

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF RECREATION IN HUNGARIAN PROTESTANT COLLEGES (16–18.-c.)

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Abstract The aim of this essay is to find some hints and data about how the meaning of sport was interpreted in conduct books in the early modern Hungarian literature. Here, the attributes of sport are said to further piety in the perspective of regulation: man should not serve God every day through sportive tricks, but through zealous routine of life, as a recreation form of a Christian. The laws of Hungarian Protestant Colleges (17th–19th centuries) include canons for many arts of sport and the conduct book also addresses regular exercises for preaching and praying as if they were acts of recreation.

Keywords Recreation, Protestant Colleges, conduct books, *Praxis pietatis*, Long Reformation.

The present essay aims to point out how a recreation form has lived throughout many centuries, and meanwhile it hardly ever changed its form that was unlike the recreation of the Reformation Era. Pál Medgyesi, a famous Hungarian preacher (1604–1663) translated *The Practice of Piety* into Hungarian as *Praxis pietatis* (1636). It was written by Lewis Bayly, bishop of Bangor in Wales, the much-liked court-chaplain of King James. It could be read as a Protestant pious book that was adequate for public and private purposes; it could also come through as a liturgical handbook. Its “vest-pocket edition” gave the genre of the so-called conduct book because of the consideration concerning rhetoric and contents: besides polemizing, argumentative, warning chapters on lifestyle, the texts offered also practical principles and practices of conduct, which balanced on the border of a sermon and a home reading. They offered practices of daily rituals and laid down the activities according to the principles of Christian life.

The Hungarian version had in early modernity such a prodigious circulation that it could practically be considered as a bestseller. The aim of this essay is to find some hints and data about how the meaning of sport was interpreted in conduct books in the early modern Hungarian literature. Here the attributes of sport are said

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DOI: 10.26424/philobib.2020.25.2.05

to further piety in the perspective of regulation: man should not serve God every day through sportive tricks, but through zealous routine of life. This latter phenomenon is a recreation form of a Christian. The laws of Hungarian Protestant Colleges include canons for many arts of sport and the conduct book also addresses regular exercises for preaching and praying as if they were acts of recreation.

One citation to that comment: “Make not an occupation of any recreation. The longest use of pleasure is but short; but the pains of pleasure abused are eternal. Use, therefore, lawful recreation so far as it makes thee the fitter in body and mind to do more cheerfully the service of God and the duties of thy calling.¹” *Recreation* had a much more abundant meaning i.e., sport and recreation in the English-speaking world between the 16th and 18th centuries.² The analysis of history of mentalities demonstrates how *Praxis* can be reread from this viewpoint i.e. what has the pious handbook got to do with recreation in a broader sense and its synonym of today – sport – in a narrower sense? On the basis of sociopsychological research of today it can be stated: the Puritans could only have suggested the abolishment of sporting events provided that they found norms to replace them. Let us investigate some of these elements.

- 1) “As soon as you wake up in the morning”, fill your heart with holy contemplation so that Satan cannot make you unsuitable for “divine service” through “wordly contemplations or carnal desires.” E.g., “As easily as the Almighty God wakes you up from your natural sleep, He can just as easily wake your body up in the coffin from the dream of death on the last day.”
- 2) “when you hear the cock crow, remember the flourish of trumpets on the last day, which will wake you up from your death.”
- 3) “when you are getting dressed, remember that our first parents were given the clothes to cover their shame that was the hideous fruit of sin,” “however adorned the clothes might be, none the less it is nothing else than the over-ornamented cover of our shame.”

If it had not been unambiguous what we said above:

- 4) “Do not let the glorious brightness of the sun shine in vain, but rather precede the sunrise - if possible - expressing your thanks [...] and greet Him [His Majesty, the Lord God] with awful *antelucanum* at dawn or *soliloquium* in the morning.”

