

Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem
Bölcsészettudományi Kar

DOCTORAL THESIS

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**SOURCE PUBLICATION, SOURCE ANALYSIS
FROM SPIS LITERACY OF THE LATE 16TH
CENTURY:
ANDRÁS MÁRIÁSSY'S LETTERS**

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Topic of thesis

The topic of my thesis is to publish and introduce András Máriássy's letter which can be found in the National Archives of Hungary, section „P”, P 1194 file, and also to analyze and enlighten some key questions of the theme. No one has come that I know of to deal with András Máriássy's letter before myself.

One of the biggest values of the revealed letters is that they are all written by the same hand, all written by the writer himself. This circumstance makes the corpus extremely estimable.

The letters were written between 1585 and 1607, with some exceptions all from the family land, Batizfalva, and the circle of the recipients is also very tight, apart from some exceptions, they are the writer's siblings. Thus these letters mean a rare source for researchers who are working on the linguistic and dialectical history of the end of the 16th, beginning of 17th century.

The source that has been prepared for critics and has been published can offer a commodity not only to linguists. The information, that these letters that had been written during the 15-year-long war contain, can mean important additions to historians and military historians between 1575 and 1606. The period is an extremely exciting time of church history, it has already been processed by researchers on a macro level, but these letters can contribute to get acquaintance in a micro level.

My work follows the publishing practice of the Régi Magyar Levéltár series.

The purpose and methods of the thesis

The letters that are published in the thesis are broadening the quantity of the 16th century articles that are electronically available; therefore a computer corpus can be built for historical linguistics researches.

The main purpose of the thesis is to publish András Máriássy's letters and to prepare them for critical publishing. Apart from the publishing of the core, I am going to introduce the letters, the writer of the letters, his sound-marking system and I am going to denote his linguistic and dialectical specificities.

In the second chapter, I am going to portray the writer's, András Máriássy's life and family, as well as the cultural historical background of his letters.

The third chapter deals with the inner characteristics of the letters, how many letters remained from which years, how the writing image changed past the decades, who are the recipients, and furthermore, I am discussing the questions of the dates.

In the fourth chapter, I am going to expound the principles of the letters' transcription, and the structure of the core.

In the fifth chapter, I am going to emphasize some linguistic characteristics of the core. Next to the phonetical and morphological angles, I am examining some stylistically interesting characteristics, such as the openings and closings of the letters, some saying that occur in the corpus, and the phenomenon of the duplicates.

After the summary and the bibliography, the publishing of András Máriássy's 48 letters, the main part of the thesis is coming.

Historical and cultural historical questions

András Máriássy and the Máriássy family

The Máriássy is an old, nobiliary family, which's two main branches are the Máriássy of Márkusfalva and of Batizfalva. The family had a significant influence at the Highland in the 16th century, both politically (due to their lands) and intellectually. Owing to the protestant Máriássy family, the school at Márkusfalva could be established, they had an excellent relationship with Péter Bornemisza, and they took a great care of their children's education. András's brother, Zsigmond Máriássy studied in Sárospatak, then in Wittenberg.

The letters' cultural historical background

These letters were written in an exciting (cultural) historical age and place(s). In the country that had fallen into three parts, despite the wars, a vernacular improvement started, and the Hungarian literacy started to spread. It was true especially for Transylvania and North-Hungary that were farther from Vienna, and those places that were under Turkish influence. It is commonly known what the continuous wars meant to the country and in what condition Hungary was in the 16th century, meanwhile how vivid intellectual improvement could start at the safer parts country.

It is generally known that reformation was an educational factor, and what role it played in the spreading of literacy. The first schools were already working, printing houses

were established, the Hungarian-language arts multiplied, and the whole Károli Bible-translation was published.

The thesis' letters also carry the signs of both the 16th century's cultural development and the continuous wars. Their writer must have been known in the intellectual centers of the period: the first letter was written in 1585 at Gyulafehérvár. András Máriássy's brother went to school in Sárospatak, and their father spread the relative, Bornemisza's books.

Despite all, there is no reference to the intellectual life in the letters; these are writings of a farmer, military and always ill man. We still can be led to the conclusion, that culture had its part in his home, his eldest son, Ferenc Máriássy (1597–1649) left a catalog from 1645, which is one of the richest information from the period, of a noble collection.

Even if pale, it stands out from András Máriássy's letter that they were written in a multi-lingual environment, where, even if the nobility was Hungarian, the majority of the residents of the villages-towns used Slavic or German languages.

It is obvious from the letters that András Máriássy used these languages naturally, Latin, Slavic, German words, and, furthermore, he used Latin expressions "fluently" in the Hungarian text.

