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# Highlights of the Lutheran Reformation in Slovakia

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The territory of modern Slovakia, encompassing much of what was formerly upper Hungary, was, during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, a Protestant stronghold and the heartland of Slavic Lutheranism. It is one of the few Slavic regions of Europe where a substantial number of Lutherans<sup>1</sup> have maintained their theological and liturgical traditions as the heritage of the Reformation, and the Lutherans played a role in the cultural-national awakening of the Slovaks of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries far more significant than their numbers would have suggested.

Unfortunately, the history of Lutheranism and the Lutheran Reformation in Slovakia has been neglected by most historians. Even Czech historians do little more than assert that the Reformation strengthened the cultural and linguistic ties between the Czechs and the Slovaks while Hungarian historians, understandably, do not differentiate between the growth of Lutheranism in the Carpathians and the Reformation in the rest of Hungary.<sup>2</sup>

More disquieting is that only a handful of Slovaks have addressed themselves to the formal study of the Lutheran Reformation and many of these were primarily interested in indicating the relationship which they believed existed between the Czech Hussites of the fifteenth century and the Lutherans of the sixteenth century, hoping to justify the concept of a Czechoslovak people.

But this argument, that the Hussites were the direct precursors of Lutheranism in Slovakia, reflects the realities of nineteenth rather than of sixteenth century history. Based upon a widely held folk tradition which ascribed to Hussite foundation many of the oldest Lutheran congregations in Slovakia, this interpretation appeared verified by evidence which indicated that Lutheranism was most quickly and widely accepted in those counties and cities which had been under the hegemony of John Jiskra and his Hussite warriors. This interpretation, though facile and attractive to advocates of a Czechoslovak nationality, lacks concrete historical substantiation.<sup>3</sup>

Even a cursory study of the Reformation Era in Slovakia indicates that the first to accept Lutheranism were the German burghers of the cities of central and eastern Slovakia. Nevertheless, although the Reformation in Slovakia began as an

extension of and was strongly influenced by the reformers at the University of Wittenberg, by the end of the sixteenth century, Slovaks would form the majority in the Lutheran Church in Slovakia. Slovak clergy would increase their voice in the administration of the Church during the sixteenth century and would look less and less to Wittenberg for guidance and direction. It was this acculturation of Lutheranism in Slovakia which helps to explain why it was able to endure until the present while in other regions inhabited by Slavic peoples, Lutheranism died out or was retained only as the faith of Germanic peoples.

Luther's ideas were promulgated and found acceptance in Slovakia shortly after his debate with John Eck at Leipzig. Merchants from the cities of central and eastern Slovakia returned from their regular visits to the Leipzig fair with news of and pamphlets by the Wittenberg Professor. In 1520 Thomas Preisner, Pastor at Leibitz near Käsmark in Zips county of eastern Slovakia, read Luther's *Ninety-five Theses* from his pulpit.<sup>4</sup> Two years later a small congregation of Lutherans had been founded at Nové Mesto pod Siatrom.<sup>5</sup> In 1522 George Baumhenckel of Neusohl became the first student from Slovakia to enroll at the University of Wittenberg and was followed in 1523 by Thomas Matthias, also from Neusohl, and Martin Cyriacus from Leutschau.<sup>6</sup> By 1525 the citizens of Bartfeld, a major trading center in eastern Slovakia, were caught up in a debate of Luther's ideas, we were the citizens of the cities of the *montana* region of central Slovakia.<sup>7</sup>

Luther's influence was even felt within the court of Hungary. There the most prominent advocate of Luther was none other than the military tutor of Louis and the close confidant of Mary, George of Brandenburg. George seems to have accepted Luther's ideas quite early, for in 1522 he was condemned by many of the lesser Hungarian nobles, clerics, and Italians at the court as a German heretic.<sup>8</sup> A ready target for their reproaches because of his pro-Habsburg attitudes, George made no effort to conceal his views. In a letter to Luther dated 5 January 1523 George indicated how he had himself defended the German Reformer before the King.<sup>9</sup>

It was George who arranged the appointment of Conrad Cordatus, later active in Slovakia and Germany, as the court chaplain of Mary. But the fiery and intemperate attack Cordatus made upon the Pope, the Papal Legate to Hungary, and the cardinals after the publication of *Decet Romanum* led to his dismissal and brief imprisonment.<sup>10</sup> He was replaced by John Henckel from Leutschau who, though an advocate of reform, was much more in sympathy with the views of Erasmus than with those of Luther. Except for a brief sojourn in Kaschau in