¹ Medgyesi. Pál. 1636. *Praxis Pietatis [The Practice of Piety]*. Debrecen: Fodorik. RMNy 1639. I cite from the modern edition: 1936. Edited by Incze, Gábor. *A reformáció és ellenreformáció korának evangéliumi keresztyén írói*, 4. 118. Bp.: Bethlen Gábor Press PLC.

² Csorba, Dávid. 2019. “Praxis pietatis and/or recreatio?: Puritan Comprehension of Sport of the 17th Century Hungarian Calvinists.” In *Cultural Encounters: New Perspectives in English and American Studies*, edited by Gaál-Szabó, Péter, and Csillag, Andrea et al. Kultúrák, kontextusok, identitások. 85–93. Debrecen: DRHE.

5) Then “having washed yourself and put on garments appropriate to your position and God’s image (that you are wearing), lock yourself in your bedroom and fall on your knees [...] at your bedside, raise your heart, your arms and eyes [...] and take your prayer to his Majesty as a morning offering on the altar of your penitent heart.”³

Thus, it is summarized in five items what a pious individual has to do after the second dream, roughly at 3 A.M., namely, pious contemplation at dawn, then while waking up, getting dressed, further on praying on knees with arms lifted up before dawn, then singing. Studying the history of everyday life at the early modern age we know that noisy and overbearing behaviour ceased in towns after 10 p.m. anyhow: this was laid down at a lot of places in Europe. As public lighting did not exist, the extended family, that mostly shared one bedroom, fell in deep sleep two times at night and got up to pray together.⁴ The *antelucanum* i.e., occasional prayer before daylight is an existing form of prayer in other cultures as well, it is similar to the “saluting the life-giving sun” that is a 12 part-practice at dawn in Indian yoga. *Soliloquium* was an essential form of prayer of the Benedictine and Augustus order especially at the time of *matutinum* i.e., lonely mass of dawn. The way of pious prayer meant – according to Bayly’s *Praxis*-editions – kneeling with uplifted hands similarly to Moses, this was the conformal behaviour.⁵ According to our data worshipping consisting of lonely singing, praying and contemplation was a duty from early modern age, which arose from such an inner necessity that even the Hungarian Protestant galley slaves strived to keep the pious events – possibly in community – two times a day, at dawn and in the evening, during their miserable Passion in Italy!⁶ The Anglo-Saxon Protestant piety of today tries to recreate worshipping using again the word ‘worship’ and partly its previous forms.

³ Medgyesi 1936, 166–171, 175–176.

⁴ First dream refers to the praying in the 3 to 4 hours’ period between evening twilight and midnight see: Köleséri, Sámuel. 1666. *Bánkódó lélek nyögési* [*Groans of a Repenting Soul*]. Q4r. Sárospatak: Rosnyai. RMK I, 1039. Edited by Fazakas, Gergely Tamás. ““El-távozott a’ mi-magyar Izraélüntül a’ dicsőség”: Köleséri Sámuel panaszmádságai 1666-ból” [“The Glory Departed from our Hungarian Israel”: From the Prayers of Complaint by Sámuel Köleséri from 1666]. *Könyv és Könyvtár* 27: 65–124.

⁵ Fazakas, Gergely Tamás. 2008. “Az imádság testi kifejeződései az angol és a Magyar puritanizmusban. Az 1643-as Praxis pietatis filológiai és ikonográfiai kérdései” [The physical expression of prayer in the English and Hungarian Puritanism. The philological and iconographical questions of Praxis pietatis from 1643]. In *Medgyesi Pál redivivus. Tanulmányok a 17. századi puritanizmusról* [*Pál Medgyesi redivivus. Essays on the 17th century Puritanism*]. Edited by Fazakas, Gergely Tamás, and Győri L. János, 129–132. Debrecen: DEENK.

⁶ Kocsi Csergő, Bálint. 2009. “Rövid elbeszélés a gályarabok szenvedéseiről” [Short stories about the Torments of the Galley Slaves]. In Debreceni Ember, Pál. *A magyarországi és erdélyi református egyháztörténete* [*The History of the Reformed Church in Hungary and Transylvania*]. Transl. Botos, Péter. 575, 605, 633. Sárospatak: SRKTGY.

