

Theses of Doktoral (PhD) Dissertation

**The Rhetorics of Bartholomeus Keckermann (1572–1609) and
Their Hungarian Reception**

Additions to 17th century Hungarian rhetorical culture

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1. Topic and objectives of the dissertation

Bartholomeus Keckermann (1572–1609), Professor at Heidelberg and Gdansk, was a prominent figure of 17th century Protestant scholarship in spite of his short life. His extensive work – over 40 individual volumes – has been studied by several disciplines, and due to his influence on Hungarian culture, Hungarian literary and cultural history has also put forth some significant results. Keckermann's work can also be placed within a network of international Calvinism: he published his first works as David Pareus's disciple in Heidelberg, his most important books were printed by the Antonius typography of Hanau, and the heirs of Wilhelm Antonius continued to publish his series of manuals after the printer's death. After Keckermann's death, his books were published by his disciples. His collected works were published by Johann Heinrich Alsted in two volumes in Hanau in 1613, with the title *Systema systematum*, and his *Opera omnia* appeared in Geneva in 1614, also in two volumes. His popularity remained unchanged even decades after this death: his works were permanently published throughout Europe's important intellectual centres until 1661, including even in English and Dutch translations. He was not only popular in Western Europe, but everywhere from New England to Hungary and Transylvania, as proved by researches of Howard Hotson, Graeme Murdock or Szentpéteri Márton.

My dissertation continues these researches.

Keckermann taught the traditional five-part structure of rhetoric and did not take over the *genus didascalicum* from Melanchthon; his follower in this respect was Vossius. At the same time – as the scholarship claims – he spread the division of the material discussed into *generalis* (general) and *specialis* (special) parts, which he hoped would result in increasing the practical applicability of his work. The roots of this division can be found already in the *Ecclesiastica*, and it is the foundation of the *Systema* (1608).

The double title of his church rhetoric shows the double nature of the work too (*Rhetorica ecclesiastica, sive Ars formandi et habendi conciones sacras*): on the one hand, it is linked to classical rhetorical traditions, and on the other hand to the theoretical works of homiletics published at the turn of century which willfully leave behind this humanist heritage. Another duality is linked to how far Keckermann utilizes Ramist considerations. The beginning of the *Ecclesiastica*

summarizes the essence of the work in a table form. This graphic representation indicates the twofold structure of the work. Chapter 3 of book 2 (*Usus Rhetoricae ecclesiasticae*), which is an introduction to the use of the learning material and assistance to the stages of *lectio*, *selectio*, *imiatio*, as well as to the particular preaching practice (*Concionandi propria exercitatio*) was not included into this twofold structure.

My dissertation does not intend to elaborate on Keckermann's "career and writings" (*Leben und Wirken, życie i działalność*), but it proposes to examine his rhetorical works. However, I included into the investigation some of his works on dialectics and theology, as previous research has proved the strong relationship of these three disciplines. I also had to apply some limitations regarding the manuscript material covered: I took account of certain mentions in the scholarship, but I had no possibility to discover new manuscripts.

2. Methodology of the dissertation

The theory of early modern Renaissance and Baroque literature, which is the framework within which I analyse Keckermann's rhetorical works and their reception, is discussed in the research with the terminology of the history of rhetoric, history of criticism, and the history of rhetorical ideas. Early modern works of rhetoric mostly follow Cicero and Quintilian, or – some of them – the works of Greek authors of the Hellenistic period. In the mid-20th century, for example, Ernst Robert Curtius called rhetoric the "common denominator" of European culture. However, this method eliminates historicity and therefore does not seem sufficient, for instance, to record possible effects of, say, Cicero, since it does not outline the differences between various works which all follow Cicero. In order to make visible the differences between various authors of rhetorical works, the methodology of intellectual history can be of help. Actually, the same rhetorical subjects are repeated over and over in the early modern period, but the unique relationship and variation of these subjects, the proportion and extent of their discussion, the structure and organization of the works, the authors they consider canonical and worthy of imitation, the relationship of biblical and profane examples, the appearance of confessionalism and interconfessionalism,

the definition of the function of rhetoric, etc. – all these are helpful in describing the state of the rhetorical culture of the period under scrutiny.

Keckermann seems to have been a summarizer of the 16th century rhetorical tradition of Wittenberg and Strassburg, while at the same time he was an agent for other kinds of processes as well.

We have partial knowledge of his references to England (Thomas Vicars, Thomas Farnaby), Sweden (Caspar Bartholin), Germany (Clemens Timpler, Johann Heinrich Alsted, Johann Philip Piscator), and the Netherlands (Gerhard Johann Vossius). The Hungarian scholarship stressed that Keckermann's reception can be referenced also in the case of Andreas Graff, Imre Pécseli Király and Mihály Buzinkai.