Some inner characteristics of the letters

The extent of the core

The core contains 48 letters from between 1585–1607, but their genesis shows an uneven dispersion. In can be seen from the dates, that though the letters remained random and can be found in the Archive's file bulked, they might used to compose a bunch, since we can notice that there are years in which no letters were written and there are weeks from which there are documents are with few days' distinction.

Even though the letter core's distribution is not balanced, it is still appropriate to examine one scriptor's language in its procedure, writing style, since from the end of the 16th century, beginning of 17th century, out of 22 years (1585–1607 – from when András Máriássy was 27 years old almost until his death), the core gives source from 13 years, and not more than 2-year-long intermissions can be found.

The hand-writing went through a slight changing during the followed 22 years. The earlier slacker, more structured hand-writing became denser, considering both row spacing

and the density of the letters. While in the first letters from 1585 (including spaces) are approximately 50 characters in one row, it is around 60 in the 1590s, 70 ten years later, and in the last years it is often 80-90 characters in one single row.

The forming of the letters had not gone through a remarkable change, I only would like to emphasize the form of letter 'ő'. While it was formed with a letter 'o' or a semi-circle (open on the top), this diacritic became simpler and finally it ended as a dot.

Circle of the addressees, place of origin, date

The recipient of most of the letters was Ferenc Máriássy, the writer's brother (16 letters out of 28 were addressed to him). Zsigmond Máriássy, another brother was the recipient of 8 letters. One letter was addressed to Anna Máriássy, one to István Melletej, Alexandro Farkas de Szarosz and one to Ciriaco Fajgell.

Aside from little exceptions, all letters were originated from Batizfalva, we can find letters from another origin from the earlier years. The first two letters, from 1585 are originated from Gyulaféhevár, the third (1588) from Batiz, the one from 1594 is from Csetnek, and from 1599, one letter is from Márkusfalva, the other is from Polyánka.

The place marking of the letters is in two different ways, either Latin or Hungarian, and it seems that the writer was not using them accidentally. When he was writing from Márkusfalva or Batizfalva (understood from the letters) he was writing from home, since he was using Hungarian locative affixes: *Batizfalvan* (4.), *Marcusfaluā* (21.), while in the other letters, sent from other places, he used Latin forms, for example: *Ex Batiz* (3.), *Ex Giulia feier Var* (2.), *Ex czitnek* (14.), *Ex Polianka* (25.).

All letters have dates, day-month-year order in every case, and the appearing words from the expressions are used in Latin, usually abbreviated. The notation of the days is always Arabic, the months are always written in their Latin names. The expression *veteris* often appears in the earlier letters, then later the *V.C.* abbreviation, ultimately the 24th letter from 17th June, 1599. The Latin *vetus*, *veteris* word means 'old, ancient'. The new, Gregorian calendar was accepted at the parliament in 1588, in Pozsony, and the parliament of Transylvania also accepted it in 1590, but the Calvinists turned back to the old-calendar in 1591. In my opinion, in his letters, András Máriássy called the recipient's attention to the use of the old calendar with *veteris* and the *V.C.* abbreviation that stood for *veteris calenderii*.

The issues of “manu propria”

The supposition, that the only scriptor could have been András Máriássy, the clause of the letter from 24th February, 1603, confirms: *Az irasrol / megh bochasson k med, mert faj az fel kezem* (33.). A personal note such as the one above would be written only by the person, marked in the signing two rows lower (András Máriássy), would be an apology. A similar personal note appears at the end of another letter, written a half year later, on the 4th September, 1603, but this time between the marking of the origin and the date: *faratt erő / uel* (35.).

Some highlighted linguistic specificities of the letters

The sound-marking system

The sound-marking system of the letters is reasonably consistent, therefore I only deal with the cases in which I experience fluctuation, uncertainty, or difference from contemporary orthography.

The writer marks the /c/ sound with *cz*, which he uses also to mark /cs/. The mark of the sound /cs/ is usually *cz*, except some words, in which it is *ch* (*szerencse, csak, bocsát, parancsol, cselekszik, tartsa*). The sign *L* marks sound /cs/ in only one case. Diversity of the words that are using *ch* are not consistent, it decreases by the years. No tendency can be determined that the *ch* marking would decrease gradually and consistently, there are letters around the end of the period in which the rate of this marking is extremely high, but its use decreased obviously, and clearly narrowed.

Regarding the sounds /e/, /ë/ and /é/, the *-e* question word and *e* determinative have distinguished places. This two (apart from some exceptions) are marked with a lower marked *e*. We can find it in a different position in only three cases.

The marking of the sounds /gy/, /ly/, /ny/ and /ty/ shows an interesting view. In can be said in general, that these are indicated differently in the beginning or the middle of the word, or at the end.

The /ü/ sound is usually *u*, but rarely, *w* can be found.

Distribution and punctuation

The letters that are the object of my thesis belong to those rare scripts that use diverse punctuation marks.