Not only the night but also the day passed off according to a different order two or three hundred years ago: the craftsmen worked 18 hours a day (it often happened that they worked at candle light till dawn and then the daily routine of the journeyman began).⁷ An 18-hour workday required enough toughness, at this point we can agree with the Puritan fathers. The description of the spiritual training before breakfast is followed by justification: “Therefore if you care for your body before leaving [the house] i.e., you do not leave without eating, drinking and in a state of nature, how much more care should be taken of your soul so that it would not remain naked among lots of temptations.”⁸

The trained Christian with a crust of spiritual and physical features sets off to the battle-field: “when you leave your house and knock about the world, wherever you go you will step into lots of dangerous and deadly entrenchments. You will meet obscene, treacherous, slanderous people, elsewhere you will find places with people armed with daggers, so that even your life can be endangered.”⁹ Not only everyday decision making, but also the conversation with worldly people and the sight of sin were considered by Puritan piety as a spiritual fight. Pál Debreceni Ember’s prayer expresses this as it follows: “Oh, my sweet Redeemer, Jesus! If Your Majesty suffered such unspeakably horrible torture for my sins and suffered huge spiritual fights, me i.e., the slave of sin, object of all kinds of temptations, how would I be devoid of spiritual wars? The disciple is not superior to his master, the servant to his master. Pray for me, oh my sweet Intercessor that my faith will not fade away during terrible trials and spiritual wars.”¹⁰ *Praxis pietatis* as a conduct book offered help to cope with these combative Christian struggles. It regulates the thoughts, speech and deeds, “from which you can learn how to walk with God as Enoch did.”¹¹ This was followed by a similar evening pattern of acting that can be described with the strategic procedures of the morning guide: it ranges from sitting in contemplation on the edge of the bed as if on that of a coffin to the rule of “moderate amount of sleeping.” It is obvious that Christian lifestyle and order of life were based on a systematically elaborated training, with Christian forms of activity and spiritual tools of recreation in the centre.

Let me remind you of the first quotation: “Amuse yourself freely but only as much as it makes both your body and soul capable of serving God and doing your

⁷ Takács, Béla. 1984. “Debrecen ipara 1693-ig” [The Industry of Debrecen until 1693]. In *Debrecen története 1693-ig [The History of Debrecen until 1693]*, edited by Szendrey, István. Debrecen története, 1. 464. Debrecen: Megyei Városi Tanács.

⁸ Medgyesi 1936, 188.

⁹ *Ibid*, 188–189.

¹⁰ Debreceni Ember, Pál. 1700. *Innapi ajándekul az Isten Satoraba fel-vitetett Szent Siklus [Saint Siklus Taken to God’s Tent as a Festive Present]*. RMK I, 1556. 215. Kolozsvár: Tótfalusi.

¹¹ Medgyesi 1936, 190–212.

other Christian tasks in a better mood. Your work is great and time is short for it.¹² This basic principle, i.e., the determination of the circumstances of proper activities, the so called *adiaforon* debate was ranked to the great Protestant theoretical debates of the 16th and 17th centuries. There were some stiff-necked, “hotter sort of Protestant” Puritan writers (Philip Stubbes, William Prynne etc.) who disapproved of all kinds of sport because of their godlessness and superfluousness, whereas others even supported the idea of playing certain kinds of sport (like John Milton who supported running or wrestling because he considered them important from the point of view of military toughness), the moderate did not start polemics on this question.¹³