1526, Henckel served the Queen until 1530 when she departed Hungary to assume the Regency of the Netherlands.<sup>11</sup>

Mary herself was attacked for tolerating Lutheranism because she sought to reduce the tensions between her brother Ferdinand and the evangelicals<sup>12</sup> and because Luther dedicated to her his exposition of four penitential psalms of 1526.<sup>13</sup> Although Mary never expressly accepted the ideas of Luther, neither did she explicitly repudiate him. Even as late as 1530, despite all of her protestations to Ferdinand that she did not tolerate heretics in her retinue, she still indicated an interest in Luther and his doctrine when she was at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530.<sup>14</sup> She would not define her own religious convictions with precision but seems to have sympathized more with the ideas of Erasmus.

Because of its attraction for the Germans in the court of Hungary and in the cities of Slovakia, Lutheranism was viewed as a very real threat to the kingdom by the lesser Magyar nobility and the Roman Catholic hierarchy. On 24 April 1523 the Diet accepted an anti-Lutheran proposal drawn up by Cardinal Cajetan and endorsed by Stephen Werböczy stating that "all Lutherans and those favoring them shall have their property confiscated and themselves be punished as heretics and foes of the most holy Virgin Mary."<sup>15</sup> Various royal governors also tried to stamp out the evangelical movement but without any real success, and in 1525 the Diet once again felt compelled to decree that all Lutherans should be purged from the land by both the secular and the ecclesiastical authorities.<sup>16</sup>

These laws must be understood, however, in light of the many problems confronting Hungary in 1525; the rivalries among the nobility, the conflict between the nobles and the monarchy, the fear of Habsburg influence and of the advance of the Turkish armies in southern Hungary and especially the financial difficulties facing the nation. Hoping to alleviate these problems, Werböczy and the lesser nobility sought to assume the direction of the mines of central Slovakia, largely controlled by the Fugger-Thurzo company. Angered by the German domination of the cities of Slovakia, which were vital to the economic well-being of the nation, the increasingly xenophobic lesser Magyar nobility took advantage of the revolt of the miners in the *montana* region, which broke out in 1525, to attack this German influence by identifying it with the doctrines emanating from Wittenberg.<sup>17</sup>

This was not difficult to accomplish. Many of the leading burghers of Neusohl, a center of the revolt, and of the other six major cities of the *montana* region, had gone over to Lutheranism during the 1520's. In Neusohl Valentin Schneider, who had been elected magistrate in 1521, and his brother-in-law, Heinrich Kindlinger, the curator of the churches of the

city, converted to Lutheranism. It was their not so secret intention to call Simon Bernhard Kech, a follower of Luther, as a preacher for the city churches. But the city pastor, Nicolaus of Zeeben, strongly opposed this maneuver, arguing that the attempt by the magistrates to name a cleric to a position subordinate to his own, without his approval, was an illegal interference in the rights and responsibilities of the city pastor. Nicolaus appealed to both the Queen and the hierarchy, the latter responding quickly in favor of Nicolaus and sending a commission to the city on 4 April 1524 to root out and destroy Lutheran books.<sup>18</sup> Not to be thwarted by the opposition of Nicolaus, after Kech requested to be excused from his earlier acceptance of the call because of the dispute, the magistrates resorted to the convention of inviting evangelical preachers to work in the city for specific terms and honorariums. Among these were Conrad Cordatus, John Kryssling and Dominikus Hoffmann. Even the hesitant Kech delivered a series of sermons in Neusohl in the winter of 1526.<sup>19</sup>

This tactic only served to prolong the struggle and led to its involvement in the revolt of the miners. For once the revolt broke out, Nicolaus charged that the reformist preachers had stirred up the workers. While Kryssling and Cordatus were imprisoned briefly, they were found innocent of any connection with the uprising, and Nicolaus, who had hoped to strengthen his hand, found that he had lost most of his support. Upon his death in 1529, the council of Neusohl selected Stephen Spetinger as the first Lutheran city pastor.<sup>20</sup> The dispute in Neusohl was not confined to theology but involved jurisdictional issues. The heat of the controversy was fired by the increasing desire of the lay leaders of the community to gain a greater voice in the administration of the churches in the city than they had previously exercised, justifying their actions by an appeal to their traditional prerogatives as embodied in their civic charters of privilege.

