

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE RELIGIOSITY OF PRINCE FRANCIS II RÁKÓCZI IN THE LIGHT OF JANSENISM

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ABSTRACT: The article highlights the teachings of Cornelius Jansen that influenced the Transylvanian prince Francis II Rákóczi. It focuses on the Prince's Memoirs and Confessions and draws parallels between the Jansen-Augustin church father and Francis II Rákóczi. Although the prince did not openly declare himself a Jansenist, we can nevertheless trace the basic tenets of Cornelius Jansen in him.

Keywords: Cornelius Jansen, prince Francis II Rákóczi, bull of Vineam Dominis, Port Royal, bull of Unigenitus, the Camaldolese Order, Hamartiology of Confessions, Augustine's confession

Who was Cornelius Jansen, whose writing influenced the Transylvanian prince Francis II Rákóczi (1703-1711)?

Cornelius Jansen was born on October 28th, 1585 in the village of Aqueui in the German Lowlands. He studied in Utrecht, Leuven, and Paris. In Paris he met Jean Duvergier, and they continued their studies on his estate. Together they

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perused the Church Fathers, especially Augustine. Janssen was ordained into priesthood in 1614, and in 1617 he received his doctorate in Theology from Louvain. In 1621 he again met with Duvergier in Leuven, who in the meantime had changed his name to Saint Cyram. Both became adherents of the reform movement within the Catholic Church, as the background to this was a deeper study of Augustine's theology. Jansen wanted change in the Doctrines of the Church, while Duvergier wanted change in the Constitution of the Church. In 1624-25, Jansen even disputed the decrees of the Reformed Synod of Dordrecht of 1618-19. At the same time, he gradually moved away from Catholic Scholasticism. From 1630 he became the professor of exegesis at the theology of Leuven. In 1636 he was appointed bishop of Ypre. As early as 1628 he began writing his major work, which he entitled "Augustine", but only a handful of people, his small circle of friends, knew about the birth of this writing.

What was the reason of this secrecy? Beyond the title, its reforming content. The background to this treatment was, above all, the teaching of Augustine².

In his three-volume work, Jansen expounded the following theological principles³:

- He saw a connection between the semi-Pelagian doctrines and Jesuitism. He strongly condemned Jesuit casuistry and hamartiology.
- He disagreed with the Catholic scholasticism and the teachings of Thomas Aquinas. On this basis, he also rejected the teaching of Aristotle, which gave a primary role to reasoning and to the intellect.

According to Jansen, good and evil can only have mutually exclusive opposite meanings. Hence, sin cannot be mitigated by explanations. Adam's sin affects all his descendants, namely the entire human race. The essence of the teaching of Augustine is expressed in Volume III⁴, which contains the doctrine of grace. It was this doctrine of all-sufficient grace that had the most profound

² Cornelius Jansen, *Augustinus, sive doctrina Sti. Augustini de humanae naturae sanitate, aegritudine, medicina adversus pelagianos et massilienses tribus tomis comprehensa*, Lovanii 1640, *Praefatio*, 3.

³ Jansen, *Augustinus* 3.

⁴ Jansen, *Augustinus*, III, *De gratia Christi Salvatoris* 497.

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influence on Francis II Rákóczi. It is my intention to give particular attention to this very fact in the later paragraphs⁵.

This work of Jansen's entitled "Augustine" which was written and completed by 1638, was not published until 1640. The author died in 1638 in Leuven, and several years later in 1642 Pope Urban VIII. banned his work. This was the beginning of a long theological debate, which was witnessed by Francis II Rákóczi himself. This period began in 1713, when Francis II Rákóczi left Poland and arrived in France in the court of Louis XIV.

