communication, as well as on a reference figuring in a text published in the 1826 issue of the *Tudományos Gyűjtemény*.³ Researchers however will be disappointed if they check this control source: the author of the journal article, Ferenc Szartóry besides presenting the activity of several other scholars of the age mentions Noszlopy's as well, but his data prove to be deficient. He wrote: "[Noszlopy] Published a middle size book anonymously which contains discussions

XVIII. században?" (Why Were Not Belletristic Works Published in Hungary in the 18th Century?), *Magyar Könyvszemle* IV (1938): 375–378, 377–378. Another reason for publishing *The Letters of Zachariah* abroad could have been that the major Hungarian printing offices were in the hand of the different Churches, and these censored the publications of their printing houses. Thus they did not allow the printing of works which opposed their teaching regarding the faith or morals. Trócsányi, "A szépirodalom üldözése" (The Persecution of Belle-Lettres), *Magyar Könyvszemle* IV (1943): 433–435, 433. Private publishing offices also tried to avoid conflicts with the Churches. On the censorship of texts with similar political content and on the principles of censorship in the age see in more detail: Oskar Sashegyi, *Zensur und Geistesfreiheit unter Joseph II. Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte der habsburgischen Länder* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1958), *Studia Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 16.

¹ Géza Petrik, *Magyarország bibliographiája 1712–1860. Könyvészeti kimutatása a Magyarországon s hazánkra vonatkozólag külföldön megjelent nyomtatványoknak* (The Bibliography of Hungary 1712–1860. Bibliographic Report on the Prints Issued in Hungary or the Publications Referring to Hungary Printed Abroad), 3rd volume (Budapest: Ágost Dobrowsky, 1891), 869. "The Letters of Zachariah, the Pope's Secret Scribe Written from Rome to His Spiritual Friend about the Religious Enlightenment which Took Place in the Austrian Provinces. Published by a Heretic. Translated from Italian Language. [By Sándor Szatsvay] (K. 8-r. 8 leaves and 182 pages.) Year 1786. [S.a. and s.l.]" ("Zakkariásnak a pápa titkos író-deákjának az austriai tartományokban lett vallásbéli megvilágosításról, Rómából költ levelei az ő lelki barátjaihoz. Kiadattattak egy eretnek-által. Fordítottak olasz-nyelvből [Szatsvay Sándor által] (K. 8-r. 8 lev. és 182 l.) 1786 eszt. [H. és ny. n.]")

² József Szinnyei, *Magyar írók élete és munkái* (The Life and Works of Hungarian Writers), reprint, 9th and 13th volume (Budapest: Viktor Hornyánszky's bookshop, 1980–1981), IX./282–283, XIII./1091.

³ A scientific journal published monthly between 1817 and 1841 in Pest by János Tamás Trattner.

on religious issues. I cannot remember either its title, or its place of publication.”¹ Though the identity of the translator is still an unsolved philological problem, on the basis of the available data it is much more justified to attribute the Hungarian version of *The Letters of Zachariah* to Sándor Szacs vay – in accordance with the general opinion in literature² – than to Noszlopy.

Sándor Szacs vay, the Voltairean-Josephinist journalist

Sándor Szacs vay (1752–1815) of Szekler origin was the first professional political journalist; he introduced several journalistic genres into the Hungarian-language literature: for example the so-called colloquy “of the dead or of Elysian souls”, dialogical articles which expound on views of current events voiced by already deceased political, intellectual celebrities.³ In Hungarian-language political journalism the main developer and master of this special “two-faced” genre, ideal to mislead the censor, was Szacs vay: he could discuss the delicate questions of his age in a biting, facetious, satirical, in some places self-mocking manner, here and there faking shock, in other places only formulating allusively.⁴ Apart from his Elysian dialogues, he also made his characters speak about the current issues of the age in short allegorical tales. He developed the short article type, the gloss, commenting on the political events at issue, and the editing of the first Hungarian literary supplement, the *Magyar Musa* is linked to his name as well.⁵ According to György Kókay, however, Szacs vay’s lasting achievement was that he introduced political journalism and satire to Hungary as well as disseminating the ideas of the Aufklärung.⁶

¹ “[Noszlopy] Nyomtatásban egy középszerű nagyságú könyvet bocsátott ki, a’ maga neve nélkül, mellyben vallásbéli dolgokat tárgyazó beszélgetések foglaltatnak. Sem titulusa, sem megjelenésének ideje és helye nem jut eszembe.” Ferenc Szartóry, “Némelly ezen Században kimult Evangelikus Írók a’ Dunántúli Kerületből” (Some Lutheran Writers Deceased in This Century from the Transdanubian Dioceses), *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* X (1826): 69–91, 91. “[Sándor Noszlopy] was a sworn lawyer and solicitor, and he lived in part in Vas County, Duka, in part in Somogy County in Mikla (if I am not wrong), and died at the beginning of the current century.” “[Noszlopy Sándor] Felesküdt Prókátor és Ügyviselő volt, ’s lakott részszerint Vas Vármegyében Dukában, részszerint Somogy Vármegyében (ha nem tsalatom) Miklán, ’s hasonlóképen a’ folyó század’ elején halt meg.”

² For example György Kókay, *A magyar hírlap- és folyóiratirodalom kezdetei 1780–1795* (The Beginnings of Hungarian Newspaper and Periodical Literature 1780–1795) (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1970), 240; or Domokos Kosáry, *Művelődés a XVIII. századi Magyarországon* (Culture in 18th Century Hungary), 2nd edition (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1983), 386.

³ Kókay, *A magyar hírlap- és folyóiratirodalom...*, 274–275.