At that time, Hungarian writers of theory distinguished between the conceptual categories of *public affairs* and *spiritual affairs*. The former one refers to the secular sphere, the general human forms of activity, whereas the latter one refers to the world of acts of religious disposition. György Komáromi Csipkés gives the definition of these expressions in his book *True Faith*: “Learn it here: *public affairs* are that God does not *command* and does not *prohibit* us to do. Such deeds are *eating, drinking, walking, speaking, wearing clothes, getting married, remaining single, being rich, being poor.*” “*Spiritual affairs like place, time, person, order, etc.* stop public affairs being public and limit their meaning because it is allowed to wear this or that kind of clothes but preachers must not wear a military uniform, men must not wear women’s clothes, Christians must not wear pagan clothes, a Hungarian must not wear clothes used by far away nations, freemen are allowed to eat and drink befittingly, however, they must not eat and drink at church during the sermon and the prayers.¹⁴” For this reason the preacher set up the borders of Christian freedom and the rules of activity in conformity with circumstances, which vary from time to time and from culture to culture.¹⁵

¹² Ibid, 211.

¹³ Collinson, Patrick. 1980. “A Comment: Concerning the Puritan.” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 31: 488.; Ibid. 1982. *The Religion of Protestants: the Church in English Society, 1559–1625*, 4. Oxford: University Press.; Ibid. 1989. *The Puritan Character: Polemics and Polarities in Early Seventeenth-Century English Culture*, 15. Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library.

¹⁴ Komáromi Csipkés, György. 1666. *Igaz Hit [True Faith]*. RMK I, 1042. 729. Szeben: Ábrahám Szenci Kertész.

¹⁵ For example: Gaál-Szabó, Péter. 2017. “Cultural Memory and Countering History Through Memory In Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Sermons.” In *Intertextuality, Intersubjectivity, and Narrative Identity*. Edited by Gaál-Szabó, Péter. 77–90. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

The English background of the *Book of Sports*

When King James I intervened in theological debates, he made his thoughts clear in connection with a case in Lancashire (1617).¹⁶ According to his system of thoughts archery, angling, horse-race, running, jumping etc. just like events in connection with certain Church and several other feasts (maypole setting, pub crawling of Whitsuntide etc.), games on saint's day, morris-dances were qualified as legal sports on the basis of tradition and certain Christian reasons. Animal fight (bear-, bull-, and cockfight), erotic dance, carousal and gambling were considered *unlawful*. In 1633 Charles, James' son, published a revised edition of this book, in which he completed the above list with bowling. This balancing attitude let certain customs of English everyday life live on, which were referred to as recreation (also Bayly used this expression in his *conduct book*) and it intended to ban only carnivalistic¹⁷ or medieval, warlike games.

The royal initiative was adjusted to the attitude of Queen Elizabeth I. who was James' predecessor. It embodied the Scottish ruler's standoff from sports and the performance of his role of power, respectively, as it represented the symbolic extension of the royal power in such common cases. The medieval and early modern folk games called Catholic games are extreme forms of patriarchy according to scientific literature, and as such they visualise the distribution between the sexes in society and at the same time of the priority of male identity (machismo).¹⁸ For obvious reasons the absolutist ruler, King James I. did not sympathize with aggressive, rude, manly games, as he represented a sexual orientation towards otherness and communicated the via media i.e. the importance of neutrality. Neither did Protestant pastors agree with the system of rules of the so-called Catholic sports and entertainments: the rule codification belonging to the oral culture, the lack of judicial, outer control function were not in accordance with the theological world concept and the imaging of the God-man relation on microworld level. In principle, this mediator role might have crowned the ruler's decree with success if he had not misunderstood his subjects' emotions, as Conrad Russell puts it: it was "the dialogue of the deaf" as usual.¹⁹ On the basis of individual cases he

¹⁶ James I. 1618. *The Kings Maiesties declaration to his subjects concerning lawfull sports to be vsed*. STC [2nd ed.] 9238.9. London: Norton and Bill.

¹⁷ Marcus. S. Leah. 1986. *Politics of Mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the Defense of Old Holiday Pastimes*. Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press.; Stallybrass, Peter. 1986. "Wee Feaste in our Defense": Patrician Carnival in Early Modern England and Robert Herrick's `Hesperides." *English Literary Renaissance* 16, no. 1: 234-252.

