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Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
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Theses of Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation

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**Greek Catholic and State Elementary Schools  
in Bereg County in the Beginning of the Dualism**

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## **I. The subject and aims of the dissertation**

The theses summarize a part of the Hungarian education history during the two decades after the Compromise, the educational situation of the Greek Catholic denomination in Bereg County; gives a view especially through the public education law in 1868 (XXXVIII.) and the compulsory Hungarian language teaching Law in 1879 (XVIII.). We checked the Greek Catholic elementary public schools of those villages where the state founded an educational institution too. We looked for relations between the foundation of state schools and the closure of Greek Catholic schools; and that what kind of effect the state had on the educational life of the county, mostly inhabited by Rusyns.

The aim is dual: on one side to work out the history of each school in details, on the other hand it is rather social-history: how the state's interference influenced the levels of education in the period. In connection with these it was necessary to examine those elements which helped the roll back of illiteracy.

Examining the development of state schools, we wanted to give an answer for the question: what was the reason to establish these institutions, if they were functioning parallel with the denominational schools or either the state or the denominational was wounded up because of not being viable and what the denominations attitude was to the state's initiative. First the Greek Catholic denomination's answer was rejection, they were protecting their ancient traditions, faith; later they saw the function methods of the

first state schools, that the students in state schools did not lose the previously mentioned values. This way later a cooperation developed out between the authorities of the denomination and the state. The theses also examine the connection between the two authorities, it points to events which had a role in change.

We looked into the Greek Catholic school system in the county formed out from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, we examined those country-wide orders which also influenced the education of Rusyns in Bereg County and the innovations of the public education law in 1868 and the following laws which regulated the education language and language teaching in schools.

## **II. The methodology of the research-work and the parts of the theses**

In the dissertation we tried to map what kind of periods can be separated; and according to what principle the state established its schools in the county; how the denominations received these new institutions and if it is possible to set up general rules in connection with the school-foundations.

The research method was exhaustive data collection. The dissertation is mainly built on the primary sources kept in Beregszász, in the State Archive of Subcarpathia Region (Державний Архів Закарпатської Облaсті). Besides the fond 151 which contains the documents of the functioning of the Eparchy in Munkács, we found the documents of fond 10 (Lord Lieutenant) and

fond 130 (school inspector of Bereg County) important too. The role of the contemporary local newspaper, the 'Bereg' is also significant in the essay, more volumes of which are only available in this archive. In spite of the difficulties of the research work in the archives, we managed to check the documents in connection with the administrative authorities of the county and the church institutions within the subject.

We did not strive for describing the chronological history of all the schools, but rather to present each type, from the point of view of the possible solutions which emerged to solve the educational difficulties (give the school to the state, establish a state school parallel to the denominational school or to prolong the case, etc.). Of course when the sources made it possible to present the history of a school in a certain period then we tried to show it in time too, so the reader also can find school-history in the essay.

It was very difficult to do research on the subject of the state authorities too, because the county administrative documents with the church documents are in possession of the state archive (SASR), but, because of bureaucracy it is very difficult to exam them or the researcher does not get a permission to reach them. The biggest part of the documents of the central institutions and ministries in the Hungarian National Archives were destroyed in a fire during the events of 1956.

The subject of the dissertation is first of all to follow the footsteps of the educational institutions and the history of educational politics. The theme touches more other sciences like

church history, culture history, social history and it is influenced by the economics, politics, jurisprudence, institution history, life style etc. of that age.

As for the methodology of the paper, it gives a review about the beginnings of school development in the given area in a wide introduction and we get to know the special surroundings, economical and religious circumstances; all of these were reasons for new problems arise.

We chose on one hand the diachronic method to place the foundation of schools in time; on the other hand the synchronistic character is competent when we expect a solution of a problem concerning one issue.

Even source analysis got place besides the analysing and comparing of statistical data; we represented them in charts, diagrams. We used the place-names according to the Monography of Bereg County from Tivadar Lehoczky. In the dissertation, we draw the maps of Bereg County based on the work of Pál Gönczy: Hand Atlas of the Counties of Hungary, published in 1890.

After the introduction, the first part of the theses reveals the conditions and developmental stage of schools in Bereg County developed by the influence of national and regional orders until the examined period, and then in the next part we tried to summarize and analyze the shortages of the dualism and the attempts in order to solve them.