⁴ Kosáry, *Művelődés a XVIII. századi...*, 547–548. With reference to Szacs vay’s journalistic activity, Kosáry emphasized his role in disseminating the news about the Transylvanian peasants’ uprising of 1784 and the French Revolution.

⁵ Kókay, *A magyar hírlap- és folyóiratirodalom...*, 423. The role of this supplement was to free the newspaper from literary articles.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 400.

Szacsvay's Josephinistic convictions and anticlericalism have often been tackled as a problematic question in literary history.¹ In the spirit of the *Aufklärung*, Szacsvay had already attacked monks in the *Magyar Hírmondó* in Pozsony (today Bratislava), later he often condemned those priests who abused their position in his articles published in the *Magyar Kurír* in Vienna. In György Kókay's opinion Szacsvay wanted to apply to the Hungarian conditions the criticism of the church which was one of the essential programmes of the Josephinian reform: in this spirit, he supported religious tolerance, condemned bigotry, and although he never attacked religion itself, he was twice denounced by church people just at the beginning of his career,² and most probably he had to leave Pozsony for Vienna on account of his articles directed against the clergy.³

Literature most often connects Szacsvay's so-called brochures with the concept of anticlericalism: he was one of the most enthusiastic Hungarian disseminators of the pamphlets which appeared in large numbers at the beginning of the 1780s, contained Voltairian critique of religion, and which sharply attacked religious fanaticism. In fact, he was an ardent disseminator of Josephinian Voltairianism. Following the example of the most characteristic Viennese Josephinist writers, Blumauer, Eybel, and Rautenstrauch, he also published such pamphlets in Hungarian.⁴ The first one *Az – Izé – Purgatóriumhoz-való utozása* (What's-His-Name's Journey to the Purgatory) (1786) was written by Szacsvay as an answer to an anonymously published work entitled *Pápista oktatás* (Papist Teaching). He answered this "very cleverly, but at the same time with much condemnation, attacking some doctrines of the Roman religion (...)",⁵ thus his book was later banned by the censor.⁶

¹ On Josephinism in more detail see: Ernst Wangermann, *Josephiner, Leopoldiner und Jakobiner, Sonderdruck aus Die demokratische Bewegung in Mitteleuropa im ausgehenden 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert Ein Tagungsbericht* (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1980), bearbeitet und herausgegeben von Otto Büsch-Walter Grab, 95–114.

² For more details see: *Ibid.*, 228–300.

³ For more details see: Béla Dezsényi, "A *Magyar Kurír* és a cenzúra 1787–1793" (The *Hungarian Courier* and censorship, 1787–1793), *Magyar Könyvszemle* 1 (1967): 12–39.

⁴ Kókay, *A magyar hírlap- és folyóiratirodalom...*, 234–241. In these texts Szacsvay formulated similar views to the ones he elaborated on in his newspapers, but in a much more cutting manner. Censorship was stricter in the case of newspapers than in the case of pamphlets; the latter could be published almost without any restriction.

⁵ "igen eszesen, de egyszersmind igen sujtólag, és a római vallás némi hitágazatait megtámadólag felelt meg (...)"

⁶ Ferenc Toldy, "Tudományos Levelek. I. Adatok Szacsvai Sándorról. Mike Sándor erdélyi országos levéltárnok úrhoz néhány levele gr. Kemény József úrnak", (Scholarly Letters. I. Data on Sándor Szacsvay. Some Letters by Count József Kemény to Sándor Mikes, Transylvanian National Archivist) *Új Magyar Múzeum* 5 (1856): 280–283, 282. "Sándor Szacsvay, having a free spirit and a freely running pen, as well as fighting against the p...[riestly] obscurities of his time, by this he acquired many p...[riestly] and other enemies." ("Szabad szellemű s tollú ember lévén Szacsvai Sándor, és az idejébéli p...[ap]i obscurantismus ellen harcolván, az által magának sok p...[ap] és egyéb ellenséget is szerzett.")

Satire, pamphlet, epistolary novel?

The object of our study, *The Letters of Zachariah* is the second “brochure” attributed to Szacs vay, which presents the Josephinian church reforms in 16 letters from the point of view of the alleged papal scribe. From a generic point of view it is a quite complex text, and as such it is not a singular phenomenon in the age: among the experimentations with the literary forms of the 1780s we can often find such generic hybrids, in which the compositional methods of the humorous sketch, parody, pamphlet, polemical treatise, and report are mingled with the characteristics of travel literature (letters and diaries).

According to György Kókay the text is a very witty and lively satire, which, following the style made fashionable by Voltaire, speaks against positive religion, ceremonies, and papal authority with feigned shock and picturing ridiculous, fanatical figures.¹ Elek Jakab, Szacs vay’s first bibliographer, already emphasized the satirical edge of the text: “In his work entitled *The Letters of Zachariah* [Szacs vay] wrote the most biting satire on some Roman Catholic dogmas and church institutions.”² In Kosáry’s opinion the mocking, satirical tone has stronger appeal to the readers than a simple analytic argumentation; thus the writer can reveal what stands in the way of progress more efficiently than by accusing anger. Zachariah, the Pope’s scribes contemplates with stupefaction Joseph II’s innovations, and cannot complain enough about the spreading of the Enlightenment, of reason, and knowledge. At the same time, the text, wherever one may look into it, demonstrates the conviction that the forces of progress cannot be hindered.³

The last letter of the book, in which Zachariah addresses Joseph II, is worth closer attention. The text is an excellent example of the ironical, satirical tone characterizing the entire text: “I turn therefore to you, head of Germany, wisest Prince! (...) If I were a layperson, I should praise all your dispositions and I should bless you; but I am – a priest, and as such I only consider the present and future unhappiness of your people (...). Banish the *Enlightenment* from your provinces: place the monks back again to their monasteries (...), let superstition and the old, inveterate, erroneous judgements overcome everything; subject yourself to His Holiness the Pope, restore the Order of the Jesuits; and – let them control you; then they will describe you truly as the *greatest* and *wisest Prince* in all the letters they will write! Consider the welfare and happiness of your provinces! Can a people with a mind of their own be happy? From whom no taxes are extorted for the priests? Who cannot go to pilgrimages? Who cannot place their gifts to the horn of the altar? And who look tearfully at the destroyed monasteries and at the ruined altars of Our Lord? Never! How can you find out what would make the peoples under you happy? Ask the Jesuits, they will tell you!”⁴

¹ Kókay, *A magyar hírlap- és folyóiratirodalom...*, 240.