Evangelical clerics were also aided and protected by some of the most powerful families of Hungary living in Slovakia, who joined the Lutheran movement during the first half century of the Reformation. Among them were the Thurzo, Illésházy, Török, Ballassi, Dragfi, Kostka, Révay, Perényi, and Nádasdy families. All of them tolerated evangelical reformers in their territories, most of them called protestant clerics to serve the chapels on their estates, and some of them, including Thomas Nádasdy, Francis Révay, and Peter Perenyi, corresponded directly with Melanchthon and Luther, seeking advice in theological and ecclesiastical matters.<sup>21</sup>

As magistrates and magnates went over to the new faith, the Roman Catholic hierarchy, which had suffered severe losses at

the battle of Mohács in 1526 and in the subsequent disorders of the Turkish occupation of most of Hungary, could not inhibit the growth of Lutheranism in Slovakia. The paucity of leaders within the Roman Catholic Church allowed the reformers in Slovakia to work within the old ecclesiastical organization to bring about the reform of liturgy and doctrine. As they took over the administration of the churches at the municipal and district levels, the reformers encountered little effective opposition and thus felt no need to organize outside the existing structures until the end of the century.

This was the pattern of reform throughout Slovakia and can be seen clearly in the eastern counties and cities. In Bartfeld, Esias Lang and Michael Radaschius were early supporters of reform, as was Matthew Ramaschi, pastor at Zeeben, who corresponded regularly with the Wittenberg reformers.<sup>22</sup> Even George Moeller, the Senior of the Fraternity of the pastors of the twenty-four Zips cities, one of the most important pastoral conferences in Slovakia, eventually went over to Lutheranism despite his earlier attempts to halt its spread in Leutschau.<sup>23</sup> In 1544 he called Bartholomaeus Bogner of Eperies to come to Leutschau as Deacon in order to preach in the spirit of Luther, while Moeller himself addressed the need to establish a continuing basis of financial support for the evangelical churches and schools.

In central Slovakia Stefan Spetinger, Bartholomaeus Frank, and Raphael Steger were the propagators of Lutheranism in Neusohl,<sup>24</sup> while Andreas Jacobaeus and Stanislaus Koskossinus did the same in Altsohl. In western Slovakia, where the magnates were particularly active in fostering the growth of Lutheranism, Slovak clergy were quite prominent in the Lutheran movement, including Caspar Kolarik, Jaroslav Urbanovic, and Michael Marcellus or Marček in Arwa county, and Basilius Modonius, Paul de Hunicov, and George Bohemicus in Trentschin.<sup>25</sup>

The rectors of the city and village schools of Slovakia were also active in the reform movement. The schools, which came increasingly under the control of lay patrons, were one of the most effective agencies for the propagation of Lutheranism in Slovakia. The magistrates or magnates would name the rectors, confirm the curriculum and orders or discipline for both teachers and pupils, and adjudicate disputes.<sup>26</sup> Continuing the pedagogical traditions of northern humanism and merging them with Lutheran doctrine, the evangelical schools of Slovakia attracted the sons of the magnates and the burghers.

Most significant were the schools located at Kasmark, Eperies, Neusohl, Leutschau and Bartfeld. Under Leonhard Stöckel, a former student and life-long friend of Luther and Melancthon,

the Humanist School at Bartfeld attained such fame that its curriculum served as a model for many of the other schools of Slovakia.<sup>27</sup>

Many of the pastors and rectors patterned their activity after the model of the reformers at Wittenberg as they had learned to know them during their sojourn at the University. Although the universities at Vienna, Cracow, and Padua still drew substantial numbers of students from Hungary, as did the University at Prague, the overwhelming majority of the evangelicals from Slovakia sought a Wittenberg education. By the time of Melanchthon's death in 1560 some 442 students from Hungary had enrolled at Wittenberg, and by the end of the century the number reached 1018.<sup>28</sup> Frequently aided by stipends and subsidies from patrons at home, the students absorbed the teachings of Luther and Melanchthon, the latter being especially solicitous of the welfare of the students from Hungary.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, since the approval of the bishops, who were still Roman Catholic, was required for ordination at home, many of these students went to Wittenberg not only to complete their education but to be ordained there. It seems that many viewed their ordination at Wittenberg as bestowing upon their ministry the authority and blessing of the *alma mater* of Lutheranism.

