

84

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SOURCES OF THE RHETORICAL HANDBOOK BY PÁL MEDGYESI

The first specialized book on rhetoric in the Hungarian language, the bilingual (Latin-Hungarian) homiletics by Pál Medgyesi (1604–1663), *Doce nos orare, quin et praedicare* (Bártfa, today Bardejov in Slovakia, 1650),¹ contains a theory of prayer as well as of sermon. This time I discuss only the latter. The part on homiletics consists of three so-called "tables," that is, information organized into numbered sections and subsections. These present the steps for three ways of preparing a sermon and three corresponding structures of the sermon. For each table, the print first shows it in Latin, then in Hungarian translation.² The tables are followed with a Latin text titled *Regulae generales manu-ducentes*, and its translation: *Közönséges mintegy kézenfogva vezető regulák*. This last part names some authors worthy of study: Ames, Perkins, Calvin, Bucanus, Polanus, Wollebius, and Rivetus. This list, however, does not contain the sources of the work on the theory of preaching, but provides literature to the practising preacher that helps, through samples, to expound dogmatic and ethical instruction.

Medgyesi's three tables and their different nature have never been assessed by identifying their sources and making the connections clear. Thus, the statements that seem quite ordinary today about the two methodologies of his three tables for producing sermons can be assessed only as a fairly speculative approach.³ Albeit in the introduction

¹ MEDGYESI Pál, Doce nos orare, quin et praedicare etc. az az, Imadkozasra és praedicatio irásra s-tételre, és a'nak meg-tanulására-való mesterséges tablak. Avagy, eggynehány-féle világos és mindenektöl megérthetö ut-mutatasok vagy modok: mellyek szerént ki ki magatul-is, mind magában s-mind háza-népe közöt, söt gyülekezetekben-is... könyöröghet, praedicalhat, és az praedicatiokat meg-tanulhatya, Bártfa, 1650.

² Only the Hungarian text of Table I has a modern edition: *Rendszerek a kezdetektől a romantikáig* (Systems from the beginnings till romanticism), eds. TARNAI Andor, CSETRI Lajos, Budapest, Szépirodalmi, 1981 (A Magyar Kritika Évszázadai, 1), 158–166.

³ Cf. ZOVÁNYI Jenő, *Puritánus mozgalmak a magyar református egyházban* (Puritan movements in the Hungarian Reformed Church), Budapest, Magyar Protestáns Irodalmi Társaság, 1911, 254–257; BORBÁTH Dániel, *Medgyesi Pál homiletikája és Geleji Katona Istvánnal folytatott homiletikai vitája* (Homiletics by Pál Medgyesi and his homiletic debate with István Geleji Katona), Református Szemle, 54(1961), 282–293; BARTÓK István, SZŐNYI György Endre, *Tanéts meg minket könyörögni … sőt praedicalni-is Vram": Az első magyar nyelvű egyházi retorika* (The first ecclesiastical rhetoric in Hungarian), in: *Eszmei és stilisztikai kérdések a régi magyar prózában* (Ideologic and stylistic questions in old Hungarian prose), eds. BITSKEY István, GOMBA Szabolcsné, VARGA Pál, Debrecen, 1978, 115–121; BARTÓK István, *Medgyesi Pál: Doce praedicare. Az első magyar nyelvű egyházi retorika* (The first ecclesiastical rhetoric in Hungarian), Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények, 85(1981), 1–16; BARTÓK István, *"Sokkal magyarabbúl szólhatnánk és írhatnánk": Irodalmi gondolkodás Magyarországon 1630–1700 között* (Literary thinking in Hungary 1630–1700), Budapest, Universitas Kiadó, 1998 (Irodalomtudomány és Kritika), 200–211.

dedicated to Transylvanian Princess Zsuzsanna Lorántffy and dated in Fogaras (today Făgăraş in Romania), March 1649,⁴ Medgyesi himself documented his sources almost perfectly. As he says, he describes the easy, short, and edifying ways of preparing a sermon "based on not only my own experience, but I have been picking from writings of scholarly men, in particular from those who have fine knowledge in these kinds of things, like *Sacra oratoria* by *Joannes Clark*, works by *Amesius*, and *Directorium* of the English Parliament. What has been written under the title of *Abba Father* comes mostly from *Elnathan Parr*." As for the last statement, it has been proven recently that even the modifier in the sentence should be taken very seriously.⁵ The author referenced here—Parr—provided the source for *ars orandi* only. Thorough examination will show at last that Medgyesi laid his cards on the table in naming the sources of his methodology for preparing a sermon as well. His references are as clear as possible.