¹⁸ Dunning, Eric. 1986. "Sport as a Male Preserve." In *Quest for Excitement, Sport and Leisure in the Civilising Process*, edited by Elias, Norbert and Dunning, Eric. 267-84. Oxford-Cambridge: Blackwell.

¹⁹ Russell, Conrad. 1990. *The Causes of the English Civil War*. Oxford: Clarendon.

produced general principles, though this inductive procedure fitted in the precedent perception of the English law and order. He did this to prevent the papist idolatry from returning.

Yet he also regulated the legal forms of sport events and leisure: their moderate and collective practice was allowed to take place after the Sunday mess. This was what made the Puritans blow a fuse. Also, the Hungarian Puritan literature - from Pál Medgyesi through György Martonfalvi Tóth to István Sajószentpéteri - dealt with the prohibition of the so called "hunter's mass". This notion referred to the claim of the nobility that the mass should be so short that there would be enough time left for early afternoon hunting. A Hungarian judgement visualizes this adverse church disciplinary case as it follows: "our Hungarians deem it enough if they hear the sermon early morning on the Lord's Day and they spend the early afternoon *receiving and entertaining guests, eating, drinking and with mere bodily activities, culpable occupations, amusements.*"²⁰ The theological debate on the intertwining of the sacral and the profane world, the "diversification" i.e. secularization of religion was connected with the question of *adiaforon* in England. This was accompanied by a latent political conflict coming to the surface: the bishop who formulated the king's opinion on behalf of the *Church of England* acted against Puritan piety, which he considered excessive; besides this the king assigned the representation of the royal power to the shires, thus, the enraged preachers resorted to their patrons with weighty civil claims. I quote its Hungarian parallel: "*The law without exequutio i.e., being carried into effect [...] is like a bell without a clapper.*"²¹

It was difficult not to understand this step as the profanation of sacrality. The Shakespearean theatre parodied the rulers because of their hypocrisy. The character of the Puritan embodied only treacherousness at Shakespeare's age (like Malvolio in *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*), at Ben Jonson's age the Puritans embodied the king's politics. Anti-Catholicism in the *Book of Sports* opposed the attempts the early Stuarts made towards re-Catholicism (e.g., each king had a Catholic wife) and a book reporting about sincere morality opposed the often-amoral quality of the rulers' private life. The anti-puritan propaganda of the absolutist government elicited such a disapproval in the contemporary public thought (be it a pastor or a lay person representing any trend) that – according to certain opinions – it contributed to the execution of King Charles I, who had the decree published again and who represented a similar political autarchy, moral world concept and awareness of selectness like his father; on the other hand, it contributed to the Puritans' rise to power and later to their fall because of similar

²⁰ Szentpéteri, István. 1698. *Hangos trombita [Loud Trumpet]*. RMK I, 1521. C2v. Debrecen: György Vincze.

²¹ *Ibid*, E2v.

principles.²² One thing is certain, even Lewis Bayly himself resisted to the decree on the *Book of Sports* that is why he was imprisoned for several months in 1621.

The early Stuart kings might have only one excuse: they did not want to throw up the unwritten laws of the statute of labour either. The 18 hour-workday, the 6 day-working week meant a 108 hour-working week, there was only one day off, Sunday, however, the order of Catholic feasts (three day-feasts, the days of the saints or the name day of the saint after whom the church was named etc.) occupied again additional days besides Sundays. After the Reformation a good few Sundays were freed but even so hardly any free days remained, especially if we take the period between Whitsuntide and Advent into account, when there were 70 Sundays without any feasts, but it was the time of harvest when “the wretched people” had to work again.²³ On the one hand, it is understandable that the royal limitation of the notion of sport affected certain social layers sensitively. On the other hand, it is the fact that the cultural consumption of pious readings was not hindered and the conduct-book form kept the readings on daily devotions alive using the recreation method I have already mentioned.