Since many of the lay patrons of the reformation movements in Slovakia were primarily concerned with moral and liturgical reform, it is not too surprising that a specifically Lutheran movement was slow to develop. Almost all who advocated reform were called Lutherans by their enemies, irrespective of the doctrine they preached. The theological particularization which was evident quite early in Germany and Switzerland developed much more slowly in Slovakia. Nevertheless, there had been, even during the early years of the evangelical reform movement in Slovakia, some egregious theological debates between the radical Anabaptists and the more moderate reformers in eastern Slovakia. Andreas Fischer from Kremnitz advocated Anabaptist and then Sabbatarian and Judaizing views in the cities of Zips county during the 1530's, achieving some success among the lower classes in the cities.<sup>30</sup> An even greater challenge to Lutheranism was that of Calvinism, which became increasingly popular among the Magyars. Presaged by Matthias Bíro Dévay who, after returning to Hungary from Wittenberg, inclined more and more to the doctrinal formulations of the Helvetic Reformation, many of the Magyars, even those who attended Wittenberg, would accept first Philippist and then distinctly Calvinist doctrine.<sup>31</sup>

At Wittenberg, the Magyar students formed a specific nation, the Hungarian *Coetus*, limited to those whose mother

tongue was Hungarian. Throughout its history, no German or Slovak from Slovakia ever joined the *Coetus*; and thus there emerged at Wittenberg a distinction between the Magyars, on the one hand, and the Germans and the Slovaks, on the other. This differentiation was not confined to ethnic or linguistic differences but became increasingly theological. At first characterized by the moderation of Melanchthon in doctrine, to whom the Magyars were especially attracted, the members of the *Coetus* would adhere more and more to purely Helvetic teachings after Melanchthon's death. After attacks were made upon it by the Archduke August of Saxony in the 1570's, only a handful of members remained in the organization and most of the Magyars sought out the universities of Switzerland and the Rhineland to complete their education.<sup>32</sup> The process which began at Wittenberg continued in Hungary as the students returned home. The theological and ethnic differentiation began to split apart the evangelical movement and was accentuated by the need to define the evangelical faith as a result of the defeat of the Smalcaldic League at Mühlberg in 1547, the repudiation of protestant ideas at the first sessions of the Council of Trent, the renewal of Catholicism, and the passage of the first anti-protestant laws by the Hungarian Diet since 1525.

At Pressburg in 1548 the Diet approved an article ordering the expulsion of Anabaptists and Sacramentarians from the kingdom was approved.<sup>33</sup> Fearing the influence of Anabaptism and other more radical theologies, the Lutheran party had joined with the Roman Catholic party to enact this law. But the Catholic hierarchy, with the support of the King, immediately began to interpret the law as meaning that all "innovators" in religious matters, including Lutherans, should be expelled. In response to this very obvious threat, the Lutherans of Slovakia, and subsequently the Magyar Calvinists, sought to define their faith and to defend themselves by disavowing the Anabaptist views proscribed by the law of 1548.

Attempts to define the theology of the evangelicals had taken place in 1545 at Erdöd and one year later at the Synod of Eperies. At the latter, where discussions focused primarily upon ceremonies and feast days, the representatives of the five royal free cities of eastern Slovakia, Eperies, Zeeben, Bartfeld, Kásmark, and Leutschau, declared their adherence to both the Augsburg Confession and the *Loci Communes* of Melanchthon.<sup>34</sup> After the passage of the law of 1548, the need for a definition of the evangelical faith became even more pressing. Believing themselves entitled to the same toleration which had been extended to their co-religionists in the Empire, the Lutherans of Slovakia would, after 1548, seek to make their adherence to the *Augustana* even clearer by drawing up three



confessions of faith: the *Confessio Pentapolitana* authored by Leonhard Stöckel in 1548 and accepted by the five royal free cities of eastern Slovakia; the *Confessio Montana* of 1558 which was largely the work of Ulrich Cubicularius of Schemnitz and accepted by the seven free cities of central Slovakia; and the *Confessio Scepusiana* prepared by Valentin Megander and Cyriak Koch using the *Montana* as their model and approved by the *Contubernia* of the pastors of twenty-four Zips cities in 1569. Although each of these confessions was a response to a specific threat to the independence of the evangelicals in each region by the Catholic hierarchy, they all conformed to the doctrines of the *Augustana* while expressing these doctrines in moderate, almost conciliatory language. Clearly repudiating the views of the Anabaptists, these confessions also stressed the true catholicity which the Lutherans believed characterized their views.<sup>35</sup>

At the same time, the Magyar Calvinists were defining their doctrinal stance and, while attempts were made to reconcile the differences between the two parties, they were to no avail. By the last quarter of the sixteenth century each party, Lutheran and Calvinist, had so defined their own theology through confessions of faith as to make reconciliation impossible. The process of definition of dogma led to the differentiation of the evangelical Reformation in Hungary into two distinct groups and to the perpetuation of the separation between the Calvinist Magyars and the Lutherans of Slovakia.