First line of the paragraphs are started a little bit closer to the margin, and they always start with a capital letter. In other places, the use of small and capital letters is not consistent; the initials of the names are not even always capitals.

To divide the paragraphs, comma, dot, semicolon and colon can be found.

Latin abbreviations rarely appear in the Hungarian texts, and in these cases they are usually word-final nasals.

Phonetical and morphological questions

- The ablative case suffixes in András Máriássy's language are *-ból/-ből*, *-ról/-ről*, *-túl/-tül*;
- *-szor/-ször/-ször* suffixes (in every likelihood) do not fit labially;
- *i* can be observed in the first syllable of the root-morpheme in the *kénytelen* and *kenyér* words, and in the non-first syllables in the words *ítél* and *ígér*;
- the root is tend to use a labial *ö* in *szerez* and *becsület* words;
- *tesz*, *lesz*, *vesz* verbs in past tense, conditional mode and infinitive have an *ö*-form;
- syllable-final *l* eliminates in *küld*, *volt*, *volna*, *szolga* (and in derivatives), *nélkül*, *holnap*, *oltalmaz*, *föld*, *zöld* and *dolog*.

The infinitives with personal signs appear remarkably often in the core. Their frequency, correlated to the forms without personal signs, is highly remarkable compared to their representation in the contemporary standard language, and their occurrence is similar to the literary codexes, rather than the original, Hungarian texts.

The rates temporal distribution is very interesting. The core letters are from 22 years, and during this seemingly short period, a significant change had gone off in the writer's use of the infinitives. In the earlier letters we can observe a high, around 50% rate but this rate decreases later.

I can originate the data's temporal changes to two reasons. Firstly, I assume that the use of the personally signed infinitives might have come from a literal intensity. In this case I can come to the conclusion that by going away from school education in time, the writer's literal intensity must have decreased and he used the learnt style element less often. Secondly, and I suppose this to be more likely, that this use of the infinitives in his language originated from the regional dialect he learned in his youth while he was living in Transylvania, but this dialect's effect must have lowered during the decades after settling down in Batizfalva.

A peculiar syntactic phenomenon: the duplicates

The writer often used the parallel construction known from the codex-literature, we can find numerous examples to this from the very early letters to the latter ones. We have no basis to presume translation from Latin in the Máriássy-letters, the writer used these piling ups as a separate style-tool. The style element should also be emphasized from another point of view, such as here it was obviously used not as an ecclesiastical language use, but fully used in a secular environment.

It gives a beautiful rhythm to the text when not only on or two words are repeated with a synonym, but creates a whole structure line:

„ha mjtt *beszedemben irasomban az mjtt meg mondok uagy megh irok uetek*” (6.),

„Ide ualo *allapatom es iarasom* penigh ebbe *uott es uagion*” (13.),

„*ualamjnt es ualahogy leszek indulasomatt es menesemett* touabra nem halasztom (13.),”

„*busult es szomoru sziuel hallottam es uottem*” (28.).

Also, a structure can be observed in which the three-element “duplication” is followed by another one in the other half of the row:

„hazug *aruloul latrul nem jamborul*, ualakj uagy minth magha szauatt en fel^olem aszt *közlötte, szolia es beszellj*” (28.),

there are also examples for the “triple duplication” structures:

„Kerem is k-medett legien *jo akarattal es tanaczadassal* kell *ę tulök tartanunk es magunkatt otalmaznunk*, es *minth auagy mitt kellessek czelekednunk*” (38.).

In the latter one, in my opinion, the third duplication was written only because of the rhythm, the structure “demanded” the „*minth auagy mitt*” wording.

In some cases we can assume that the repetition and the use of synonyms are due to an explanation of strange words:

„ily nagy *latorsagh szertelensegh*” (11.),

„megh *regulaltassek es zabolasztassek*” (34.),

but we can determine in the use of the word *lator*, that this intension could be only occasional, because the word *lator* appears often (11 times) in the core, but the writer does not explain it elsewhere.

Phraseologic questions: idioms and proverbs

The writer often talks with several idioms, many of them can be found in Gábor O. Nagy’s collection (O. Nagy 1976), and there are some that can be found in János Baranyai Decsi’s idiom-collection.

Some examples: „*az ő kőr alatt is borjut ke- | res*” (38.), „*felek rajta Tőkőlj Vram uizre ne uigie*” (39.), „*Engem szinte ugy akarnak ala | uinnj, mjnt az kjnek az szemet | be kőtik ne lasson*” (5.), „*reghen fogattam Vram | hogy mas szekere farkan nem jarok*” (6.), „*ha egy hordo serbe buttak uona es az czapon kj ferhettek uona, talam | ő is reajok tanalt uona*” (18.), „*en szinte ugy iartam mjnth az kit ighen Vernek es sir- | rnja sem hadnak*” (6.).