² Elek Jakab, “Szacs vay Sándor V.”, *Figyelő* 11 (1881): 321–346, 329.

³ Domokos Kosáry, “Szacs vay Sándor”, *Élet és Tudomány* 30 (1953): 934–937, 935.

⁴ [Szacs vay], “Tizenhatodik levél. Nints fel-téve kihez”, in *Zakkariásnak a’ pápa titkos iró-deákjának...*, 174–182, 178–179 [emphases in the original]. “Fordulok Te réád Német-Országnak Feje, leg-böltsebb Fejedelem! (...) Ha én Láikus vólnék, ditsérném minden te Rendeléseite, és áldanálak; de én – egy Pap vagyok, és ott nem egyebet, hanem a’ Te

On account of its highly timely social content and of its exceedingly ironical, satirical edge meant to agitate, the text is often mentioned in literature as an anticlerical pamphlet: its anonymous author/translator tried by this tone to sway its readers to a standpoint in conformity with his views and efforts.¹ Our text, however, is much more than a pamphlet, it is a “press product formulated in an easily intelligible style”. Its extremely exacting language, its pleasant, witty style makes it a literary text, while due to its epistolary form it can be justifiably analyzed as a novel; moreover, it seems that it unites several sub-genres of the novel.

Because of its actual political content, we may call it a political novel, which was a quite popular genre in the 18th century.² But it also shows some similarities with travelogues; for here also the moralizing-meditative tone is prevalent, the political-philosophical discussions occur during a journey, more exactly as a result of travel, and the plot is given by the experiences made during the trip.³ According to Antal Wéber, this age so susceptible to political issues favoured political novels and travelogues on account of the adventurous journey, because they discuss different questions related to the life of the state in the manner of humanist

népednek jelen-való 's következő boldogtalanságát szemlélem (...). Küld számkivetésbe a' meg-világosodást a' te birodalmaidból: helyheztesd-viszsa a' Barátokat ismét Klastromaikba (...), engedj tellyes erőt venni a' babonaságnak, és a' régi meg-rögzött hibás – itélet-tételeknek; vesd alá magadat a' Szentséges Pápának, állítsd-fel a' Jésuiták' Szerzetét; és – engedd őket nyakadra ülni; úgy osztán bezzeg leg-nagyobb és leg-bóltsebb Uralkodónak fognak tégedet festeni minden Leveleikben, melyeket irándók lésznek! Vedd szívedre a' Te tartományaidnak javát, és boldogságát! Lehet-é valamely nép boldog a' mellynek esze van? és a' mellytől csak kevés adó tsikartatik-ki a' Papok' számára? A' melly Bútsút nem járhat? Az Oltárok' szarvaira ajándékait fel-nem rakhattya? és a' melly könyves szemekkel néz az el-pusztult Klastromokat, és az Urnak szélyel hanyattatott Oltárait? Soha sem! Mi módon tudhatod-meg azt, hogy mi tégye a' Te alattad-való népeket böldeggé? Tudakozd-meg a' Jésuitákat, ők meg-fogják néked mondani!!”

¹ István Szerdahelyi, editor-in-chief, *Világirodalmi Lexikon* (Lexicon of Universal Literature), vol. 12 (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1991), 170. Pamphlets in the course of their history often assumed belletristic forms being composed as poems, dialogues, epistles, tales, parables, satires, and travesties.

² Lajos György, *Az anekdota. A magyar regény előzményei. Tanulmányok* (The Anecdote: The Antecedents of the Hungarian Novel: Studies) (Bukarest: Kriterion, 1988), 193–194. In this respect the author mentions other texts from that age as well: *Álom második Józsefről* (A Dream about Joseph II) (1781), *A második József az Elisium mezején* (Joseph II on the Elysian Fields) (1790), *Procurator Simon és Vinkler a másvilágon* (Procurators Simon and Vinkler in the Otherworld) (1791).

³ Imre Nagy, “Filozófia, állambölcsélet, utópia, szatíra. Bessenyei György Tariménes utazása című regényének műfaj történeti háttere” (Philosophy, Political Philosophy, Utopia, Satire: The Generic Background of György Bessenyei's Novel entitled The Journey of Tarimenes), in *Mesterek, tanítványok* (Mentors, Disciples), ed. Mihály Szajbély (Budapest: Magvető, 1999), 68–82, 70–73. The author, analyzing György Bessenyei's novel entitled *Tariménes utazása* (Tarimenes's travels), points out that the characteristics of several generic categories and subcategories are merged in it: mainly of the philosophical novel, the travelogue, and the utopian novel. The works presenting state organizations in the form of novels flourished mainly in the 17–18th century.

dialogues, and they blend literature, fiction with scientific elements.¹ The artistic form obviously justifies the generic category of the epistolary novel, and in this respect the text continues several Hungarian epistolary traditions: its rich style indicative of spoken language, its coarse humorous expressions originating from popular speech, its funny phrases having literary value recall the stylistic parodies authored by Péter Pázmány,² or the satiric protestant polemical writings.³

István Margócsy demonstrates, analyzing Dávid Barczafalvi Szabó's novel entitled *Szigvárt*, that our literary history has rather neglected the few experiments, mainly going back to German models, with the novel and novel translations. These novels, being the product of Josephinism, influenced the literary taste of the age greatly in the 1780s not only by their extremely important and modern social content; their prosaic and romantic character questioned the classical hierarchy of genres and fulfilled an aesthetically determinative role. These works touched almost every literary question of the 1780s, and they played an important part in the radical reshaping of the age's every literary canon and set of rules, which prepared the way for a more open literary world.⁴ In this sense *The Letters of Zachariah* is a

¹ Antal Wéber, *A magyar regény kezdetei* (The Beginnings of the Hungarian Novel) (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1959), 30.