After the death of Jansen, a decade-long controversy began within the French Catholic Church. There was also a threat of Schism. The centre of Jansenism became the monastery of Port Royal in Paris. In 1636, the monastery was overtaken by Duvergier (Saint Cyram). Even Antoine Arnould became a member of the monastery and with his works he succeeded to win over several of the Sorbonne professors. The accusations made by the Jesuits resulted in a lawsuit against Arnould, during which Blaise Pascal himself became the defendant of Arnould. Pascal's father had been himself also a Jansenist⁶, and he had published several of his work in a letter format, having his message targeting the activities and ethics of the Jesuit order. Along with Arnould and Pascal, Nicole Pierre (1625-1695) was the third defender of the doctrines of Jansen. He was a teacher at Port Royal and published 25 volumes of his ethical treatises from 1671⁷. Madame de Sevigné (1626-1696), the author of the "Lettre Familière", was also a Jansenist.

The decisive offensive blow against Jansenism began after 1705. In 1694 Quesnel became the Archbishop of Paris. His friendship with Arnould made him a follower of Jansenism. In his influential position he united the followers of Jansenism into a single party. Louis XIV. did not look kindly at the spread of

⁵ Lukács O., A janzenista II. Rákóczi Ferenc, I, *Református Szemle* 1995, 452-459; Lukács O., A janzenista II. Rákóczi Ferenc, II, *Református Szemle* 1996, 294-303; Lukács O., A janzenizmus református szemmel *Református Szemle* 1995, 359-365.; Tüskés G., Janzenizmus, felvilágosodás, emlékirat, in: *A felvilágosodás előzményei Erdélyben és Magyarországon, 1650–1750*, Edited by Balázs Mihály-Bartók István, Szeged: SZTE Magyar Irodalom Tanszék, 2016, 23–39.; Knapp É., „II. Rákóczi Ferenc és a veritas-gondolat, Antikvitás & Reneszánsz” VII MTA-SZTE, Edited by Vigh Éva, Szeged 2021, 137–178.

⁶ B. Pascal, *Vidéki levelek*, translated by Rác Péter, Palatinus, Budapest 2002, 7.

⁷ Zolnai B., *Magyar janzenisták*, Kolozsvár 1924, 93.

Jansenism and he became hostile to the Jansenist spirit at the Port Royal. As a result, he persuaded Pope Clement XI. to condemn Jansenism again.

This led to the issuing of the bull of *Vineam Dominis* in 1705, which the monks of Port Royal refused to accept. It was then that Louis XIV. ordered the destruction of Port Royal, which took place on July 11th, 1709⁸. Francis II Rákóczi witnessed and saw the destroyed monastery. Louis XIV's son, the Count of Orleans, was on friendly terms with the Prince of Transylvania. They often enjoyed hunting together⁹.

The Count was sorry to see the destruction. After the destruction of Port Royal, the controversy over Jansenism continued. New issues were added to the growing tension. This was the debate regarding the Holy Scriptures: should the Bible be translated into the mother tongues and how much study was needed? These prompted the papal court to issue the bull *Unigenitus* in November 1713. In it, Clement XI. condemned Quesnel's 101 theses and branded them as Jansenist heresies. Some of the French clergy accepted the bull's accusations, others did not. King Louis XIV. of France wanted a national synod¹⁰, but Pope Clement XI. opposed the King's intention. The issue became obsolete with the death of Louis XIV. Francis II Rákóczi arrived in France in the year of the bull's publication, and experienced the tensions that arose during that period. On the one hand, he learned of the King's position after his warm welcome. "I greeted the King by way of introduction, who greeted me with a kindly face and a gracious address", he writes¹¹. This relationship between the prince and the king remained throughout his life. At the same time, he was also aware of the position of some of the French clergy, such as those who had reservations about the bull of *Unigenitus* and asked the Pope for explanations¹². The controversy over the bull made Francis II Rákóczi

⁸ Zolnai, *Magyar janzenisták* 11.

⁹ J.-L. Quantin, *Port-Royal et le jansénisme du XVIIe siècle dans l'historiographie depuis Sainte-Beuve*, *Chroniques de Port-Royal*, no 49, 2000, 87–119; C. Maire, *De Port-Royal au jansénisme: le XVIIIe siècle*, *Chroniques de Port-Royal*, no 49, 2000, 135–152.

¹⁰ Zolnai B., *A jansenizmus kutatása Európában*, Kolozsvár 1944, 18.