The first part of the paper is the introduction with the choice and aims of theme, in the second part we go into details with the

research method and resources, we also mention the press and specialized literature of the period and the few secondary literature. This subject was not examined thoroughly before because of the inaccessible of resources.

The topic is placed into the proper place and time in the third chapter: we can get to know Bereg County's geographical, economical, ethnic and denominational characteristics and this is followed by the living circumstances of Rusyns and the formation of the Greek Catholic Church and its administration.

We separated the problem-intersections before the dualism according to the changes in the functioning of schools in the fourth chapter of the dissertation. The first period started with Maria Terezia's Ratio Educationis and it finished by establishing the first systematic schools in 1830, then during the Reform period we checked the formation of new schools. As a result of the Reform Area in 1840's the number of systematic schools increased and during the neoabsolutism again the main idea was the imperial spirit also in establishing schools and with the help of severity it gained a new result in the 60's. The law (XXXVIII.) in 1868 created new viewpoints which kept the 'national' (each nationality could use their mother tongue) schools and state schools could be established parallel.

We mapped the changes in Bereg County influenced by the educational laws after the Compromise in the fifth chapter. We have to puzzle out and analyze more subjects in the examined period: the role of state school inspectors in the development of education, in the

foundation of village and state schools. These new institutions always evoked a kind of answer from the parish church and from the Greek Catholic principals.

We analyzed the role of the state in each of the mentioned period, this kind of attitude of the state fits into the educational history characteristics of the European countries; the state tried to take education of masses into hand as a very important strategy tool in politics. The paper does not analyze the national situation completely only the elements of the new laws which affected the local school-history too.

### **III. Main Results of the Theses**

At the time of the Compromise we can talk about a developed school-system in Bereg County. At the beginning, in the first part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the bigger and richer villages were able to found their own schools, mainly in Munkács and in its neighbourhood. They were able to maintain them on their own resources, they demanded its functioning, so they invited and brought a teacher to their villages, besides him they kept a cantor too. This kind of Greek Catholic schools were settled not only in Munkács, but also in Alsó-Verecke, Szolyva, Sztrabicsó, Nagy-Lucska, Új-Dávidháza etc.

From the 1840's the authorities - inspired by the ideology of the modern civilized society - pressed the realization of the principle that every village should have a school and education; and all the

children from the age of six should get every-day-education. Education meant not only the religious elements any more, but also the subjects in connection with the duty of their conditions. We have to add that it was not possible at this stage to organise the schooling of all the school-able children.

The desire to establish systematic schools did not become strong in the Rusyn areas, the biggest reason we can first of all find is the lack of materials and then the special geographical characteristics and also the character of the people. The small, almost unapproachable hilly villages offered very difficult circumstances for their inhabitants. They were not able to take the costs of the school foundation, on the other hand the authorities tried more and more to force them to educate their children. As a consequence, they converted the so-called parochial schools into elementary systematic schools and they tried to employ a cantor-teacher and build a school building. Because of this pressure from above the parishes were able to make small steps only: the former, almost or completely uneducated cantor-teachers should have given more lessons, got a suitable qualification, the children should have attended school regularly, the parishes should have built a school building and given a normal payment for the cantor-teacher and the parents should have regularly sent their children to school. The local principals who were uneducated themselves, they should have looked after the normal school life.

In those villages, where an educational institution did not developed out from the need of the inhabitants, they could not

change the situation purely because of the warnings and orders. Where there was a school but it was not able to receive in all the school-able children, there the replacement of lack needed huge efforts.

To solve this situation the law of public education (XXXVIII.) became suitable in 1868 and especially §. 80. which let the state establish schools where the parishes or the villages were not able to do it on their own resources; this way to solve the financial problems. The possibility to establish state schools was a new element of the law in 1868, which earlier appeared in some orders but state schools were never established before the Compromise. Establishing state schools started considerable changes in the period after the Compromise.

This intervention of the state led into a great result in Bereg County, thanks to this more school-able attended school, more settlements without a school could join to education or because they got a new school or they became a part of an educational unit with the neighbouring village(s). More villages got an educated teacher and also the result of the denominational schools improved seeing the results of the state schools, so state school establishment had an indirect effect too, which is perceptible.