² Péter Pázmány (1570–1637) was a Hungarian theologian, writer, orator, statesman, cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church. He was a central figure of the Counter-Reformation in the Kingdom of Hungary. His many carefully and elegantly elaborated theological, polemical, and devotional writings made him an important personality of Hungarian literature.

³ Lajos Hopp, "A magyar levélműfaj történetéből" (From the History of Hungarian Letters), in *Irodalom és felvilágosodás: Tanulmányok* (Literature and Enlightenment: Studies) eds. József Szauder and Andor Tarnai (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1974), 501–566, 507–508. An exemplary sample of the polemical letter form popular all over Europe pertaining to religious journalism was the *Epistolae obscurorum virorum* (1516), the famous "Letters of Obscure Men". The extremely popular religious polemical writing had several authors, most of it being written by German humanist Ulrich von Hutten. This form of debate came fast into vogue in the different national literatures, and letters proved to be an excellent device for conferring a literary guise to the opponent's arguments. The propagandistic content of polemical treatises in the form of letters is related to scholarly theological literature, which aided their publication in the form of pamphlets.

⁴ István Margócsy, *Szigvárt apológiája* (The Apology of Szigvárt), in *Mesterek, tanítványok...*, 151–168, 155–156. Hungarian literary history has not yet reinterpreted the late 18th century translations of German novels and the texts with political content similar to *The Letters of Zachariah*. In German specialized literature, however, general works on the political communications published in the form of pamphlets were compiled decades ago; see for example: Kurt Strasser, *Die wiener Presse in der josephinischen Zeit*, (Wien: Verlag Notring der wissenschaftlichen Verbände Österreichs, 1962). Since scholars realized that these texts are important sources for defining the concept of publicity in the age as well as with respect to the history of reading habits, several attempts have been made to reassess the role and value of this literature (mainly the pamphlets) and to reposition it in the system of the media and genres of the age. E.g. Christian Oggolder and Karl Vocelka, *Flugblätter, Flugschriften und periodische Zeitungen*, in *Quellenkunde der Habsburgermonarchie (16.-18. Jahrhundert) Ein exemplarisches Handbuch*, eds. Josef Pauser, Martin Scheutz, and Thomas Winkelbauer (Vienna and Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2004), *Mitteilungen des*

noteworthy epistolary composition not only on account of its content, but also because of its generic complexity, from the point of view of the history of literary genres.

Structure and collation

The fictional frame story of the work is outlined by *Elöl-járó beszéde a' ki-adónak* (The Publisher's Foreword). According to this, the publisher had been corresponding with a friend of his living in Rome, whom he asked to describe for him the state of affairs, morals, and customs of the country the "Enlightened minded" people of whom "had been the guide of all the other nations before and surpassed them both in mode of life and in crafts."¹ A few months earlier he received a great bunch of letters: *The Letters of Zachariah*. The publisher/primary narrator's distance from the epistles can already be observed here, at the beginning of the narration; by this he questions beforehand the truth of the things described in the letters: "My friend writes to me that this [the bunch of letters] was given to him by a friend of his stating that it really belongs to *Zachariah*, who is his friend, and he [the friend's friend] told him [the publisher's friend] that he received it from *Zachariah* himself. (...) In any case, I do not vouch for the truth of my friend's words that these letters were indeed written by an Italian. He has already written several times that in Rome the light reigning in the Austrian provinces is not much favoured, and to support this he has sent me these days the list of the books forbidden in Rome, where each and every writing compiled in Austria, whether great or small, are recorded (...)."² The witty allusion in the passage obviously refers

Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung Ergänzungsband 44, 860–874. Leslie Bodi's handbook offers a monographic discussion of late 18th century Austrian literature, with special emphasis to Viennese Enlightenment, to the relationship of literature and politics. The book, apart from introducing the readers to the operation of Josephinian censorship and to the history of literary institutions, apart from informing them on the reading public, accords special attention to Austrian pamphlet literature. It does not only clarify philological problems and interpret individual works, but also discusses the main issues, genres, stylistic and formal questions of pamphlets. Leslie Bodi, *Tauwetter in Wien Zur Prosa der österreichischen Aufklärung 1781-1795*, (Vienna, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 1995), 2., erweiterte Auflage, Schriftenreihe der Österreichischen Gesellschaft zur Erforschung des 18. Jahrhunderts 6.