1. Identity of John Clarke, who is mentioned first, seems settled a long time ago. Clarke⁶ (1596–1658) studied in Cambridge from 1615, earned baccalaureate degree in the humanities in 1618, magister of the humanities in 1621, baccalaureate of theology in 1631, was ordained in 1625, yet he was given a parish in Fiskerton in 1634 only. His work was much more deeply influenced by the fact that he was the rector of the Lincoln School between 1622 and 1641. Later, it seems, he taught at a private school in Fiskerton. In identifying his Sacra oratoria mentioned by Medgyesi, Hungarian research of rhetorical history—which was at its toddler stage at the time—seems to have followed the wrong track three decades ago. "Because of coinciding names, times, and genres" as well as "considering lack of precision in references at the time," Clarke's Formulae oratoriae was believed to be the source.⁷ However, this compilation of phrases,⁸ which had several editions, has nothing to do with Medgyesi's reference, and the hasty conclusion about this source has been corrected in the synthesis of history of criticism of the era.⁹ In fact, Oratoriae sacrae skiagraphia was published in 1630 as a Latin-language appendix for Clarke's another collection of phrases that included biblical citations listed under subject headings in alphabetical order with the title Holy Oyle for the Lampes of the Sanctuarie.¹⁰ Together with its dedication and preface, it fills thirty pages, without them

⁴ Modern edition: MEDGYESI Pál, *Elöljáró beszéd. Háromszázéves Medgyesi Pál homiletikája: Doce nos orare, quin et praedicare* (Introduction from the 300-years-old homiletics by Pál Medgyesi), ed. INCZE Gábor, Református Egyház, 4(1952), 19–22.

⁵ TOTH Stella, "*A melly penig Abba atya név alatt vagyon, jobbrészént Elnathan Parré*" ("What has been written under the title of *Abba Father* comes mostly from Elnathan Parr"), Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények, 110(2006), 309–318.

⁶ Edward A. MALONE, John Clarke (1596–1658), in: British Rhetoricians and Logicians, 1500–1660: Second Series, ed. Edward A. MALONE, Detroit etc., A Bruccoli Clark Layman Book–The Gale Group, 2003 (Dictionary of Literary Biography, 281), 48–57.

⁷ BARTÓK 1981, op. cit., 7.

⁸ Wilbur Samuel HOWELL, *Logic and Rhetoric in England 1500–1700*, Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1956, 338–339.

⁹ BARTÓK 1998, *op. cit.*, 191.

¹⁰ Heinrich Franz PLETT, Englische Rhetorik und Poetik 1479–1660: Eine Systematische Bibliographie, Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1985.

not more than twenty.¹¹ Clarke's book and its appendix were novelties in biblical exegetics and in homiletic literature, respectively, in England, when Medgyesi himself visited the country and spent two or three trimesters in Cambridge in 1630-31.¹² He might as well have met the author in person. British bibliography does not know about reprints of Oratoria sacra, so we may presume that Medgyesi brought his own copy of the first and only edition home. This means that it belongs to an early layer of his orientation in the theory of preaching, which he had been studying for nearly two decades when his own homiletics was published. We could lay our hands on Clarke's summary of homiletics only recently, and now it is clearly seen that this was almost the only source for Medgyesi's first table about preparing a sermon, even if he didn't copy the text unchanged but condensed it. Clarke's formulations are still clearly recognisable on the levels of words, phrases, and sentences alike, and there is no difference between the two pieces of text on the macro levels of division of the speaker's tasks or of the parts of speech. So he made use of the Latin original from England in a linear fashion, and he made use of the whole. Characteristics of Medgyesi's wording, his adherence to the original and his deviations from it are best demonstrated on the example of the instructions given on introducing the sermon:

ΠΡΟΛΟΓΟΣ continet. Primo

Exordium [...]. Quod,

- 1. Non debet esse nimis longum, sed ut se habet caput ad corpus.
- 2. Sit e re natum, utpote, Fine, Causa, Adiuncto, Comparatis, Dissentaneis, Historia, etc. [...]
- 3. Quantitate, sit adeo parvum ut tres periodos non excedat.
- 4. Qualitate, artificio divino rarum, admirandum.

