

**Eötvös Loránd University  
Faculty of Humanities**

DOKTORAL THESIS

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**Methodological possibilities in the identification of scribes in 16th-century  
correspondence**

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The doctoral thesis presents possible identification methodologies of scribes of 16th century. The linguistic definition of the writers of early modern letters is an undeveloped and under researched area of Hungarian diachronic linguistics. The identification of letter scribes has so far been based on other areas of science, mainly based on the results of paleography (PAPP 1961: 91), which in some cases allowed a precise definition, but at other times resulted in false conclusions (see chapters 2 and 5). Identification based on complex linguistic analyses in addition to the results obtained from literary study is capable of deciphering uncertainties resulting from isolated analysis of writings, allowing more accurate definition of the letter scribes and the identification of individual persons as well.

The purpose of my doctoral dissertation is to discover the procedure to identify missionary scribes or to categorize the letters by writer and to develop a method for identifying them. During the research, I investigated the use of synchronous and diachronic identification-research methods for the identification of letter scribes and attempted to identify original approaches. In the dissertation, I will present the possibilities, the method and the results of the identification criteria, going through each aspect. The corpus of the examination is composed of 256 letters by Katalin Batthyány's Svetkovics Ferencné, a note from Ferenc Batthyány 10, and 18 letters in Hungarian by András Perneszy. The letters Svetkovics and Batthyány appeared in transcripts (TERBE 2010; HEGEDŰS-PAPP 1991), and I personally transcribed the Perneszy-letters scripts.

One of the basic aspects of hand-identification is handwriting analysis (HAADER 2004; AGARDI 2006; VIGH 2007). In the paleographic analysis of historical texts, the researcher must take into account the forms of letters, the shape of letters that are commonly used in conjunction with each other, and common words. In addition, the elaboration of the writing, the arc lines, the direction, the size of the lines, and so on must also be taken into consideration. (VIGH 2007: 64–66). Of all the letters examined, 40 distinct groups could be distinguished from the paleographic point of view. During the analysis of the missionary scribes, I noticed a group of letters whose forms were markedly different. These were: the *a*, *i*, *t* (rarely *b* and *d*) and the *h*, *k*, *s*, *sz*, *z* minuscules were in the beginning and ending positions in *g*, *h*, *s* and *z*. During the grouping, it emerged that the letters in frequently used letter combinations (e.g. *th*) and words could be as unique as the individual calligraph. In the letters investigated, the shape and position of the letter (mid-word and ending), *hogy*, *az*, *Isten*, *Katerina*, *Svetkovics*, *Batthyány* (with varying spelling), and the abbreviations of *nagyságos/nagyságod* and *kegyelmed* showed relatively constant form. Certain groups of letters could easily be separated from the writing,

but this was not generally the case. The paleographic study has a high probative value in refuting or verifying common source, but for further assurance, further analysis needs to be conducted.

The second major thesis of the dissertation discussed the role of spelling in identification (HAADER 1995; WIGGINS 2004). In each subsection, I have presented in detail the building blocks of our orthography that may have the same origin or justification of the texts. My aim was to assess the applicability of existing criteria for synchronous and diacritical identity research, and to develop new possible criteria.

Regarding the application of the criteria and the role of spelling in identifying it, it can be stated that it is not possible to expect full agreement in the spelling system of the letters, but instead focus on key phenomena during identification. Due to the limited number of constituents of the system and the space and time differences, we must accept the fact that two orthographic sub-systems may overlap (see KNEZSA 1952a, 1952b, ABAFFY 1969, TERBE 1998, KOROMPAY 1999, 2003, 2012). A single component system (e.g. marking phonemes, punctuation, abbreviation) can not be the basis of identification. An overlap justifies the examination of phonemes with a weaker identification strength (e.g. punctuation) in case there is overlapping between phonemes with a higher identifying strength (e.g. an marking phonemes). The role of each aspect in hand identification needs to be examined and evaluated separately.

The marking phonemes can be successfully applied to the identification of letter scribes, a phonemes with high potential for identification (Chapter 6.2). The silent *h* (section 6.3.1) and the letter of abstraction (chapter 6.3.2) that are part of it may not always have an identifying capacity, and there may be some distinctive individual marks. Textualization can be used to identify correspondents in letters, but the identifying strength of the cases is more moderate than other aspects (Chapter 6.4). Separation (Chapter 6.7) and capitalization could not be used for identification (Chapter 6.8). The abbreviation for oddities is successful in identifying hands. The special feature of the text type is the analysis of abbreviations of your grace and of your greatness solos. This is a strong identifying aspect (Chapter 6.8).