¹ "világosított elméjü" "ezelőtt minden más Nemzettségnek útmutatója volt, és azokat mind az életnek módjában, mind pedig a' Mesterségekben fellyül haladta"

² "Az én Barátom azt írja nékem, hogy ezt [ti. a levélsomót] ő néki egy Baráttya adta, olly állítással, hogy e' valóságosan *Zakkariásé* volna, a'kinek ő Baráttya, és ő néki úgy mondotta, hogy ő azt önnön magától *Zakkariástól* kapta. (...) Egyéb-aránt én az én Barátom' beszédjének igassága mellett kezességet nem vállalok, mintha tudniillik ezen Levelek valósággal egy Olasztól irattattak volna. Már egynéhány ízben úgyis írta, hogy Rómában az Austriai Tartományokban Uralkodó világosság nem igen kedves, és ennek nagyobb erősségére el-is küldötte hozzám a' napokban a' Rómában meg-tiltott könyvek' Laistromát, a' mellyben az Austriából költ Irások, nagyok bár kintsinyek légyenek azok, egyről egyik fel-vagynak jegyezve (...)." – "Elöl-járó beszéde a' ki-adónak", in *Zakkariásnak a' pápa titkos író-deájkjának...*, 2–3b [emphases in the original]. Before this, on the second page of the book there is a biblical quotation: "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if

to church censorship. The foreword immediately reveals that Italian is given as the original language on the cover only because of the frame story; for the Zachariah-character, the Pope's secret scribe is of Italian origin and writes his indignant letters against the Enlightenment from Rome. *The Letters of Zachariah* is most probably the translation of the German text mentioned at the beginning of the study, published also anonymously one year earlier, in 1785 with the imprint *Frankfurt und Leipzig*, penned supposedly by an Austrian, Viennese author.

The publisher's foreword is followed by *A' leveleknek summája* (The Letters' Summary),¹ the detailed synopsis of the 16 letters, then by the *Elenkus*,² that is the table of contents, which lists the addressees of the letters. Among these we mostly find the satirical denominations of high church dignitaries: "Sent to Madrid to the chief investigator of heretics" ("Küldettetett Madridba, az eretnekek leg-főbb nyomozójához"), to "His Eminence, the fiery scourge of the infidels" ("Fő Tisztelendő Ur Hitetlenek tüzes Ostora") (letters 1–4), "To a foreign Jesuit in Lisbon" ("Egy külső Országi Jésuitához Lisabonába") (letters 5–7), "To the chief seeker of heretics in Madrid" ("Az Eretnekek' Fő ki-keresőjéhez Madritba") (letter 8–11), "To the former superior of the Jesuits in Lisbon" ("A' Jésuitáknak ezelőtt volt Elöljárójához Lisabonába") (letter 12), "To the confessor of the King of Lisbon" ("A' Lisabonai Király' Gyontató Papjához") (letter 13), "To a pastor who feeds his flock well, but himself even better" ("Egy Nyájját jól; de magát még sokkal jobban legeltető Pásztorhoz") (letter 14), "An seine Excellenz die gnaedigste Graefin von † ** in W**" (letter 15), and in the case of the last letter "the addressee is not given" ("Nints fel-téve kihez") (letter 16). This list is followed by Zachariah's indignant letters which can serve as a quite entertaining reading for present day readers as well.³

The structure of the print is revealed by the signature printed to the recto of the leaves below the text. The signatures differ on the front matter and the body matter of the book: on the preliminaries a)(-type signature is observable, then, beginning with the letters, the signature follows the letters of the alphabet: A – A2 – A3 – A4 – A5⁴ up to the letter M (J is missing). The body matter consists therefore of 12 quires, and each quire of 4 pair of leaves. The part from the *Preface* to the

well, why smitest thou me?" ("Ha gonoszúl szoltam, tégy tudományt a' gonoszról; ha jól szoltam, miért versz engemet?") (John 18:23)

¹ "A' leveleknek summája", in *Zakkariásnak a' pápa titkos író-deákjának...*, 4–8.

² "Elenkus", in *Zakkariásnak a' pápa titkos író-deákjának...*, 8b.

³ The rhetorical structure of fictive letters would also require attention, all the more so, since there have been written some German studies on 18th century letter writing habits and the rhetorical, stylistic-formal features of letters in the age. See for example: Beatrix Bastl, *Formen und Gattungen frühneuzeitlicher Briefe*, in *Quellenkunde der Habsburgermonarchie*, 801–812; or Thomas Wallnig, "Gelehrtenkorrespondenzen und Gelehrtenbriefe", in *ibid.*, 813–848. Nevertheless, we do not intend to analyze rhetorically the individual letters in the present study.

⁴ Borsá, *Gyakorlati tudnivalók...*, 15. The signatures were usually used only in the first half of the quires and often also on the first page of the second half, but no further, as it is the case here.

Elenkus forms a separate quire; the title page was probably attached to this later.¹ Page numbering also supports this supposition: in the preliminaries numbers figure only on the bottom of the recto pages (up to the 3rd page of the *Summary*), thus this part consists of 16 pages in total. In the body matter, however, the verso also contains the number in the upper right corner up to page 182.²

“...he ought rather to have hidden with it.” The reflections of a critical reader

Related to our text another aspect is worth mentioning: its reception in the age, which can be interesting from the perspective of the history of reading and of mentalities, for *The Letters of Zachariah* were written in an era when the reading culture was in change as compared to the previous epoch: in the 1770s and 1780s religious literature was thrust into the background, and the reading public became exceedingly interested in the French and German Josephinian literature of the Enlightenment.³ Analyzing booksellers’ catalogues and announcements related to book trade of the age, Géza Fülöp observed that in this age the Hungarian reading public in the process of embourgeoisement was mainly interested in the popular pamphlets coming from Vienna and Leipzig. The great number of the anticlerical pamphlets and freemasonic writings figuring in the lists reveals that the enlightened popular literature originating from these cities was the most in demand among the wider circles of society.⁴ Obviously, *The Letter of Zachariah* was one of these popular works containing Voltairean criticism of religion and vehement attack against religious fanaticism. One of the authors who responded to this book was,

¹ Ibid. 13–14. In the case of old prints the title leaf was often later attached to the body of the book. Apart from this, one can observe the general practice that the body matter is separated from the front and the back content (introduction, foreword, dedication, etc., respectively, epilogue, table of contents, etc.), and this is reflected in the signature marks as well: the body matter is preceded by quires marked with different symbols. All this shows well the old printing practice that in the case of more voluminous books the preliminaries and the title page were usually set at the end of the printing process. The correct order of the leaves was ensured by marking the pairs of leaves: after the symbol marking the quires the number of the leaf within the section was also given (e.g. A1, A2, etc.) – as it is the case in the publication we are discussing.