Secundo Prologus continet [...] disquisitionem, et accuratam *Contextus* observationem; dispiciendo quomodo Sensus a praecedentibus pendeat, cum subsequentibus cohaereat.

Prologus qui vel

Exordium quod

1. Non sit prolixum.

 E re natum, scil. fine, causa, adjuncto, comparatis, dissentaneis, historia.

3. Quantitate tam parvum, ut tres periodos non excedat.

4. Qualitate, Artificio divino rarum, admirandum.

Accurata contextus observatio, i. e. quomodo textus cum superioribus et consequentibus cohaereat;

¹¹ John CLARKE, Holy Oyle for the Lampes of the Sanctuarie: or, Scripture-phrases Alphabetically Disposed, for the Use and Benefit of Such as Desire to Speake the Language of Canaan, More Especially the Sonnes of the Prophets, Who Would Attaine Elegancie and Sublimity of Expressions, London, 1630, 465–497.

¹² HEREPEI János, Adatok Medgyesi P. Pál életéhez (Data to the life of Pál Medgyesi P.), in: HEREPEI János, Polgári irodalmi és kulturális törekvések a század első felében (Civic efforts in literature and culture in the first half of the 17th century), ed. KESERŰ Bálint, Budapest–Szeged, MTA Irodalomtörténeti Intézet–JATE, 1965 (Adattár, 1), 367–400, 370–371; GÖMÖRI György, Magyarországi diákok angol és skót egyetemeken 1526–1789 (Hungarian students at English and Scottish universities), Budapest, ELTE Levéltára, 2005 (Magyarországi Diákok Egyetemjárása az Újkorban, 14), no. 102.

Si autem per Contextus dependentiam, via ad futuram explicationem sterni nequeat omittenda est.

quae si viam ad futuram explicationem ostendat, adhibenda est; si non, omittenda.

There is one fundamental difference between the works of Clarke and Medgyesi. Clarke's text is supported by an abundance of footnotes that contain longer quotations, often in Greek, that are related to the information in the main body. Most of these come from the works of St. John Chrysostom, Augustine, Jerome, Tertullian, Seneca, and others. In spite of these references, Clarke would have to face the charge of plagiarism later. In Querela apologetica, included in the 1632 edition of Formulae oratoriae, he shifted the blame on the print-shop for omitting marginal references to authors that appeared in the manuscript of Oratoria sacra. He lists Bartholomaeus Keckermann, Wilhelm Zepper, Johann Heinrich Alsted, William Ames, William Chappel, William Perkins, Richard Bernard, John Willis, Thomas Vicars, and Erasmus among his sources. He compared his own creative method to that of Lipsius, citing the latter's self-interpretation ("omnia nostra esse et nihil"), and he deserved credit as an author just for the work of compilation, and, in the case of English examples, translation.¹³ In Medgyesi's text, however, there is no trace of the notes attached to the main body of Clarke's work, or the names of the cited authorities, even though he could find this information in his source. We cannot assume that Medgyesi was so well-versed in the literature of the theory of preaching in English and Latin that he could have recognized a large number of Clarke's direct sources, adaptations, and paraphrases. What happened is a typical example of localization of theological literature: during the pragmatic adaptation the multi-layered intertextuality of the original work lost its complexity; indirect, secondary sources remained unreflected to; referential modality has changed.

The almost exclusive source of Medgyesi's first table is Clarke. Only in the part discussing preparations for preaching was it possible to identify considerations that originated elsewhere. Only observations on the form of public prayer come from Clarke; elements of the list concerning its subject material are adapted from Ames' *Medulla*. The closing sentence of this part, which states the general purpose of praying, comes from there too.