These confessions did differentiate between the Lutherans of Slovakia and the Magyar Calvinists as well as the Anabaptists but did not eliminate another major threat to the Lutherans in Slovakia, that of dissension within their own ranks. The very moderation of language and brevity, which characterized all three of the confessions accepted by Lutherans within Slovakia, allowed for a variety of interpretation. After 1580, attempts to have the Formula of Concord accepted as the normative statement of Lutheran theology for the Lutherans of Slovakia resulted in a generation of debate. On the one hand, many German Lutherans of the central and eastern cities of Slovakia were reluctant to accept the very precise doctrinal definitions which had been incorporated into the Formula of Concord and accepted by the orthodox Lutherans in Germany. On the other hand, the clergy of Slovak ancestry, often supported by the leading magnates of Slovakia, and seeking a greater voice in the administration of the Church in which Slovaks were now numerically the majority, became the ardent advocates of the Formula.

It could have been expected that the controversies leading to the formulation and acceptance of the Formula of Concord

would be echoed in Slovakia. For many of the issues treated in the Formula had already emerged in the cities of Slovakia. In 1551 Matthias Lauterwald, Pastor at Eperies, accepted and proclaimed an Helvetic interpretation of the Lord's Supper and a synergistic interpretation of the doctrine of salvation. Michael Radaschinus and Leonhard Stöckel both chastized Lauterwald, who had been influenced by Osiander and the other Königsberg theologians. This dispute eventually involved the town councils of Bartfeld and Eperies, who appealed to the faculty of Wittenberg for a decision in the case. On 30 October 1554 Melanchthon wrote to the magistrates of Eperies indicating that, if Lauterwald persisted in his views, they had the right to dismiss him from his post.<sup>36</sup> Even before Lauterwald, both Andreas Fischer and George Leudischer from Leutschau had preached doctrines more radical than those generally accepted as Lutheran; while, during the second third of the sixteenth century, Francis Stancarus of Poland, who also labored in Transylvania, and Francis David of eastern Hungary, proclaimed even more radical Unitarian doctrines. These radical theologians had had some influence in eastern Slovakia and this region had also been the center of the moderate Philippist Lutherans. It is quite understandable, therefore, that the Formula provoked hostility among the clerics in eastern Slovakia.

The first attempt to have the Formula accepted as a normative theological statement was made in central Slovakia. George Melzer, from Neusohl, advocated its acceptance at the Synod of Kremnica in March 1580. Many of the other clergy at the Synod were reluctant to accept the Formula and, as tempers flared, Matthias Eberhard, the Senior of the district, worked out a compromise which led to a reiteration, by the clergy, of the theology of the *Confessio Montana*.<sup>37</sup> In eastern Slovakia, Gaspar Kreutzer and Albert Grawer of Kaschau, who had come to Slovakia from Germany, took up the advocacy of the Formula while Anton Platner of Leutschau became its most outspoken critic and was joined by John Mylius, Sebastian Lam, and Sebastian Ambrosius, all of whom were considered Philippist, in opposing its adoption.<sup>38</sup>

The controversy over the Formula of Concord focused largely on the definition of the *communicatio idiomatum* and its implications for the theology of the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. It seems that few, if any, who adhered to Lutheranism in Slovakia, denied the real presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper. But it is also obvious that there were many who were reluctant to define the precise manner by which the bread and the wine communicated the Body and Blood of Christ to the believer. While many of the

clergy were Philippists, most did not consider themselves anything but Lutherans, as can be seen in the frequent and clear repudiations of Calvinist, Zwinglian, and Anabaptist views. It seems most logical, therefore, to conclude that they were reluctant to accept the Formula of Concord because it might have been considered a new confession of faith which could have endangered their own position within the nation.

The Lutherans of Slovakia had consistently defended their right to follow their own religious faith and practice by citing their allegiance to and conformity with the Augsburg Confession recognized in the Empire and also by the rights devolving from their charters and patents of privileges to appoint pastors and rectors. By formally accepting the Formula, they could open themselves to the charge of having adopted a new, non-recognized confession and thus lose what was already a tenuous claim to toleration, a situation which appeared to be happening in Bohemia after the acceptance of the *Confessio Bohemica* of 1575. The threat was made all the more real when Bishop George Bornemissa, whose authority extended to eastern Slovakia, warned that any cleric accepting the Formula in his territory would be considered as having dishonored Christ and would be appropriately punished.<sup>39</sup>