The foundation of the first state schools is connected to Ferenc Fischer (later he changed his name into a Hungarian version: Halász), who became the royal school inspector of the newly organised Bereg County Inspectorate in 1876.

The state supervision (Administrative Committee, lead by the Lord Lieutenant; Royal School Inspectorate) could exploit the changes given by the law very good in Bereg County to improve the schools on the territory of the inspectorate. They founded and supported a lot of state schools, they visited schools and they made huge efforts to end insufficiency.

The inspector gave voice more times in connection with the resistance of the church, because he did not understand why they resisted against the state initiative. His and the teachers aim was to develop the Hungarian self-consciousness but they did not want to liquidate the differences of denominations. He rather scourged the Reformato Hungarians who did not do everything for themselves, the Rusyns tried to fulfil their tasks with their entire mind. He also condemned the Israelites because they resisted while the Rusyns liked studying the Hungarian language and cooperate the authorities. The inspector found the Greek Catholic Holy See and the church leaders guilty to resist in case of the foundation of state schools.

Halász wanted to solve the education of the school-able children in small northern villages next to river valleys with so-called itinerant teachers. A state teacher would go to a village twice or three-times a week where he would not only teach the children but also the local teacher the methods of teaching, and the other days he went to another neighbour village. This way the state did not have to maintain a school-building, but they could develop the teaching level in 2-3 villages with one teacher and the denominational school did not close.

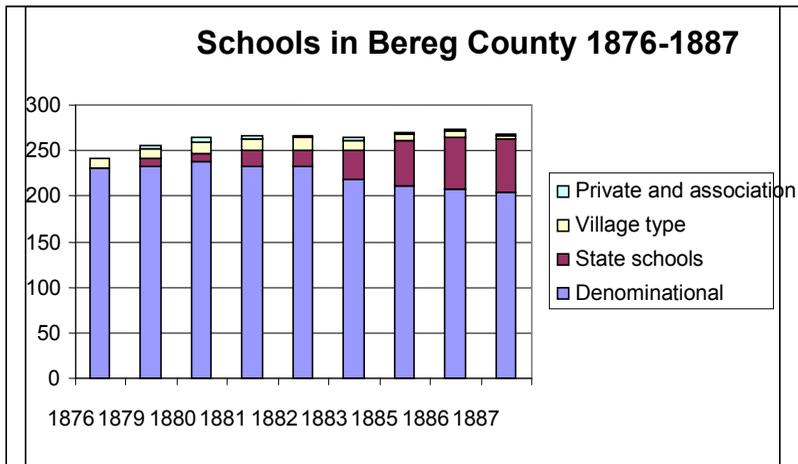
We can see on this itinerary-teacher institution as a solution by compromise which was very fertile on both sides. On one hand the church could keep its' schools, the teacher got improvement at least twice a week, the students had good education and the state authorities checked that everyone attended the school. On the other hand the state could develop the inhabitants of small villages in the mountains in a cheap way, without building an own school and applying more teachers. The royal school inspector could secure an education according to the laws and it did not cost a lot for the state.

The Law 18<sup>th</sup> in 1879 ordered the teaching of the Hungarian language besides the mother tongue. This Teaching of the Hungarian Language Law had a special significance on a territory with nationalities, but the Rusyns did not put a resistance against it. In this law the biggest problem merged by the lack of qualified teachers. Removal of teachers, pensioning off, and further trainings to fulfil the demands of the law did well for the education, because younger, more educated teachers got besides the teacher's desk. Because of the Language Law more schools were unable to fulfil the instructions of the new law, so in some places the denominational school had to be closed, the state established a state school.

We can see the increase of state schools in Bereg County during the decade when Ferenc Halász was the school inspector of the county with the following chart:

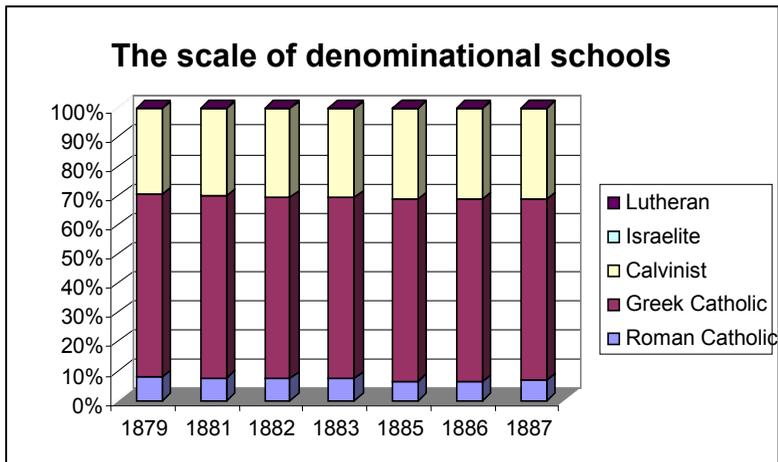
School-year	1876	1878/ 79	1879 /80	1880/ 81	1881/ 82	1882/ 83	1884/ 85	1885/ 86	1886/ 87
Number of schools	241	256	264	267	267	264	270	273	268
Number of state schools	0	8	10	18	18	33	50	57	58

We can see from the data that the number of state schools grew in a bigger degree than the number of the denominational ones, in the examined period with 58 and the number of all the educating institutions grew only with 27. This way it is obvious that there were state schools which were established on the denominational and village schools' account. The influence of the state definitely grew from 1881, this can be the effect of the law in 1879, since this year the number of state school foundation has increased.



Let's exam whether the foundation of state schools only affected the Greek Catholic denomination in a negative way or the other denominations were also forced to close their worst schools.

The following diagram examines the scale of the denominational schools compared to each other based on the annual report of the inspector. We can see that the percentage scale stays the same through the whole decade so all the denominations were affected by the same degree; not only on the Greek Catholic and Rusyn villages. We can also get to know from the report of the school inspector that the Reformat Church gave more of its schools to the state; the Greek Catholics first saw it as a taking away but later also the Greek Catholic leaders asked the state to establish a state school instead of the denominational school in some cases.



We can see the state schools (also itinerary schools) in Bereg County in 1886 on the map:



The state interference affected 45 settlements mostly in the middle of the county where most of the inhabitants were Greek Catholic Rusyns but it was a mixed population with Hungarians and

Jews. A boy and a girl state primary school was established in all deputy sheriff centres. In the southern territory, mostly inhabited by Hungarians, seven state schools were founded during the observed decade. The regions of the itinerant state schools became distinct in the hilly area in villages with small population.

By 1886 there were only 15 settlements in Bereg County without education, Ferenc Halász royal school inspector could solve this situation with the help of itinerant teacher posts; in spite of the lack of state resources, he was successful. By establishing four new itinerant teacher stations, not only the situation of those 15 villages became settled in 1887 but also a period finished in the history of education in Bereg County: all the settlements were involved to the education network of the county, all the school-able children got a chance to study and also the change of the unskilled teachers happened.

Ferenc Halász was moved to Heves County by the Minister in January 1888 on his own request. The royal school inspector left a complete school network behind with viable institutions fitting to the geographical and national circumstances.

The work of the school inspector is significant, because after this one decade in Bereg County, the most state institutions were established in this county (58 state schools until 1886), which is the 10% of the state institutions of the whole country. Also he established the first state itinerant teacher station in the country.

#### **IV. Publications in connection with the subject**

- The Greek Catholic Basic Schools of Bereg County in the Beginning of the 1880's, Bereg vármegyei görög katolikus népiskolák az 1880-as évek elején = Collectanea Athansiana I. Studia, vol. 3, Symbolae, A görög katolikus örökségkutatás útjai. A Nikolaus Nilles SJ halálának 100. évfordulóján rendezett konferencia tanulmányai, Nyíregyháza, 2010.

- Göröghatolikus iskola Patkanyócson, = Athanasiana 33-34, Nyíregyháza, 2012.

- Munkács görög katolikus elemi iskolája a XIX. században = Szabolcs-szatmár-beregi Szemle, Nyíregyháza, 2012/2.

#### Conference lectures:

- Halász (Fischer) Ferenc és a görög katolikus oktatás, lectured at the Conference of the Workshop of History Ideas, in Doctoral School of History at PPKE BTK, 09.11.2012. Piliscsaba. Before publication.

- Oktatási kérdések és az oktatási intézmények helyzete Firczák Gyula tevékenysége idején a Munkácsi Egyházmegyében, lectured at the Conference on the 100<sup>th</sup> death-anniversary of Gyula Firczák, the bishop in Munkács, 22.11.2012. Beregszász. Before publication.