3. Findings and solutions of the dissertation

Keckermann differentiates the *adhortatio* and *dehortatio*, *obiurgatio*, *correptio*, and *consolation* as forms of *genera dicendi*. This division is similar to the one introduced by the Marburg theologian Andreas Gerardus Hyperius – although his name is never mentioned by Keckermann - in his homiletics as the five genera of sermons (*doctrinalis, refutatoria, institutiva, reprehensiva, consolatoria*).

The structure of the *Systema Rhetoricae* follows the traditional five-part division, but the dichotomy is also strongly present. Book 1 of part 1 (*Rhetorica generalis*) deals with the *inventio* and *dispositio*, book 2 with the *elocutio* or *exornatio*, while book 3 with the delivery of the speech, that is the *memoria* and the *pronuntiatio*. Part 2 is also divided into 3 books, this is the field of *Rhetorica Specialis*. This book contains mostly a summary of practical knowledge for the early modern period, which was outside the scope of the classical division in part 1. As Keckermann puts it: “Orators must be trained primarily for public matters like the Church and the State and not for the school.”

Following the prescriptions of classical rhetoric, Keckermann emphasizes the three functions of *docere*, *movere* and *delectare*, but – stressing the differences between rhetoric and logic – he claims that the orator's most important task is the “moving of the heart” (*motus cordis*).

It seems that Keckermann did not differentiate between secular and ecclesiastical rhetoric. In the name of the tradition beginning with Melanchthon, the rhetorical culture of the Antiquity must be used for the interpretation of the Scripture as well, in which way rhetoric acquires a role in the mediation and interpretation of salvation, while the rules of classical rhetoric are also indispensable for the writing and delivery of sermons – that is, the arts of secular and ecclesiastical eloquence are not antagonistic. Several elements of the “double paradigm” (Mihály Imre) can be identified in Keckermann’s rhetorical works, from the discussion of the theory of rhetorical *genera* to the presentation of figures of *elocutio* on biblical and secular examples to the significance of the *amplificatio*, discussed in detail in the book on *inventio*.

After the overview of Keckermann’s rhetorical system I highlight one element which is discussed in detail in Keckermann’s rhetorical works as their peculiarity: the phenomenon of *amplificatio*. This issue is treated not only in the *Systema*, but also in the *Rhetorica Ecclesiastica* and the collection of oration drafts called *Dispositiones orationum*, therefore I will analyze all three works from this point of view. Finally, I will present Johann Mylius’s summary of Keckermann’s rhetoric, which has not yet been thoroughly discussed in Hungarian research.

Keckermann takes his stand in the (Ciceronian and anti-Ciceronian) theoretical and language philosophical debates of the turn of the 16th–17th century. His emphasis on *euphonia* is clearly of a Ramist origin: the novelty of the subject and its Hungarian interpretation is indicated by the fact that a contemporary reader wrote on the margin of a volume found in the Library of the Reformed Diocese and College of Debrecen (shelf mark: G.2138) the explanation: “*szépen szólás, hangadozás, eggyező szép szók*” (approx. “nice speech, matching words”) – not independently of Albert Szenci Molnár’s translation. There is a separate chapter about the problem of the *stylus asianus*, *atticus* and *laconicus*, and the *stylus argutus*: he claims that he is the first one to offer a “general and trusted rule” in this question. (Eric van der Putten, who followed Lipsius in his professorship at the University of Leuven, published his treatise entitled *De laconismo* in 1609, one year after the publication of the *Systema Rhetoricae*). Another example of responding to public matters is that the device of *exaggeratio* is presented by the

description of the Gunpowder plot (1605) in England. The most recent rhetorical works are represented by the repeated references to Vossius's *Oratoriarum institutionum libri sex* (1606).

In his rhetorical works, Keckermann links together the appeal to emotions and detailed description, *hypotyposis*, which he calls *descriptio graphica, energeia* or *evidentia*. Amongst the examples taken from the Church Fathers, the detailed description of Jesus Christ's sufferings is rhetorically related to the detailed description of the histories of martyrs. Past events appear thus in a sense before the eyes of the audience, as if they were participants and direct witnesses of the presented scene. He emphasizes in both of his rhetorical works: "Emotions are raised by two things: magnificence and description" (*Moventur affectus duplici ratione: magnitudine et praesentia.*) All these procedures are subservient to make the supernatural visual and sensual, and surpass the insufficiency of human linguistic expression; the *amplification* served the needs of *movere* and *delectare* at the same time.