² Apart from these there is an empty page at the beginning and an empty flyleaf at the end of the publication.

³ Ilona Pavericsik, “A ‘megvilágosodott’ írók munkái a pesti könyvkereskedelemben” (The Works of the ‘Enlightened’ Writers in the Book Trade of Pest), in *Folytonosság vagy fordulat? (A felvilágosodás kutatásának időszerű kérdései)* [Continuity or Change (The Current Questions of the Enlightenment)], ed. Attila Debreczeni, (Debrecen: Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó, 1996), 81–87, 82–84. And Géza Fülöp, *A magyar olvasóközönség a felvilágosodás idején és a reformkorban* (The Hungarian Reading Public during the Enlightenment and the Age of Reform) (Budapest, Akadémiai, 1978), 26–28. The fact that before the 1770s members of the clergy wrote polemical treatises against such writings in Latin, while beginning with the mid 1780s these were elaborated in Hungarian for a larger public shows the wider dissemination of the new, enlightened literature. Books in this age popularized the new ideas or, through stories with a secular subject, entertained, offered enjoyment to, and unified, educated the public at the same time.

⁴ Ibid., 71.

however, a decided opponent of such writings, the negative critique, nevertheless, indirectly proves the popularity of the text in the age.

The critic of *The Letters of Zachariah* was Leó Szaicz, a Servite Friar, the preacher of the convent of Eger, one of the notorious, sharp eyed defenders of the faith in that age, with an almost paranoid sensitivity.¹ He wrote the historically well-founded apologetic work *Igaz Magyar* (True Hungarian) in the years subsequent to the Edict of Toleration. The subject of this many-volumed work according to its title is the Hungarians' veneration of the Virgin Mary, but the author in fact attempted to prove by means of historical arguments, contending with 16–17th century authors too, that the Catholic creed is the only true faith:² that only a good Catholic can be a true Hungarian.

Szaicz studied in Vienna in the second half of the 1760s, hence he was familiar with the various political pamphlets, but he did not have significant apprehensions about the influence of the German, Austrian Enlightenment in Hungary at that time.³ His attitude, however, changed by the mid 1780s, for then one could no longer – in his formulation – “laugh from afar” (“távulról nevetni”) at the Enlightenment.⁴ He compiled the sequels of the *Igaz Magyar*⁵ and the pamphlet entitled *Más is igaz magyar* (Others Are also True Hungarians),⁶ where he elaborated his arguments against the “novelties” mainly in the footnotes: he gave his opinion on a great variety of books, Hungarian and foreign pamphlets, as well as newspapers from the point of view of the Church, religion, and religious ethics.⁷

¹ Ferenc Bíró, *A felvilágosodás korának magyar irodalma*, 4th edition (Budapest: Balassi, 2003), 150–151.

² Ilona Pavercsik, “Szaicz Leó a felvilágosodás irodalmáról” (Leó Szaicz on the Literature of the Enlightenment), *Magyar Könyvszemle* 2 (1997): 167–186, 167.

³ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁴ *Ibid.* Quotation from Szaicz's book entitled *Más igaz magyar* (Other True Hungarian). Olga Granasztói, *Cenzúra, hitvédők, könyvkereskedők és olvasók* (Censorship, Defenders of the Faith, Book Sellers, and Readers), in *A magyar irodalom története I. A kezdetektől 1800-ig* (The Histories of Hungarian Literature I. From the Beginning until 1800), chief ed. Mihály Szegedy-Maszák, ed. László Jankovits and Géza Orlovsky (Budapest: Gondolat, 2007), 656–667, 658. The apologetic literature responded to the spreading of the new, mainly anti-religious views beginning with the 1770s. Ecclesiastical authors must have had good reasons for adding to their condemnation of socially useless reading, pursued for the sake of entertainment, the fear of the secularization disseminated by reading and misgivings about Christian values being renounced.

⁵ Pavercsik, “Szaicz Leó...”, 169. Leó Szaicz must have written the *Igaz Magyar* around 1783–1784, the second volume was published in 1788, the pamphlet entitled *Más is igaz magyar* in 1789, the third volume of the *Igaz Magyar* in 1789, and the fourth volume in 1790.

⁶ *Más-is igaz Magyar írta Kalapatstis György*. Mohilóban, MDCCXXXIX. Esztendőben. (Others Are Also True Hungarians, written by György Hammary, in Mohiló, in the year 1739.)

⁷ Pavercsik, “Szaicz Leó...”, 169.

Following the publication of the *Igaz Magyar* volumes, a polemic was started between Szacsvey and Szaicz in the *Magyar Himondó*,¹ later continued on the pages of the *Magyar Kurir*² and in the volumes of the *Igaz Magyar*, regarding the concept of nation interpreted by Szaicz on the basis of denominational identity.