2. The influential theoretician of early 17th-century Calvinism, William Ames¹⁴ (Amesius, 1576–1633) did not write a stand-alone homiletics. In his major work, *Medulla theologica* (1627), chapter 35 in the first book—*De ministris ordinariis, et eorum officio in concionando*—can be regarded as a brief *ars concionandi*.¹⁵ Chapter 26 in book 4 of

¹³ Charles GARTON, John Clarke's "Querela apologetica", Humanistica Lovaniensia, 25(1976), 261–281.

¹⁴ Jameela LARES, William Ames (1576–1633), in: MALONE 2003, op. cit., 3–13.

¹⁵ BARTÓK 1998, *op. cit.*, 190. The edition used by me and cited below: Guilielmus AMESIUS, *Medulla S. S. theologiae, ex Sacris literis, earumque interpretibus, extracta, et methodice disposita*, London, 1630, 185–195.

his *De conscientia* (1630) is also *De concionibus habendis*.¹⁶ Homiletic views of Ames are very vigorous components of Calvinist thought on the theory of preaching in Hungary throughout the entire 17th century.¹⁷ Even though we have no knowledge of Medgyesi's stay in Franeker or their personal connection, his rhetorical work is under the strong intellectual influence of the Franeker professor. The above-mentioned chapters in the two major works of Ames are the second sources given by Medgyesi that have been unspecified until now. Table 2 in *Doce praedicare* consists of material taken from these two chapters.

Systematic exposition of considerations concerning the preacher's vocation, general instruction on creating a sermon, and specific parts of a sermon are found in the referenced chapter of Medulla. The chapter on preaching in Conscientia has a secondary role. It discusses mainly unconnected methodical problems in a question-and-answer form. Thus we may consider it a perfectly clear and logical solution that the framework of Medgyesi's second table is the abstract of the chapter in Medulla. This is supplemented here and there with considerations from Conscientia. The summarized information regarding structural units of a sermon is the result of a linear abstract of Medulla. Additions from Conscientia are attached to the beginning and the end of the structural framework. Regarding the selection of text, the Amesian position that rejects the fixed order of Scriptural texts for Sundays comes from there¹⁸ as well as the common information on doctrina and usus that gives the rules of polemical, controversial arguments. In this second table of Medgyesi, only exegetical, dogmatic, and moral theological elaborations belong to the preparation of the sermon, while general morals of the preacher, requirements of delivery, and information regarding exordium are to be found in the unit called declamatio. These considerations concerning declamatio come from a real synthesis of Medulla and Conscientia. Summary of essential characteristics required from exordium is based on the former, while additional observations are based on the latter:

Medulla:	
Neque etiam prooemia	Exordium non sit
non necessaria,	1 Non necessarium,
et longe petita,	2 Longe petitum,
aut persuasoria oratorum verba sunt consectanda:	3 Persuasoriis Oratorum verbis constans,
nec digressionibus aut excursionibus est indul- gendum.	4 Digressionibus abundans.
5*····	

¹⁶ BARTÓK 1998, op. cit., 191. The edition used by me and cited below: Guilielmus AMESIUS, De conscientia et eius iure, vel casibus, libri quinque, Oxford, 1659, 236–246.

¹⁷ KECSKEMÉTI Gábor, "A böcsületre kihaladott ékes és mesterséges szóllás, írás": A magyarországi retorikai hagyomány a 16–17. század fordulóján (Rhetorical tradition in Hungary at the turn of the 16th–17th centuries), Budapest, Universitas Kiadó, 2007 (Irodalomtudomány és Kritika: Tanulmányok), 52–62; CSORBA Dávid, A Martonfalvi-tanítványok és a református pietizmus szellemi horizontja (Disciples of Martonfalvi and the intellectual horizon of Calvinist Pietism), Irodalomtörténet, 82(2001), 576–593, 578–579.

¹⁸ Éva PETRŐCZI, Some Features to the Portrait of William Ames, Könyv és Könyvtár (Debrecen), 21(1999), 193–204, 199 already took notice of this quotation, which is accompanied with a reference here.