¹¹ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc fejedelem önéletrajza*, translated from Latin Domján Elek, Szelényi és Társa Könyvnyomdája, Miskolc 1903, 257.

¹² Köpeczi B., *A bujdosó Rákóczi*, Budapest 1991, 239.

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cautious. Signs of this caution can be seen throughout the prince's behaviour. The bull affair caused a sensation throughout the Catholic world. Refutations appeared in France, Germany and the Netherlands. Pope Clement XI. declared that those who did not accept the bull were not considered to belong to the Catholic Church. The Pope stated in the bull *Unigenitus*: "We see clearly that the greatest danger of such a book is that it spreads and prevails, especially because it seduces the reader with a certain kind of piety ... a nasty pus which only bursts out when the wound is cut open"¹³.

Francis II Rákóczi was well aware of the "Unigenitus Dei Filius" bull. "Quesnel's theses are seditious, insulting, heretical, suspicious, spread heresy, favour sectarianism, are wrong, and have been repeatedly condemned by the Church ..."¹⁴.

In 1720, Clement XI (1700-1721) excommunicated all those who rejected the bull of *Unigenitus*. Francis II Rákóczi was no longer in France at the time but witnessed the most heated phase of the controversy. He recalls this in his memoirs written in 1718 in the Turkish *Jeniköi*: "... I have seen from the example of this very pious prince Constantine himself how much easier it is to avoid the venom of the courtly flatterers than of the bishops"¹⁵.

During the period of the internal dispute within the Catholic Church, Francis II Rákóczi lived the bright, worldly life of the court of the Sun King. He hunted, socialized, attended receptions, played cards, sought the company of princesses, ran a princely court, and spent money. He maintained friendly relations with the King's son, the Count of Toulouse, with whom he often hunted.

Slowly, the Prince was maturing a change of lifestyle¹⁶. This change came after the death of Louis XIV.

¹³ Szántó K., *A katolikus egyház története*, Bd. III, Budapest 1987, 767.

¹⁴ Szántó, *A katolikus egyház története* 767.

¹⁵ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc Emlékiratai a magyarországi háborúról 1703-tól annak végéig. (Mémoires du prince François II Rákóczi sur la guerre de Hongrie depuis 1703 jusqu'à sa fin)*, translated by Vas István, Edited by Benda Kálmán-Esze Tamás-Gyenis Vilmos-Köpeczi Béla-Kovács Ilona, Budapest 1978, 352.

¹⁶ Köpeczi, *A bujdosó Rákóczi* 225.

The Prince's relationship with the Kamalduli monks

The Camaldolese Order was founded as a branch of the Benedictine Order at the turn of the first millennium. It was founded in Italy by a monk named Romuald according to the rules of the Benedictine order. The order was confirmed by the Pope in 1072. The French Congregation was not created until 1634. Their monastery was built in Grosbois, a woodland south of Paris. The monks were given permission to build houses in the beautiful woodland and to accommodate distinguished visitors, including people who wanted peace and solitude. Later, in exceptional cases, guests were also allowed to book accommodation inside the monastery grounds. The motto of the Camaldolese is Colossians 3:3, which writes "Vita vestra est abscondita cum Christo in Deo. Your life is hidden with Christ in God". The monastery at Grosbois was closed in 1768 because the number of monks had been reduced to seven¹⁷.

The Kamalduli did not consider themselves to be straight followers of Jansenism. But they did not accept the Unigenitus bull either. It was a puritanical order, prone to mysticism, practising simplicity. They favoured the Psalms from the Scriptures, the life and sacrifice of Jesus, and praying several times a day. Before everything, the Benedictine law: ora et labora. The monks supported themselves by physical work.

Francis II Rákóczi remembers the contact: "The desire for a solitary life, instilled in me in my youth, returned to my memory, in which the love of eternal salvation was not so much calling as the love of tranquillity. ... As I was thinking of these things, I remembered the monastery of the Order of St Augustine in the forest of St Germain, where I kept a room and changed my clothes after the hunt"¹⁸. But he could not carry out this plan, which came to nothing, because he realised that this place was not suitable for retreat either.