The citation of the Church Fathers by Keckermann draws attention to the fact that the Protestant reinterpretation of church history happens in this respect as well, understood as the interpretive strategies of the struggle for places of memory. In parallel, the works of Greek and Latin Church Fathers served as examples in the early modern period both for Catholic (Granatensis, Caussin, Le Jay) and Protestant authors.

The manual examples of the *Dispositiones orationum* are also instructive. The manual develops 51 topics for practice, comprising biblical stories and examples from Roman history on the one hand, and interesting stories of the author's own age on the other. The examples also include works (such as: the *Chronicon Carionis*, John Foxe's Book of Martyrs), and stories (like the figure of Emperor Phocas, the history of the Virgin of Brandenburg, the execution of Lady Grey, or the Saint Bartholomew's night) decisive for Calvinist/Protestant self-definition. The cited fragments of the collection of model speeches offer a rhetorical analysis of some important texts for Protestant self-interpretation in the time of a strong Catholic-Protestant opposition, in a highly polemical context. The reason is that, once the students revealed and studied the rhetorical complexity of the texts, they would also be able to create similar orations. The model speeches

place great emphasis on the presentation of the figures of *amplificatio*, with an important role in arousing emotions. The fragments taken from the Church Fathers in works of rhetoric present the suffering and death of Christ in a similar way, as an example of *amplificatio*. All these indicate that not only the martyrs are like Christ, but the narration, the rhetorical description of their lives can also be similar. Both Lady Jane Grey and the Virgin of Brandenburg use the same words as Jesus to pray to God (Lk 23:46). Although this story might have a hagiographic background, the text doesn't mention it, but presents the story of the virgin taken out from the monastery as a proof of the piety of pre-Reformation times and emphasizes the historical circumstances of the event.

The author of the most recent neo-Latin handbook, Marc van der Poel, groups the rhetorical manuals according to whether their authors intended them for an educated audience or for the use in schools. Keckermann did not make a shorter version of his *Systema Rhetoricae*, but, similarly to his other manuscripts, his disciples and friends made available an epitome at a more convenient size and price for the use of lower education. The author of the “Keckermann minor”, the Moravian Johannes Mylius, who became a school rector in Levoča in 1588 and in Kežmarok in 1595, then left for Elbing because of his Crypto-Calvinist views, maintained his Hungarian relationships later on as well. This may have been a reason why the summary of Keckermann's *Systema Rhetoricae* was popular in Hungarian Calvinist schooling too. The work was printed in 1617 by the same Antonius typography which printed the other volumes of Keckermann's manuals. Mylius kept the original structure of the *Systema*, although it wasn't easy to shorten the 720 pages of the original version to 144 pages. As a result, the *Epitome* only contains a mere scheme of rhetorical knowledge, the explanations and examples are mostly erased. Mylius leaves out the “*amplificatio*, the most important resource of the art of rhetoric, which is especially important for arousing strong emotions of the listener”. The discussion of the differences between logical and rhetorical invention and the emphasis on the *hypotyposis* is also missing. There are no examples from Classical authors, Biblical books or Church Fathers, and no references to Justus Lipsius. The inner proportions of the work have changed: in the *Epitome*, the part on *elocutio* became even longer at the expense of other chapters.

The second part of the dissertation offers an overview of some stages in the reception of Keckermann. The first one of these is Máté Csanaki's dispute published in Leiden (RMK III. 1387), where the authors of the *propempticones* addressed to Csanaki indicate the social group, the circle of priests and schoolmasters connected to the Sárospatak college, who were the audience of Keckermann's works. The "court style" was taught from Keckermann's manuals at the Reformed College of Sárospatak, where the youth of the local nobility was educated for a time (similarly to the court schools of Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia and Várad/Oradea), while students of theology acquired the methodological basis for religious disputes. Keckermann developed a highly effective method for the "educational revolution" of the early modern period at the academic gymnasium of Gdansk, and the successful application of this method was probably the basis of its local application as well.

The confessional or even interconfessional aspects of early modern rhetorical works are discussed in the scholarship as a topic of great importance. Keckermann, as Pareus's disciple, studied controversial theology, then, together with his disciples and followers, he engaged into harsh debates on religious issues with his Catholic, Lutheran and Unitarian opponents. Therefore, it has a theological significance whether the words of Jesus Christ (*Hoc est corpus meum*) are read in a literal or figurative meaning. That's how Keckermann could write that "to understand without logical premises is like flying without wings." The students of Sárospatak quoted Keckermann when they criticized the educational reforms of Tolnai Dáli, saying: "Logic is the wings and nails of a student, and that's what he deprives them of".

Comparing the *Rhetorica Ecclesiastica* (1600) and his main work, the *Systema Rhetoricae* (1608), it can be said that ecclesiastical rhetoric is an organic part of Keckermann's rhetoric, as the rules of classical rhetoric must be applied both for the interpretation of the Scripture and for sermon writing. Biblical texts must thus undergo a rhetorical text interpretation, because that is the only way to efficiently reveal the message of the Scripture and convey the teachings of the church.