During the 1590's, however, the changing political situation made it necessary for the Lutherans to establish both theological unity and organizational independence. The organization of the Lutheran congregations apart from the old structures and the acceptance of the Formula of Concord might have taken much longer had the political situation remained stable. But during the 1590's the various regions of Slovakia were being threatened by a reinvigorated, post-Tridentine Catholic hierarchy and the absolutist pretensions of Rudolf II and Matthias, who challenged both the traditional political and religious liberties and prerogatives of the cities and nobles. In the face of these threats, the lay leaders came to the foreground as advocates of the Formula of Concord. It was at this juncture of events that the clergy of Slovak ancestry also emerged to assume more prominent roles of leadership within the Lutheran community in Slovakia. In eastern Slovakia, Severinus Scultety, Pastor at Bartfeld, sought to have the Formula recognized by the eastern cities and finally attained his goal at the Synod of Leutschau in 1596.<sup>40</sup> In western Slovakia, Eliáš Laní, a former instructor at the evangelical school at Stráža and the chaplain and advisor to the Lutheran magnate and later Palatine of Hungary, George Thurzo, gained the acceptance of the Formula at Sankt Martin in Thurutz in 1608.<sup>41</sup>

As the debate over the Formula continued, all of Hungary was thrown into an uproar by the attack of the Turks in 1591 and by the renewal of the conflict between the Habsburgs and

the nobles of Transylvanian Hungary. For fifteen years the destructive struggles raged on until the peace of Vienna and of Sztitva Török in 1606. Largely due to the successes of the Calvinist nobleman, Stephen Bocskay, articles recognizing the religious privileges of the nobles were incorporated into the Treaty of Vienna. These were subsequently confirmed, clarified, and extended to the cities by the articles approved at the Diet of 1608.<sup>42</sup> Taken together, the *Pacificatio Viennensis* and the decisions of the Diet of 1608 laid the legal foundations for the existence of Protestantism in all of Hungary. All nobles and cities were to enjoy the free practice and exercise of their religion. Public offices, civil and military, were likewise to be open to all qualified candidates irrespective of their religious persuasion. Moreover, each Protestant group—that is, the Lutherans, Calvinists, and Unitarians—was allowed to establish its own separate ecclesiastical organization.<sup>43</sup>

Under the patronage of George Thurzo, who was elected Palatine in 1609, the Lutherans of western Slovakia took advantage of these laws to organize themselves at the Synod of Sillein in March 1610. A presbyterial structure, independent of the Catholic hierarchy, was retained and the responsibility for administering the churches was laid upon the *seniors* who were to be assisted by inspectors. Three *seniorats* for central and western Slovakia were established, each of them administered by a Slovak *senior*. Three inspectors were also selected, two for the German speaking congregations and one for the Magyar congregations. Each *senior*, moreover, was to take an oath of office which included the statement that “in my public and private life I will teach and foster no other doctrine but that which is found in the prophetic and apostolic writings which are embodied in the confession presented in Augsburg to Emperor Charles V in 1530 and which is found in the Formula of Concord.”<sup>44</sup> The Synod of Sillein thus not only created an independent ecclesiastical organization for the Lutherans of central and western Slovakia; it also ended the controversy over the acceptance of the Formula of Concord. It was not until 22 January 1614, however, that the Lutherans of eastern Slovakia were able to create a similar *seniorat* system of ecclesiastical administration at the Synod of Kirchdrauf. Held under the patronage of Christoph Thurzo, the Synod followed the pattern established at Sillein, even to the acceptance of the Formula of Concord as the theological norm for the two *seniorats* created by the Synod.<sup>45</sup>

These synods placed the responsibility of administering the Lutheran churches of Slovakia largely in the hands of the clergy. It was this structure which helped the Lutherans maintain their existence even after most of the magnates

returned to Catholicism during the counter-Reformation and the churches of the cities were restored, often by force, to the control of the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

Equally vital to the continuance of Lutheranism in Slovakia was that the majority of the members of the some nine hundred Lutheran congregations were Slovaks. Lutheranism had not remained merely a German religion but was acculturated by the native Slovak population. It was a process that was not completed, however, until the middle of the seventeenth century with the publication of the *Cithara Sanctorum* or *Harp of the Saints* by George Tranoscius.<sup>46</sup> Born in Silesia and having studied at the University of Wittenberg prior to settling in Slovakia where he died in 1637, George Tranoscius prepared the *Cithara Sanctorum* to serve as a hymnbook, prayerbook, and service book all in one. Written in the *kraličina* or the language of the Czech Kralice Bible, which served as the literary language of the Slovaks, it encapsulated in song and verse the spirit and substance of the Lutheran Reformation. The leading monument of Slovak literature and culture of the Reformation movement, it was the final step in the acculturation of the Lutheran Reformation in Slovakia.