Conscientia:

Connexionis aut dependentiae textus explicatio, quae pars est analyseos, utilissime proponi potest vulgarium exordiorum loco.

Brevis etiam insinuatio aliquando potest adhiberi, qua aliquid ex occasione singulariter ad propositum spectans indicatur: sed non ex ordinario instituto. Obser. 1 Connexionis aut dependentiae Textus explicatio, quae analyseos pars est, utilissime proponi potest vulgarium exordiorum loco.

2 Brevis etiam insinuatio aliquando potest adhiberi, qua aliquid ex occasione singulariter ad propositum faciens, indicatur; sed non ex ordinario instituto, id est, non semper.

3. The third source referred to as "Angliai Parliament Directoriuma" is identical with the decree of the Parliament titled A Directory for the Public Worship of God. This decree repealed, in 1645, the Anglican service-book Book of Common Prayer originally created by Thomas Cranmer, which had been in use since the mid-16th century. This measure had religious and political reasons alike: the Long Parliament, which stood up against Charles I, was dominated by a Puritan wing that wished to eradicate "roots and branches" of the ritualistic and institutional traces of the Catholic religion. On the other hand, the alliance with the Scottish orders against Irish Catholics on the Royalist side required a move towards continental Calvinism, which was very important for the Scots. The Book of Common Prayer was unacceptable for the Scots, and attempts to introduce it in the late 1630s were received with riots. In the Northern kingdom, Book of Common Order was adhered to since 1562. This had been produced by John Knox for the English congregation in Geneva in 1556. Presbyterians in the English Parliament, who compared the Book of Common Prayer to the Roman Catholic breviary, the missal, and rituals, themselves attempted to replace it first with a version of the Book of Common Order in 1641. Then the Westminster Assembly, established by the Parliament in June, 1643, received instruction, in October, to formulate a uniform denomination, catechism, service-book, and principles of government in the Church for the three kingdoms. The Directory for the Public Worship of God was created, under the influence of the Book of Common Order, as part of this work. The Parliament ordered introduction of the Directory in January, 1645, and any previous rulings about using the Book of Common Prayer were annulled. The Parliament's decision soon appeared in print with the text of the Directory attached to it.¹⁹ In Scotland, the text was known as the Westminster Directory, and was introduced in February, 1645. The manual achieved the status of great authority there, although there was no decision about withdrawal of the Book of Common Order. However, we cannot speak about general acceptance of the *Directory* in England. Presbyterian and Congregationalist (independent) parishes used it, while in the majority of congregations the Book of Common Prayer remained in use in spite of its ban. Restoration in 1660 cancelled the ruling that introduced the Directory on the North; moreover,

¹⁹ Orders to create the first edition in England were given on 13 March 1645, yet the print has the year 1644 on it. The reason for this is that the beginning of the year was tied to the Annunciation (Immaculate Conception) in England until 1752, according to the Florence calculus. Thus we find the year 1644 on books printed before 25 March 1645. In Scotland the beginning of the year was changed to 1st of January in 1600.

Episcopal influence became stronger. On the South, the use of the Anglican service-book was restored. A new version was published in 1662 in spite of Presbyterian protests.

The *Directory* is not a compilation of fixed liturgical texts and prayers²⁰ but a mixture of an agenda and a pastoral handbook. It regulates the service, baptism, the Lord's Supper, wedding, as well as visiting the sick and spiritual guidance in the parish. No funeral ritual is prescribed, however. The ceremony of service is strongly focused on the Word and prescribes reading whole chapters from canonical scriptures. This is followed by psalm-singing and free prayer. Then comes the preacher's sermon, about which a five-page chapter of the book, *Of the Preaching of the Word*, gives instruction. This chapter²¹ was the source of Medgyesi's third table. Sometimes he followed methodical advice to the letter, at other places he shortened them or gave excerpts. Admonitions on *exordium*, for instance, fall into the category of translation:

Let the Introduction to his Text be	II. Exordium, quod sit
brief	1 breve,
and perspicuous,	2 clarum,
drawn from the Text it self,	3 ex ipso textu
or context,	vel 4 Contextu,
or some parallel place, or generall sentence of	vel 5 ex aliis eo pertinentibus Scripturae locis.
Scripture.	