The coexistence of the three models of sport-life i.e., the Catholic, Puritan and the Anglican, in other words the golden middle course, which embodied the royal power, was obviously not void of problems. We must not forget that the notion of sport belonged to the open intellect group of the premodern period before Romanticism: the notion of sport was defined in several different ways in space and time and as regards to content and form by various groups of the moulders of public opinion, its conceptual range involved entertainment, collective games, Bahtyin-kind collective traditions of carnivals and several versions of the so called *free-time activities*, which could only take place at weekends. The method offered by Puritan pastors, who were longing for chaste and godly life, contained such recreational practices which could substitute the order of Catholic feasts for individual piety, the medieval brutal team games for regulated spiritual fights and the mistakable erotic dances and dalliance for spiritual contemplation.

Sport in the Puritan medium in Hungary

I have compared one of the notions of English Puritan life with its Hungarian equivalents and have presented several examples from *Praxis* that were translated into Hungarian by Medgyesi and from the speech of István Sajószentpéteri, the thundering voiced preacher of the Haiduck towns in the 18th century. The expression

²² Semenza, Gregory M. Colón. 2003. *Sport, Politics, and Literature in the English Renaissance*. Newark: University of Delaware Press.

²³ *Histoire de la vie privée*. Dir. á Duby, Georges et al. Tom. 3. *De la Renaissance aux Lumières*. Dir. á Ariès, Philippe and Chartier, Roger. Paris: Seuil.

‘sport’ used in Great-Britain did not have a Hungarian equivalent until the end of the 19th century, however, the word ‘recreation’ did. Feast consecration was the topic of the only sermon known today. It was written in Hungarian by György Martonfalvi Tóth, the best-known figure among the Puritans in Várad. He used this word in connection with true church service as it follows: “what people did during feasts was lechery, *recreation*, exhibitionism, idling, revelling and squandering food and drinks.²⁴” Martonfalvi’s son-in law published a book entitled *Saint Siklus* in 1700. The Appendix contained the second edition of the sermon in whose text not many changes were made as compared to the edition from 1663.²⁵ The corrections made at several places in the full text (abbreviations, numerations, adjustments of numeration, abandonment of Biblical citations) might just as well have resulted from the son-in law and printer’s linguistic and/or typographical conception of simplification and endeavour towards transparency.²⁶ Yet a major alteration is striking: the abandonment of the preliminaries that is reasonable (e.g., the recommendation to the one-time town-councillors) on the one hand, the deliberate shaping of the text to meet the expectations of the editor/s on the other hand.

Let me give two examples of this, one referring to the title and the other one to the passage concerning us. The change of the title (in 1663: “*keresztény*,” in 1700: “*keresztvény*”) demonstrates that the original Catholic, generalizing notion was replaced by a pointedly Protestant point of view. As long as the former spelling of the word stressed the difference between the common Christian roots of the 17th century Calvinist celebrations and the superstitious, colourful Catholic forms, the latter one stressed the Christ-like attitude to be followed in the Calvinist practice, contrary to the hypocritical Christian-like practice. This is especially interesting if we know that this passage of Martonfalvi’s sermon (the passage on warnings in the part on benefits) goes back to passage 17 on true feast consecration in *Praxis pietatis* that has been cited several times. Martonfalvi involves and merges two items of “Sabbath-consecration” in *Praxis pietatis* when writing about the factors that hinder true celebration and the total consecration of the feast. Martonfalvi reduces the seven items in the first part of *Praxis* to five; the long piece of the second part from Saturday evening to Sunday evening that is interrupted by prayers (that has been

²⁴ Martonfalvi Tóth, György. 1663. *Keresztényi Inneplés, avagy Lelki Szent Mesterség* [Christian Celebration or Spiritual Hieratic Craft]. RMNY 3077. A4v. Debrecen: György Karancsi.

²⁵ “De már az emberek az Innepeket bujaságra, *recreation*ora, magok mútogatásokra, henyélésre, dorbézolásra, és ételben ’s italban potsékolásra fordították” [But the people used the feasts for lechery, *recreation*, exhibitionism, debauchery and squandering food and drinks.]. Cf. Debreceni Ember, Pál. 1700. *Keresztvényi Inneplés* [Christian Celebration]. RMK I, 1001. 484. Kolozsvár: Miklós Tótfalusi.