Although Lutheranism was first accepted by the German burghers of the cities of upper Hungary or Slovakia, its gradual acculturation by the Slovak population helps to explain why Lutheranism maintained itself in Slovakia. In contrast to other regions of eastern Europe inhabited by Slavs where Lutheranism remained merely a "German" religion or was accepted primarily by the higher nobility for distinctly political purposes, in Slovakia Lutheranism gained the allegiance of a broad spectrum of the native population. The spread of Lutheranism into Slovakia is thus a unique episode in the history of the Lutheran Reformation. Among all the Slavic peoples, only the Slovaks retained their allegiance to Lutheranism and only in Slovakia did Lutheranism remain a powerful cultural force.

#### FOOTNOTES

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1. In 1973 there were about 450,000 baptized members in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia which had 326 parishes and 14 districts. In the United States there are two Lutheran bodies which have their roots in Synods founded by Slovak Lutheran immigrants: the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (within the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod) with 19,953 baptized members and 58

- congregations and the Zion Lutheran Synod (of the Lutheran Church in America) with 13,326 baptized members and 40 congregations.
2. For the only survey of the historiography of the Lutheran Reformation in Slovakia in English see David P. Daniel, "The Lutheran Reformation in Slovakia, 1517-1618," Diss. The Pennsylvania State University 1972, pp. 1-78.
  3. There is no evidence of any direct ties between the Hussites of the fifteenth century and the sixteenth century Lutherans, although the latter did have ties to the contemporary Hussites in Bohemia. Definitive studies on the question have been produced by Branislav Varsik, *Husiti a reformácia na slovensku do žilinskej synody* (Bratislava, 1932) and *Husitské revolučné hnutie a Slovensku* (Bratislava, 1965).
  4. Alžběta Göllnerová, "Počátky reformace v Banské Bystrici," *Bratislava IV* (1930), p. 583.
  5. Branislav Varsik, "Prvá evanjelická cirkev na Slovensku?" *Bratislava II* (1928), pp. 70-73.
  6. Johann Borbis, *Die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche Ungarns* (Nördlingen, 1861), pp. 29-30; J. P. Tomasik, *Andenken an die 300-jährige Jubelfeier der evangelischen Gemeinde in der k. Freistadt Leutschau* (Leutschau, 1844), pp. 17-18.
  7. Ján Kvačala, *Dejiny reformácie na Slovensku* (Lipt. Sv. Mikuláš, 1935), p. 46; Bartolomej Krpelec, *Bardejov a jeho okolie dávno a dnes* (Bardejov, 1935), pp. 40-41.
  8. Louis Neustadt, *Markgraf Georg von Brandenburg als Erzieher an der Ungarischen Hofe* (Breslau, 1883), pp. 19-29, 40-44.
  9. WA Br. III, p. 568.
  10. Deszö Wiczian, "Beiträge zu Leben und Tätigkeit Conrad Cordatus," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte LV* (1964), p. 219-221; Jane de Iongh, *Mary of Hungary, Second Regent of the Netherlands* (London, 1958), pp. 85-86; Adalbert Hudak, "Der Hofprediger Johannes Henckel und seine Beziehungen zu Erasmus von Rotterdam," *Kirche im Osten II* (1959), p. 108.
  11. Gustav Bauch, "Dr. Johann Henckel, der Hofprediger der Königin Maria von Ungarn," *Ungarische Revue IV* (1884), pp. 599-600; Lajos Nyikos, "Erasmus und der böhmisch-ungarische Königshof," *Zwingliana VII* (1937), pp. 356-368.
  12. CR II, p. 178.
  13. WA, XIX, pp. 542-615.
  14. CR II, p. 233; WA Br. V, pp. 510-511; Ján Kvačala, "Kralovom Maria a jej účasť v dejoch reformácie," *Viera a Veda I* (1930), pp. 102-105.
  15. *Corpus Juris Hungarica*, I (Budae, 1884), Article 54, 1523.
  16. *Ibid.*, Article 54, 1525.
  17. For an account of the miners revolt see Günther Frhr. von Probszt, *Die niederungarischen Bergstädte: Ihre Entwicklung und wirtschaftliche Bedeutung bis zum Übergang an das Haus Habsburg, 1546* (München, 1966); also "Die sozialen Ursachen des ungarischen Bergarbeiteraufstandes von 1525-1526," *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung X* (1961), pp. 1-25; and especially Peter Ratkoš, *Povstanie baníkov na Slovensku roku 1525-1526* (Bratislava, 1963).
  18. Gustav Hamman, "Magister Nicolaus von Sabinov: Ein Beitrag über den Humanismus und die frühe Reformation in der Slowakei," *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung XVI* (1967), pp. 25-40.
  19. *Ibid.*, p. 38; Göllnerova, pp. 587-590.
  20. Hamman, pp. 42-43.
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  22. Andreas Fabo, *Codex evangelicorum utriusque confessionis in Hungaria et Transylvania diplomaticus* (Pesthini, 1869), pp. 13-16.