In this debate besides the two main protagonists several other persons participated with satirical poems as well as with texts containing legal, church historical, and theological arguments.³ All the reflections formulated by the preacher in the *Igaz Magyar* against Szacsvey (too) can be interpreted as a stand in the controversy: in the several volumes long book Szaicz severely criticized the journals of the age, most frequently the Viennese *Magyar Kurir* edited by Szacsvey and its literary supplement, the *Magyar Musa*. He accounted for his polemical tone by asserting that he had been constrained to assume such a tone by his opponents' mockery, for the *Magyar Kurir* "abused, reviled the papists unbearably"⁴ and unceasingly. Szaicz ranked Szacsvey several times with the so-called Aufklärung-fantasts, who deceived and fooled many day by day, trying by all their actions and power to destroy everything that was good and to introduce and disseminate every wickedness ("kutyaságot"), in general, to annihilate the Christian faith altogether.⁵ Szaicz represented an ultraconservative standpoint rejecting any new ideology rigidly, therefore the main aim of his book was to prevent people being deceived by the "Aufklärung-fantasts" ("Aufklärungsz-fantaszták"), for, according to him, "there are no (...) greater fantasts than they, and there is not, there cannot be greater fanaticism than the present Aufklärung."⁶

¹ The first Hungarian language newspaper was started by a Lutheran minister Mátyás Rát. It was issued twice a week in Pozsony, in Ferenc Patzkó's printing house between 1780 and 1788. Apart from giving information on daily events, it contained scientific articles as well.

² The first Hungarian language newspaper in Vienna (1786–1834) was launched by Sándor Szacsvey himself; he was its editor until 1795. This newspaper with a critical and satirical voice issued twice a week, though published in Vienna, remained in close touch with the developments in Hungary.

³ The debate was already presented by Elek Jakab. Cf. Jakab, "Szacsvey Sándor V...", 321–346.

⁴ "a pápistákat ... tűrhetetlenül motskolta, piszkolta".

⁵ *Az Igaz Magyar* II. Része, írta Máriafi István. *Igaz Magyar, vagy is: Az igaz magyaroknak Máriához, az ő nagy aszszonyokhoz, és nagy pátronájokhoz-való különös áhétatosságáru, és a' mostani újságokról. II. Rész, melly szóll Sz. Istvánról, és egy kítsínyt a' régi, 's-mostani Sz. István-tagadókról is* (Part II of the True Hungarian, written by István Máriafi. True Hungarian, or: On the True Hungarians' Special Devotion to Mary, Their Lady and Great Patron and on the Current Novelties. Part II, about Saint Stephen and in Some Measure about the Old and Present Deniers of Saint Stephen as Well) (Paris and Berlin, 1788), 38.

⁶ "nintsenek (...) nagyobb fantaszták, mint ők, és nintsen, nem-is lehet nagyobb fanatizmus, mint a mostani Aufklärung." *Más-is igaz Magyar...*, 67.



Octavian Cosman, *Don Quixote*,
30X18 cm, oil on wood, 2002

He discussed *The Letters of Zachariah* in a long footnote and mentioned it many times in the four volumes. In his observations, however, one cannot detect a coherent image of the adversary, a certain hesitation can be observed in Szaicz's treatment of the translator's denomination (who calls himself a heretic in the imprint).

In some cases he emphasizes Szacsvy's protestant denominational identity, definitely considering the translation an attack against Catholicism by Protestants, whom he reproved for popularizing and translating "the many trashy books by Vitola, Ejbel, Rautenstrauk and Hofman", "which are full not only of much vanity, but also of much wickedness."¹ In his opinion, Szacsvy, though flaunting "tolerance, Menschenliebe", in fact committed the worst offences against it himself by "constantly mocking, reviling the papists in almost every newspaper".² Szaicz presented his own critical attitude as a natural defence, asserting that if certain Protestants upbraided him for his intolerance, he would answer them first of all that he did not write against Protestants in general, but only against some of them: "only against those who mock, revile the papists, such as e.g. from among the Germans Sletzer, Nikolai, (...) from among the Hungarians the *Magyar Kurir*, Zachariah, P. Emilián, etc."³ Referring to the idea of tolerance fashionable in the age, he pointed out particular passages where the translated text infringes the decree referring to religious tolerance: for example related to the "letters of indulgence made in Rome",⁴ according to Szaicz, the translator "reviles indulgencies which are an article of faith at us".⁵

In some of his observations, however, Szaicz interpreted the translator's denomination in a peculiar manner, calling it "pig religion": "he calls himself a heretic, but he does not add whether he is of Lutheran, Calvinist, Greek, Jewish, or Turkish faith. I believe that he is none, but, in brief, as I have read elsewhere, his faith was pig religion. Both the author and the translator are EPICURI, DE GREGE PORCUS".⁶ In other words, Szaicz identified the critique of Catholic rituals with a general attack on Christian culture; he labelled at the same time the writers of such

¹ "Vitolának, Ejbelnek, Rautenstrauknak és Hofmannak a' sok giz-gaz könyvei-"t, "mellyek nem tsak sok hivsággal, hanem sok kutyasággal is tele vannak." Ibid., 32.

² "a' Tolerántziát, Mentsenlébet", "a' Pápistákat szüntelen tsúfollya, motskollya majd minden újságában". *Az Igaz Magyarinak II. Része...*, 40.

³ "tsak olyyak ellen, kik a' Pápistákat tsak tsúfollják, piskollyák, mint p. o. a' Németek közzül Sletzer, Nikolái, (...) a' Magyarok közzül a' Magyar Kurir, Zakkariás, P. Emilián 's a' t'." Ibid., 15–16.

⁴ "a' Romában készültt párdon-levelek".

⁵ "az Indulgentziákat, vagy'is a' Bútsúkat motskollya, melly nálunk hitnek ágazattya". Ibid., 37.