²⁶ The changes in spelling comply with the principles in *Apologia* chapter 3. by Tóthfalusi. But they can be attributed to the hypercorrection by Pál Ember. Anyway, Pál Ember’s good friends – Sámuel Kaposi Juhász and János Csécsi Jr. – were the proofreaders of the *Gilded Bible*, too.

analysed above) is summarized in 4 items.²⁷ In the second edition the word ‘recreation’ is written in italics, so it becomes more emphatic.²⁸ This word is an apposition, which –as a logical parenthesis –makes the reader conscious of the usage of the Biblical game notion. That is to say, all wrong celebration customs in the text from 1663 get involved in the Biblical (and only partially in the English) game notion and they visualize its superfluosity and harmfulness.

Again, our next example appears in a different context: The appendix of the Protestant church history written by Pál Debreceni Ember and published by the Lampe Publisher contains the *Narratio brevis* by Bálint Kocsi Csergő, which was published anonymously. An apologetic reference in *Narratio brevis* reads as it follows: “as it was a habit of the the pupils, the children and pupils of Pápa marched to the fields equipped with drums and flags on Wednesday and Saturday to refresh themselves” (the original text reads like “ut mos erat Studentibus, diebus Mercurii & Sabbathi Recreationis causa prodierunt”).²⁹ The report on this tradition written by the former headmaster of the Reformed College in Pápa gives credit to Bálint Kocsi Csergő’s words, although the contemporary school regulations have not survived. Consequently, it can be stated that we are reported on a custom practised at the Reformed College of Pápa i.e., sport lessons were held regularly, two times a week, between 1674 and 1676 when the *Narratio brevis* was written.

Simultaneously, the same custom was true for Reformed colleges in general: it is known from the Debrecen school rules and regulations of 1657 that sport lessons were held. The school rules and regulations of 1657 and their updated version of 1704 ruled over the methods sport lessons had to be held („recreandi animi et corporis causa relaxationem a studii simpetratam habet”). In fact, they referred back to the relevant paragraphs of the school regulations of 1621 of the Reformed College of Sárospatak, which were used to formulate the law.³⁰ The law of both Debrecen and Sárospatak emphasized the necessity of physical exercise that

²⁷ Medgyesi 1936, 291–313.; Martonfalvi 1663, B2v–B3r.

²⁸ The beautiful text edition, that omitted the marginalia and made the text more compact, was made on the basis of the latter edition. Cf. Fekete, Csaba. 2006. “Martonfalvi György (1635–1681)”. *Zsoltár* 13: 5–11.

²⁹ Lampe, Friedrich Adolf and [Debreceni Ember, Pál]. 1728. *Reformatae in Hungaria et Transsylvania*. 556, 763. Utrecht: van Poolus.

³⁰ Thury, Etele. 1908. *A debreczeni református főiskola törvényei s az ezeket aláírt tanulók névsora, I. Törvények 1657-ből*. [The laws of the Reformed College of Debrecen and the list of names of the students who signed it. I. Laws of 1657]. *Leges Scholae Debrecinae de studiis, moribus officiisque scholarium. Anno Christi MDCLVII. Statutae*. Edited by Thury, Etele. Iskolatörténeti Adattár, 2. Pápa: ORTE. 78. (De moribus Scholarium, Art. XXI); Szentimrei, Mihály. 1996. *A Sárospataki Református Kollégium 1618-as rendszabályai és 1620-as törvényei* [The Regulations of the Reformed College of Sárospatak (1618) and its Laws of 1620]. Edited by Szentimrei, Mihály. Sárospatak. 58–9 (Leges de moribus, XIX. lex).