Greetings and felicitations

The letters usually start with the *Zoghalatomatt ajanlom k-mednek mjnth bizodalmas Vramnak batiarnak / őczemnek...* introductory form, then comes a felicitation, and after all these does the writer come to the point. The letters are closed with similar frames – after the last saying another greeting can be found, it is followed by the date, then the signature)and the postscript.

The final closing seems to be the *Isten éltesse kegyelmedet* type, since this core can be found at the end of all letters but 4. It does not appear at the end of the first letter, written on the 3rd of February, 1585, addressed to Ferenc Máriássy, of the one addressed to István Melletej on the 25th of September, 1588, addressed to Anna Máriássy in 1590, and the one that is addressed to Ferenc Máriássy on the 25th of October, 1600. The specialty of

the first letter's formula is that the *tartsa...* form can be found, which does not appear later in itself. The *éltessé* form can be found in 16 letters along with the *tartsa éltesse*, the *és* conjunction appears only once in one an earlier letter, written in 1585. September (2.). It can be determined about István Melletej and Anna Máriássy that they were "special" recipients, Anna Máriássy is the only female recipient (presumably in was the writer's aunt, Pál Máriássy's sister, Anna), and István Melletej must have been one of the land's administrator. (The addressing of the letters written to them differ from the other's Latin addressing, these were in Hungarian). Both letters begin concisely, instead of the usual long introductory formula (*bátyámnak, öcsémnek, uramnak*) that illustrates the relationships, he only writes to Anna Máriássy *Zoghalatomnak ajánlasanak utanna*; and writes only *Köszönetemnek utanna* to István Melletej. Knowing the above, it can be understood that even though the writer gave a closing to both recipients that differ from all the other letters, he writes a personal sentence at the end of Anna's letter, referring to the content of the letter (*Isten hozza jó egészségben kelmeteket fejenként*), but he only writes *Isten hozzád* to István Melletej.

I suppose, taking into consideration, that the letters were exchanged sometimes almost every day between András and Ferenc Máriássy and the letter-beginnings became quite formal, that these beginnings did not reflect their relationship's momentary development. Further standpoint could be to find and examine the letters, written by Ferenc Máriássy, such comparison could result more outcome for historical socio-pragmatic researches.

The above mentioned *Isten éltesse kegyelmedet* base formula completes firstly with (*sokáig jó*) *egészségben*, and the a *sokáig* elements. The *sokáig* expression appears only once after 1595, but the expression *sok jókkal* takes its place and then appears in almost every letter, in the two-third of the letters after 1595.

Fashions can be observed in the introductions of the letters, while *adjon Isten, áldja meg az Isten* formulas appear here and there in every period, the greeting-beginner *kívánok* is specific in the 1593-99 years, the *Látogassa az jó Isten kegyelmedet minden/sok jókkal* appears first in 1601, but then it can be found in the introduction in almost half of the letters (9 out of 22).

Summary

The letters that are published in the thesis are broadening the quantity of the 16th century articles that are electronically available, therefore a computer corpus can be built for historical linguistics researches.

The value of the thesis is that it offers data for research of the 16th century dialectal position and written language.

In the examined file, numerous further Hungarian letters can be found. These letters are only partially from family-relatives. By examining them in the same geographical space, in the same social environment and dialect, in the use of the language, we could get further information, and these could contribute with a huge amount of data to the core of the late 16th century's, early 17th century's linguistic normals.

Publications in the topic of the thesis

Huszonöt levél a 16. századból: Hasonmás kiadás betűhű átirattal (Régi Magyar Levéltár; 2.). Szerk.: Korompay Klára. Budapest, Magyar Nyelvtudományi Társaság, 2006.

Isten tarcha eltesse k.medet sokaigh egesseghben. In: Csiszár Gábor – Darvas Anikó (szerk.): *Klárisok. Tanulmánykötet Korompay Klára tiszteletére*. Budapest, ELTE Magyar Nyelvtörténeti és Nyelvjárástani Tanszék, 2011. 95–100.

A márkusfalvi Máriássyak – Szolgáltatomat ajánlom ... *Élet és Tudomány* 59. (2004), 1238–1240.

Conference lectures

Egy „szinkrón” nyelvjárástörténeti vizsgálat terve XVI. századi misszilisek alapján. VII. Nemzetközi Magyar Nyelvtudományi Kongresszus. Budapest, 2004.
[<http://www.nytud.hu/NMNyK/eloadas/>]

Egy 16. századi nemes, Máriássy András leveleiről. Szolgáltatomat írom kegyelmednek. Misszilis és fiktív levelek, naplók, emlékkönyvek, dedikációk és alkalmi feljegyzések a régi magyar irodalomban. Az MTA Irodalomtudományi Intézet Reneszánsz Osztálya által szervezett tudományos konferencia, Körmend, 2010.