23. Tomasik, pp. 24-35.
24. Arnold Ipolyi, *Geschichte der Stadt Neusohl: Eine kulturgeschichtliche Skizze*, II (Wien, 1875), pp. 118-119.
25. Borbis, pp. 12-13.
26. The best study of the organization of the schools during the Reformation Era in Slovakia is Peter Vajcik, *Školstvo, študijne a školské poriadky na Slovensku v 16. storočí* (Bratislava, 1955).
27. Mihály Bucsay, *Geschichte des Protestantismus in Ungarn* (Stuttgart, 1959), pp. 33-34; Mathias Szlavik, *Die Reformation in Ungarn* (Halle, 1884), pp. 20-23.
28. Géza Szabo, *Geschichte des ungarischen Coetus an der Universität Wittenberg, 1555-1613* (Halle, 1941), pp. 15-16.
29. Ladislaus Strop, "Ungarn und Melanchthon," *Deutschevangelische Blätter*, N.F. III (1903), pp. 727-746; Adalbert Hudak, "Melanchthon und die Slowakei," in Desider Alexy, ed., *Roland Steinacker: Ein Leben für Kirche und Volk, Festschrift zur Geburtstag von R. Steinacker* (Stuttgart, 1960), pp. 33-37.
30. Kvačala, *Dejiny*, pp. 58-59; Peter Ratkoš, "Počiatky nevrstenečtva na Slovensku," *Historický Časopis* V (1957), pp. 185-203.
31. Stöckel attacked Dévay for having forsaken Lutheranism, and news of the controversy between Dévay and other reformers in eastern Slovakia reached Luther, who in 1544 wrote the clergy of Eperies to deplore the growth of sectarian views in eastern Slovakia and expressing astonishment at the reports concerning Dévay. In any case, Luther wrote, Dévay had not learned such ideas at Wittenberg. WA Br. X, pp. 555-556.
32. Szabo, p. 101; Bucsay, p. 80.
33. *CJH*, Article 6, 1548.
34. Iohannes Ribini, *Memorabilia augustanae confessionis in regno Hungariae*, I (Posonii, 1787), pp. 67-70.
35. Viktor Bruckner, *Gedenkbuch anlässlich der 400. jährigen Jahreswende der Confessio Augustana* (Leipzig, 1930), pp. 3-67.
36. CR VIII, pp. 354-361; Kvačala, *Dejiny*, pp. 120-121.
37. Ribini, pp. 521-528; Kvačala, *Dejiny*, p. 124.
38. Kvačala, *Dejiny*, pp. 134-136; Borbis, p. 39.
39. Borbis, p. 39.
40. Kvačala, *Dejiny*, pp. 131-132.
41. For the best short study of Láni see Ján Mocko, *Eliáš Láni, prvý superintendent cirkve evanj. augš. vyzn. v Uhráč a jeho doba* (Lipt. Sv. Mikuláš, 1902).
42. Josef Irinyi, *Geschichte der Entstehung des 26. Gesetzartikels von 1790/1 über Religionsangelegenheiten* (Pest, 1857), pp. 7-10; Kvačala, *Dejiny*, pp. 147-148.
43. *CJH*, Articles I, X, XIII, 1608 Ante Coron.
44. Iohannes Szeberinyi, *Corpus maxime memorabilium synodorum Evangelicarum Augustanae Confessionis in Hungaria cum praefatione Historica in Singulas* (Pesthini, 1948), pp. 15-20; Borbis, pp. 124-126.
45. Szeberinyi, pp. 29-42.
46. Concerning Tranoscius and his work see Ján Mocko, *Život Jura Tranovského* (Senice, 1891) and also Ľudovít Hgán, *Cithara Sanctorum, její historia* (Pest, 1873) and Ján P. Durovič, *Životopis Juraja Tranovského* (Lipt. Sv. Mikuláš, 1942).