⁶ "maga magát Eretneknek nevezi, de nem tezzi hozzá, ha Aukspurgi, Hetvetziai, Görög, Zsidó, vagy Török vallású é? én azt tartom, hogy edgyik sem ezek közzül, hanem egy szóval, a' mint másutt olvastam, disznó-valású ember vólt. EPICURI, DE GREGE PORCUS mind a' Szerző, mind a' Fordító". Ibid., 36–37. [Emphasis in the original.]

works dilettante, who are merely “physical men, homines animales, (...) pig-men, who do not understand spiritual things.”¹

He called the translation as well as the work entitled *Az – Izé – Purgatóriumhoz-való utozása*: “Two piggeries.”² To prove this, he pointed out the most vulgar passages from the book. In order to exemplify Szacsvay’s dilettantism and lack of respect, he compared the translation with the original and cited several fragments where the translator had transposed the original (anyway condemned) text in a coarser manner. For example: “They tell the lie that the indulgence letters made in Rome (...) in the Otherworld, I beg your pardon, are worth a shit.” Szaicz added twice: “In the German there is only that they are worth *nothing*.”³ He mentioned indignantly that the translator was capable of mocking Saint Anthony of Padua when he called him “Saint Anthony of Padua who produced many fine sons.”⁴

He was also outraged on account of the highly satirical observation made on the Pope in the fifth letter: “In the 5th Letter he [the translator] writes in this honourable manner: I do not know how he (the Emperor) could presume to think that anyone is free to have children without the Pope’s permission (...). As His Holiness can do nothing himself, therefore he freely and for the love of peace, since he has no soldiers, gladly surrendered to the Emperor’s bishops the right of giving permission to anyone to have children, as many as and with whomever one wants. There are several other such things in his letters.”⁵ The satirical edge of the translation angered Szaicz also because by this the translator offered the Protestants a pretext to mock the papists.⁶

The footnotes made by the preacher with reference to this text reveal more than a simply ecclesiastical view: Szaicz’s text according to all indications is a decidedly Catholic critique. Though he attempted to present his antagonist’s work as an attack on universal Christian culture, he detected in Szacsvay’s translation a clearly Protestant view. Szaicz’s critique exemplifies well the controversial

¹ “testi emberek, homines animales, (...) disznó-emberek, kik nem értik azokat, mellyek a’ léleké.” *Más-is igaz Magyar...*, 119.

² “Két disznósdi.” Pavercsik, “Szaicz Leó...”, 44–45.

³ “Azt hazudgyák, hogy a’ Romában készültt párdon-levelek (...) a’ más világon, követem kigyelmedet, szart sem érnének.”, “A Németben tsak úgy vagyon, hogy *semmit* sem érnék.” *Az Igaz Magyarinak II. Része...*, 37. [Emphasis is mine, A. O.]

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ “Az V. Levelében illy tisztességesen ír [t.i. a fordító]: Én nem tudom, hogy vetemedett illyen gondolatra (a’ Tsászár) hogy a’ Pápa engedelme nélkül-is szabad légyen akárkinek gyermeket tsinálni (...). Mivel ő Szentsége semmit sem tsinálhat; tehát önként, és a’ békességnek Szeretetiből, mint hogy semmi katonája sints, örömet által engedte a’ Tsászár’ Püspökjeinek már azután ezt a’ hatalmat, hogy akár kinek szabadságot adhassanak, a’ gyermek-tsinálásra, kiki a’ mennyi, és a’ kinek akarna. Illyen több-is vagyon az ő Leveleiben.” *Ibid.*, 38.

⁶ *Ibid.* “I hear however that the Protestants were very glad about this book, especially in Miskolc and Patak, etc., and that they mocked the papists greatly [quoting] from it, though they ought to have rather hidden it.” (“Még-is hallom, hogy ennek a’ könyvnek nagyon örülének a Prótestánsok kivált Miskóltzon, Patakon ’s a’ t’. ’s hogy abbúl nagyon tsúfolták a’ Pápistákat, holott inkább el-kellett volna nekik bújni véle.”)

relationship that existed between the Church and secular intelligentsia, between ecclesiastical literature and the Enlightenment at this moment: such texts as *The Letters of Zachariah* justly had a readership among the clergy, and mainly there. Nothing proves this better than the extant critical observations which were almost exclusively penned by them. Paradoxically, in our case too, Szaicz himself drew attention to all that he objected and argued with.

The preacher interpreted the printed work as a threat, considering it a performative action, and taking up a defensive position, he regarded it his task to answer such texts. According to this, the critical discourse is formulated from the point of view of the Church and religious morals. However, interestingly, other kinds of reasons are also introduced to the argumentation: the author built his critique – especially along the interpretation of the tolerance and intolerance concepts – mainly on the same fashionable ideas of the age and on the same imperial decrees on which *The Letters of Zachariah* was based.¹ And although he did not wish to evaluate the text as a literary work, he condemned it several times in his critique on account of literary or translation theoretical considerations, that is, he tried to dispute the *raison d'être* of such writings, presenting them as dilettante works.

The discourse adopted by Szaicz, who was highly familiar with the ideas of the age, due to the complexity of the argumentation applied by him, can be regarded as the formulation of a particular, local version of the enlightened ideas. Thus both our chosen text, *The Letters of Zachariah* and its critique are exciting records regarding the interpretations of enlightened ideas of the time and on the late 18th century Hungarian literature's mode of existence.

Translated by Ágnes Korondi

¹ Zoltán Lukácsi, “Egy ismeretlen Apor. Apor József (1759–1813) prédikációi” [An Unknown Apor: The Sermons of József Apor (1759–1813)], *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 4–6 (2005): 494–503, 503. In the works of ecclesiastical authors not only the negative impact of the Enlightenment is observable; they – partly under pressure – also adopted the argumentative technique and the more modern, varied scientific system of the age, that is, they spoke with a new voice in the changing world. Ferenc Biró suggests this too: *A felvilágosodás korának...*, 157–158. Since ecclesiastical writers had to conform to their opponents for the sake of an effective argumentation, they became the supporters of some new views which were no longer the manifestations of traditional religiosity.