served the relaxation of body and soul; however, it prohibited superfluous entertainment (archery, wrestling, throwing stones, card and dice games, and imbecile conversations.) The pupils of the Reformed College of Sárospatak got special penalty or other punishments if they wasted their time swimming, bathing, rowing, fowling, wall-climbing, and in winter skating, sledging, snowballing; it was prohibited for the pupils in Debrecen to dance and to damage the botanical garden.³¹ According to the regulations of Patak it belonged to the duties of the person on duty for a week (custos) to attend to the morals, the behaviour of the pupils and to their speaking Latin also when „in partum recreandi causa dimissos” i.e., similarly to Reformed College of Pápa there were games and physical activities carried out in the field also in Debrecen.³²

There was only one exception to the rule namely ball game though not in today’s sense. A note probably refers to it in the diary of László Wass, a student of the Reformed College of Kolozsvár (today: Cluj Napoca, RO) on 11 September 1714: he took a successful exam on some of Burmann’s theorems with Professor Sámuel Szatmárnémeti and then he wrote “after lunch I went recreating in our garden.”³³ If the poor college student spent his time according to the rules, he played with the ball on his own, but this did not mean that he was playing football. In *Basilikon doron*, a treatise on the ideal monarch, written by King James I. several sports were forbidden e.g., “balls kicked with feet” i.e., football. This prohibition was very successful. Although this was the first time that mention was made of the European style football, even Mihály Vörösmarty, a great Hungarian poet and translator of *King Lear* did not know the Hungarian word for it, so he omitted the translation of the expression ‘exotic football’ in the text edition two hundred years later.

On the basis of all these we cannot give an answer to the main question: was or could there be any Anglo-Saxon sport conception relevant to the reception of Hungarian students or their reader’s perspective? Since religious disagreements and sport as a hobby have totally different roots in both countries, we might not be far from the truth if we state that books like *Praxis pietatis* were read with a different expectation in Hungary, on the one hand and the students’ approach to sport did not develop in accordance with them, on the other hand. In spite of this it might be interesting to have a look at the English and at the Hungarian reception of this very effective, pious bestseller from the readers’ active, (re)creative perspective that is a phenomenon of the history of mentalities at the early modern period; especially when we take the possibility of linguistic games into account and here we admit that

³¹ Thury 1908, 78–9. (De moribus Scholarium, Art. XXI–XXIII, XXV); Szentimrei 1996, 58–61 (Leges de moribus, XIX–XXI, XIV), 90–3 (Poenae).

³² Szentimrei 1996, 80–1 (De officio custodum).

³³ Nagy, Gyula. 1896. *Czegei Wass György és Wass László naplói 1659–1739* [*Diaries of György czegei Wass and László Wass 1659–1739*]. Edited by Nagy, Gyula. MHHS XXXV, Magyar történelmi évkönyvek és naplók, 3. 475. Bp.

Sándor Nagy's statement on college history is right.³⁴ The performance of the Debrecener student legation was practised in the Sunday afternoon services, and according to him its successful accomplishment was celebrated with a small feast called *praxis*.³⁵ Bayly and Medgyesi's Puritan *praxis pietatis*, which tried to keep the Christians aloof from feasts, was sharply up against this. Their *praxis pietatis* was also against symposiums and sports and instead of them offered other forms of spiritual practice linked to physical activities.

Acknowledgement: This article has been written with the support of the MTA BTK Lendület Long Reformation in Eastern Europe (1500–1800) Research Project.

³⁴ Cf. Tóth, Zsombor. 2019. "Hosszú reformáció Magyarországon és Erdélyben I.: konfesszionalizációk és irodalmi kultúrák a kora újkorban (1500–1800)." [Long reformation in Hungary and Transylvania I. Confessionalisations and Literary Cultures in the Early Modern Period (1500–1800)]. *ItK* 123: 720.

³⁵ Nagy, Sándor. 1933. *A vallásos nevelés és oktatás a Debreceni Kollégiumban a reformáció korától a XIX. század közepéig*. [The Religious Education and Teaching in Reformed College of Debrecen from the Reformation to the middle of 19th-c.]. Theologiai tanulmányok, 26. 21. Debrecen: ORLE.