The third aspect of hand authentication is the examination of errors. When creating a text, speakers have several mistakes during design and implementation due to various reasons (GÓSY 2002; HUSZÁR 2005; GYARMATHY 2015). In the mistakes of the written text, regularity can be observed, which gives a pattern that can help the identification of scribes (HAADER 1995: 421). HAADER has observed this phenomenon during the examination of the scripts of the codes (1996/1997, 1998, 2011b, 2014), so it was a question of how this aspect was suitable for the identification of the letter hands. During my research, I recorded all of the errors from the

corpus, then attempted to quantitatively group the manuscripts. I wanted to find out whether the frequency of mistakes could be a feature of a scribe. There were letters like the S5. and S117 and S84. and S210. Letter pairs whose members showed paleogenesis, but the ratio of the errors in them confirmed the same origin, which was confirmed by spelling. However, most of the letters had a variable rate of error, so this approach did not seem to be useful. After that, I applied qualitative aspects in the identification where similarity was manifested by the deception factor (anticipation, perseverance, omission, incorrect vocabulary, etc.), the linguistic elements affected by the error (letter, letter of association, word or larger element). examinations can be used for confirmation or refutation of identity in text of the letters.

One of the most important steps of identification is the examination of the different elements of language use (NAGY F. 1980; VIGH 2007; HILTUNEN–PEIKOLA 2007) In the next major chapter, I approached the question of scribe authentication from language usage (Chapter 8). The local language features also play a key role in synchronous and diachronic identification research, so I first analyzed the letters from this point of view. Of the dialectal dialect, variance was found in the phonetic specificities, and thus in the identification of the scribes these were the determinants. For territorial variants, identification is based on elements that differ from local dialect in their quality or quantity. We cannot therefore claim that some dialect marks always distinguish/identify. The meaning of any element can only be obtained from context. In this corpus, especially the epoch oppression helped to organize the texts, but the depalatal-palatal opposition to the word and the consonants played a role.

Following the dialectal features of TERBE (2015) I examined the language use of formulas, in which I found additional sociolinguistic and stylistic features. Formulas, the more "mechanical" parts of the letter, which often were not dictated were determined only by context of the letter were set by the senders of the letter. Scribes have made these parts more freely, so not only their dialect, but also other elements of their language use have left them traces. Less material changes in formulas, stylistic differences. Since the formulas have own rules, only large groups could be created based on this criterion. The distinctness of the signatures is the spelling of the name (the sender of the letter). His/her examination, however, does not belong to the orthography, but also to sociolinguistics. In the signature the spelling of the last name Svetkovics is very variable (ch / tz / cz). The reason for this phenomenon is probably that the person who used the name of the South Slav origin even used the Slavic é, which was missing from the Hungarian language and was therefore replaced in different ways. The ortography of spelling is also part of the identification, which can be a basic prerequisite for pre-selection. Another feature of language use is the alternation of the second-person pronouns. The

addressees of Svetkovics's letters are mostly called to *kegyelmed*. It differs in two ways: either you use only the pronoun or the expression of *kegyelmed*. If these changes are caused by a change in the context of communication, they simply fulfill a pragmatic function at the sender, expressing a speaker's intent. However, if this does not happen, switch to hand instead of head. Why the scribe use a different address like a sender may have several reasons. However, the change helps to separate the use of the hand and the head language, as well as the individual writers.

In the last chapter of the dissertation I presented a summary of the aspects. Using the methods I used, I could allocate a total of 24 hands in the Svetkovics letters. The study pointed out that many writers turned around in the service of Katalin Svetkovics, but there were also two scribes (1., 2. profiles scribe) who served for almost all her life. By comparing the Svetkovics and Batthyány correspondence, it turned out that the scribes at the service of the husband made letters from Batthyányné on time. Comparison with the Pernesy letters revealed that Pernesy served as a secretary or scribe from time to time for the noblewoman. Svetkovics's other writers are still in the process of identification, but the absence table based on the content of the letters helped to name scribe Balázs of them. The identification of letter scribes is a complex operation and methodology that is shaped and evolved. This dissertation can not therefore be seen as the end point of the process, but rather its first steps, which are the basis for further research.

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