

JAN NICOLAE, **De dignitate memoriae. Gottfried Schwarz (1707-1788): Historian, Preacher and German Savant Theologian of the 18th Century**

**Abstract:** This study proposes to present the pre-Illuminist historian Gottfried Schwarz and his creation in the context of historiography developed around issue Hierotheos, that is disputes concerning Hungarians' Christianization, resumed with increased intensity in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Paradoxically, if in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Gottfried Schwarz was the one who rediscovered the missionary role of Hierotheos, this time Saint Hierotheos is the one who reveals us the historian and leading theologian and preacher Gottfried Schwarz.

The oldest presentation of the life and creation of this scholar, already highly appreciated during his times, was made by Johann Christoph Strodtmann and Ferdinand Stosch, in the work *Das Neue gelehrte Europa* (1752, 1781), where the personality and creation of Gottfried Schwarz are presented in an important series of European scholars from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Gottfried Schwarz comes from a family with strong Protestant beliefs, his grandfather, Andreas Schwarz, former preacher in Michaelshof, being persecuted after 1672 because of his creed, was obliged to leave the parish and his relatives, settling down in Danzig, where he died shortly after. Gottfried Schwarz (Igló, 1707, Nov. 19 – Rinteln, 1788, Nov. 23), an Evangelic scholar, Zipser born in Upper Hungaria, in nowadays Slovakia, began his studies in Lőcsén (Levoča), Csetneken (Štítinik) and Osgyánban, then, from 1724 he studied at the University from Jena, becoming rector in Levoča, returning in Budapest, in 1734; from 1735 he lived in Germany, being active in Marburg and Halle, later on he held the position of rector in Osnabrück (1742), and then that of Evangelic bishop of Rinteln (1749). In the presentation of J. Strodtmann, the creation of this polyglot and versatile intellectual includes a number of 28 works. This list of works proves refinement of the author and his vast knowledge from diverse fields such as: history, logic, rhetoric, linguistic, homiletics, biblical exegesis, pedagogy etc. At the top of the list is, it goes without saying, the work that made him famous during the epoch, *Initia Religionis Christianae inter Hungaros Ecclesiae Orientali adserta. Eademque a dubiis et fabulosis narrationibus repurgata*. Dissertatio historico-critica auctore Gabriele de juxta Hornad. Francofurti & Lipsiae, 1739. (Editio III. Clausenburgae.)

The name of Schwarz was mentioned subsequently in connection with disputes referring to researches of the Hungarian crown from 1790 but also with the oldest grammar of Hungarian language, *Grammatica Hungarolatina*, being considered one of the leaders or precursor of free historical research; he was named ever since 1781 the father of Hungarian historical criticism. The full appreciation that this Evangelic scholar enjoyed is remarked both from pages that Strodtmann dedicated him in his work of presentation of leading intellectuals of the New Europe, but especially by his inclusion, in 1835, in the work of literary historian and theologian Johann Michael Heinrich Döring (1789-1862), *Die gelehrten Theologen Deutschlands im achtzehnten und neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (1831-1835), of presenting the German theological savants of the 18th-19th centuries, where the list of Schwarz's writings includes this time no more than 74 works. Amongst those who mention Schwarz in the epoch is also the Reformed

Transylvanian historian and priest Péter Bod (1712-1769), in his famous work *Magyar Athenas* (1766) and in the preface of his posthumous work *Historia Hungarorum Ecclesiastica* (1888). The two pre-Illuminist historians, Gottfried Schwarz and Péter Bod, leading representatives of European ecclesiastical historiography from the 18th century, may be read in parallel as far as the issue of Hungarians' christening and the missionary activity of the first bishop Hierotheos is concerned, because both are affirming, as it seems, common opinions that are specific to the historiographic Protestant repertoire. Similarly, the two historians may be considered pioneers of Hungarian historiography criticism (*historia critica*), exponents of *peregrinatio academica* and of *eruditio et pietas* historiography trend.

**Keywords:** Gottfried Schwarz, Péter Bod, Hungarians' Christianization, ecclesiastical historiography, pre-Illuminist historians.