Particulars of divisio, on the other hand, are abridged, condensed:

In Analysing and dividing his Text,	IV. Partes, ubi
he is to regard more the order of matter, then of	magis rerum quam verborum series est atten-
words,	denda.
and neither to burden the memory of the hear-	Partes sunto 1 quam paucissimae,
ers in the beginning, with too many members	
of Division,	
nor to trouble their mindes with obscure termes	2 absque vocum peregrinarum intermixtione.
of Art.	

Medgyesi's text goes through all the parts of speech mentioned in the *Directory* and the general admonitions for the preacher, at least to the extent of giving abstracts. He

²⁰ On its position in the history of liturgical prayer and in the contests around fixed or free prayers in the middle of the 17th century, see Christopher DURSTON, *By the Book or with the Spirit: The Debate over Liturgical Prayer during the English Revolution*, Historical Research, 79(2006)/203, 50–73. Hungarian literature incorrectly states that the book contains "patterns for speeches and the way of speaking"; cf. *Régi magyarországi nyomtatványok*, *III*, 1636–1655 (Old Hungarian printed materials), ed. HELTAI János, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 2000, no. 2310. There are no patterns for speeches in the publication.

²¹ LORDS AND COMMONS ASSEMBLED IN PARLIAMENT, A Directory for the Publique Worship of God, throughout the Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Together with an Ordinance of Parliament for the Taking away of the Book of Common Prayer, and for Establishing and Observing of This Present Directory throughout the Kingdom of England, and Dominion of Wales, London, 1644 [1645], 13–18.

fully exploits the English original. The third pattern for preparing a sermon is a precise abstract made after the English text—it is a faithful summary of the ideals for a Puritan pastor.

In the spring of 1649, when Medgyesi wrote the introduction for his book, execution of the English King was the current political sensation. The *Directory*, promulgated four years before, was not only a fresh document of the Church of England, but one of the most striking measures elicited by more and more radical revolutionary ideas. The court preacher in Gyulafehérvár (today Alba Iulia in Romania) did not only find a way to obtain one of the most important documents that marked the zenith of the Puritan movement in Britain,²² but utilized it extensively in his homiletic work.

Thus, I believe, in the series of the three tables stages of personal development can be grasped. For Medgyesi, Clarke's admonitions served as points of reference during his studies in homiletics. Later he abstracted the system of Ames, who was held in high esteem among Puritans in England as well as in Hungary and Transylvania. And in the late 40s he could renew his thinking in rhetorical theory on the basis of the latest guidance coming from England. It is instructive to view the three tables as stages of theoretical radicalization, and regard the patterns for preparing sermons as changes in the ideals of communication in time—and the realization of these changes—, as well as different types of adjustment to the needs of the audience at the same time. Another important conclusion is that knowing his sources and having registered the fact that he followed these sources, we are restrained in speaking about Medgyesi's rhetorical autonomy and the originality of his position. We can grasp certain elements of his objectives and ambitions in how he prepared the abstracts of these texts. And, of course, assessment of the exact extent of reproduction and innovation in rhetorical theory and of personal integrity can only be speculative as long as we do not have a critical edition of first Hungarian rhetoric that would present Latin and English sources and the text by Medgyesi in Latin and in Hungarian side by side and would thus enable our synoptic vision.

²² E.g. a collection of sermons in the English Parliament in the years 1644–1645 was brought to Gyulafehérvár by Ferenc Bihari, who made a detour to England interrupting his studies in the Netherlands. After his return he became a teacher of poetics at the college; GÖMÖRI György, *Egy angol prédikáció-gyűjtemény viszontagságai* (Vicissitudes of an English collection of sermons), in: GÖMÖRI György, *A bujdosó Balassitól a meggyászolt Zrínyi Miklósig: Tanulmányok* (From peregrinating Balassi to mourned Zrínyi: Studies), Budapest, Argumentum Kiadó, 1999, 196–199. Orientation of students abroad helped older colleagues in keeping intellectual connections.