



## CALL FOR PAPERS

### International REFO500 Conference

#### **Tribute to Miklós Bethlen (1642–1716): Sources, Genres and Scribal Habits of Early Modern Prison Literature**

Date: May 18–20., 2016

Location: University of Miskolc, Hungary

The Institute for Literary Studies, RCH, HAS together with the University of Miskolc organizes an international conference dedicated to the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Miklós Bethlen (1642–1716), a great statesman and a prolific early modern author. As he died imprisoned in Vienna he had written his memories under the determining influence of a displacement experience. Hence, our conference taking the example and most importantly the memoirs of Miklós Bethlen, which is one of the rare early modern Hungarian texts available in English due to the generous efforts of Bernard Adams,<sup>1</sup> proposes a scholarly debate on the whole canon of early modern prison literature incorporating under this genre all those Neo-Latin and vernacular texts that emerged as a result of imprisonment, exile or any kind of displacement during the early modern era.

We consider that Reformation and especially Calvinism had a particular contribution to the development of this prison literature, as early modern martyr discourses often stemmed from narratives describing prison experiences, which deliberately promoted conduct patterns and examples of martyrdom performed in the sinister locations of early modern prisons. Furthermore, persecution, displacement, and imprisonment usually caused a terrible liminality against which writing proved to be an efficient remedy. Therefore, an astonishing scribal culture and flourishing literary activity are being discovered by historians, while investigating significant chapters of early modern imprisonments, such as the case of Marian martyrs in England.<sup>2</sup> The main aim of the conference is to foster a comparative examination of these

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<sup>1</sup> *The Autobiography of Miklós Bethlen*, transl. Bernard Adams (London-New York-Bahrain: Kegan Paul, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Ruth Ahnert, *The Rise of Prison Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

disparate prison experiences and evaluate their similarities and particularities in a truly multidisciplinary interpretive context

We expect 25-30 minute papers in English reflecting upon the following major issues:

- The historical anthropology of imprisonment: liminality and its consequences
- The theology of imprisonment: persecution and martyrdom
- Afflictio, patientia, et constantia: writing up survival
- Freedom, displacement, home, and nostalgia
- Writing and fashioning the imprisoned self
- The variety of early modern scribal culture located in prison
- Scribal publicity and print publicity
- Manuscripts and their readerships
- Producing, reading and reduplicating texts in prison
- Prison literature within the wall and outside the walls
- Readership within the walls and outside the walls
- The early modern genres of prison literature: poetry and prose
- Antecedents and literary traditions from ancient to medieval times
- Translations and their significance
- Authorship(s) and readership(s): individual and collective habits of producing and reading texts
- Mediality: from manuscript to print and vice versa
- The act of publishing

The conference will take place in Miskolc on **May 25–27, 2016**. The official languages of the conference are English and Hungarian. Paper proposals should be sent by email to: [toth.zsombor@btk.mta.hu](mailto:toth.zsombor@btk.mta.hu). The deadline for submitting a paper proposal by e-mail is: **September 30, 2015**. The organisers provide accommodation and reimburse the travel expenses of the accepted speakers. All those who send in proposals will be notified whether their papers have been accepted during the first week of October. For further questions do not hesitate to ask the contact person for REFO500, Zsombor Tóth ([toth.zsombor@btk.mta.hu](mailto:toth.zsombor@btk.mta.hu)).

Budapest, April 08. 2015.

On behalf of the organizers

Dr. Gábor Kecskeméti and Dr. Zsombor Tóth

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Research Centre for the Humanities,  
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