Despite the fact that the Lutherans heavily argued against Keckermann's works of rhetoric and logic, professor of rhetoric Jeremias Spiegel recommended Keckermann's rhetoric – more precisely its *epitome* by Mylius – to Imre Thurzó, a student in Wittenberg at the time.

Secondly, I analyse the early 17th century reception of Keckermann in Strasbourg, in a Lutheran environment. This can be described based on the publications of Hungarians studying in Strasbourg (mostly the disciples of Matthias Bernegger).

Although Keckermann's name did not appear in the dissertation of Baron Ferenc Listius published in Strasbourg in 1616, his fragmentary library preserved a volume by Keckermann (*Disputationes practicae, nempe ethicae, oeconomicae, politicae* Hanoviae, 1612) into which he wrote his name, probably while still in Strasbourg, in 1615.

An outstanding work for Keckermann's reception is the *Oratio* of Boldizsár Frisowitz from Besztercebánya/Banská Bystrica (RMK III. 1411), which mentions in the subtitle that the oration followed Keckermann's model sermon collection as a source (*ad imitationem dispositionis Keckermannianae*). At this time the professors of the Alsatian town did not teach the theoretical precepts of rhetoric in their manuals but practice orations, and published collections of *Loci communes*. For these, and a plethora of political subjects, they used Keckermann.

Frisowitz's work *Oratio de praecipuis requisitis consilarii* published in 1627 stands out from other, shorter works because of its length: together with the three dedicatory texts before the oration, it counts 204 pages. The work teaches the logical and rhetorical devices of amplification, but it also has current political references to analyse. Frisowitz was in touch with Count Péter Bethlen, nephew of the Prince of Transylvania, who was peregrinating in Western Europe, thus his works also contain the power representation of the princely family.

Boldizsár Frisowitz's work is an *oratio* and not a dispute or a dissertation, although apart from some signs of oral delivery (e.g., directly addressing the audience) there are hardly any differences between the two genres; in content, it

is related to the disputes led by Bernegger, which prove the skills of their author (orator) in the field of politics. How can we look at these works then? Márton Schödel's work, *Disquisitio*, also published in Strasbourg, was called a collection of aphorisms by Márton Kaposi, or a collection of quotations by Kees Teszelszky. The structure of this work is similar to the treatises of other disciples of Bernegger, or to Frisowitz's oration. All these works are collections of commonplaces (*loci communes*); they contain arguments and examples taken from the classics and grouped under certain "titles", that is, subjects. Preserved examples of such collections are Péter Révay's collection of *loci communes*, begun in Strasbourg, and Albert Szenci Molnár's collection which has recently gained scholarly interest. Johannes Sturm's method of teaching rhetoric was also based on the collection and interpretation of commonplaces. However, a new impulse in this respect came from the fact that Justus Lipsius, whose works Bernegger annotated, and Jean Bodin, whose name also appeared in Bernegger's dissertations, compiled their works from quotations and *exempla* taken from classical or contemporary authors. The printed collections of *loci communes* presented above offered help precisely for the writing of such works.

Although the *Oratio de praecipuis...* mentions Keckermann's manual in the subtitle, Frisowitz actually used other direct sources as well for preparing his oration: the dispute of Andreas Rey a Naglowice, defended on 21 June 1607, a defence which was presided by Professor Keckermann. This work is very similar in subject to the *Oratio* of Strasbourg, but it does not contain Hungarian references. Thus the additions of quotations from Bonfini to the scheme can be regarded as Frisowitz's individual work. Andreas Rey a Naglowice's treatise has another Hungarian reference: in the preface, Keckermann refers to Hungary, as one of the countries affected by "civil war"; his reference probably refers to the Bocskai-uprising.

As an annex to this chapter, I also identified some previously unknown *Hungarica* works (RMNy, RMK).



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List of publications related to the dissertation

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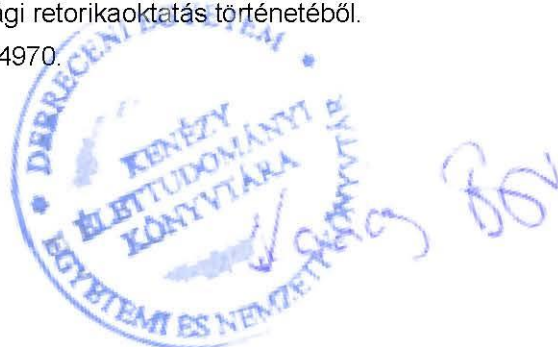
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