The turning point was a meeting with a late French-born captain who drew his attention to the Camaldolese monastery in the Grosbois forest, where he had become a monk after a turbulent life. With the help of the ex-captain, he had

¹⁷ Köpeczi, *A bujdosó Rákóczi* 238.

¹⁸ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc emlékiratai* 269.

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booked a small house¹⁹ for himself and his small court near the Camaldolese monastery. He attended the Easter mass. He wrote: "I was born again with the Easter confessions"²⁰. Later he continued by writing: "I benefited greatly from reading a religious booklet on the importance of salvation, given to me by the superior of the Camaldolese Fathers"²¹. According to Béla Köpeczi, the booklet was entitled "On the Importance of Salvation" and this "...presented the obstacles to salvation and led me to a knowledge of myself"²². Rákóczi initially continued hunting but stopped playing cards.

He later wrote, with satisfaction, that "... it was through your grace that you suggested to me that I should reject the world. How sweet the solitude was, in which I tasted the beauties of life, separated from the crowd of the ungrateful, the slanderers, the ill-willed"²³. His retirement was approved by some of the court's nobility, but most spoke of it with derision. Béla Zolnai published a note according to which the prince continued the same lifestyle as the monks. According to this, he rose at 1 A.M., during which time they sang psalms together, prayed, and meditated until 6 o'clock in the morning. He attended mass and took part in physical work with the monks. He practiced fasting on Mondays all his life, which he accepted as a sign of gratitude for his escape from Vienna. The monks considered it a "noble and Christian simplicity"²⁴.

The monastic life also had its bitterness. He remembers this later. There are some who abandon spiritual practices, others get absorbed in a detail, prolonging their prayers: "From nausea comes nausea, from nausea comes weariness, from weariness comes the desire for relief ..."²⁵.

We might call this the mechanical bitterness of monastic life, Francis II Rákóczi thanked him for his "admission to the Order", from which we can infer

¹⁹ II. Rákóczi Ferenc emlékiratai 271.

²⁰ II. Rákóczi Ferenc emlékiratai 272.

²¹ II. Rákóczi Ferenc emlékiratai 275.

²² Köpeczi, *A bujdosó Rákóczi* 239.

²³ Köpeczi, *A bujdosó Rákóczi* 286.

²⁴ Zolnai B., *A janzenista Rákóczi, Széphalom, Sátoraljaújhely* 1(1927), 177–181, 266–288.

²⁵ II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza 305.

that he had become a full member of the Order and not just an external visitor²⁶. On 16 August 1717, he left the monastery. “I bid farewell to the monks ... with many tears”²⁷.

In 1719 he wrote in Jenikői that he longed to return to the monastery. “I do not know where to turn ... I long for the solitude which I left at your command; I am afraid to stay here among these people, I am terrified to go over to the Tsar and his court, I hate war and the bloodshed of men....”²⁸.

Why is this association with the monks of Kamaldul relevant for posterity? The reasons can be found in the prince’s financial situation, his turning away from court life, the disappointments of his private life. But the main cause must be sought in the religiousness and Catholic faith of Francis II Rákóczi. The grandson of Zsófia Báthory, the family traditions of the Catholic Zríny family, his Jesuit upbringing and his inner spiritual nature led him to this Kamalkuld relationship. It was here that he began to write his Confessions during Christmas in 1716 and put commit to paper his Memoirs, which he later revised in Rhodes.

The Camaldolese protested against the label of Jansenist. Their way of life, their practices, their teachings and their opposition to the papal bull prove that they were secretly Jansenists in their hearts.

Here the Prince learned how to deal with this paradoxical, contradictory, and peculiar way of life.

The Catholicism of Francis II Rákóczi in the light of his Confessions

Posterity might call this religious quality Reform-Catholicism. The Roman Church has learned to deal with this phenomenon over the centuries. It has done so from St. Augustine to the present day. Francis II Rákóczi was grateful that his grandmother Zsófia Báthory had raised his father Francis I Rákóczi as a Catholic, and that as a result he became a Catholic as the son of Francis I Rákóczi and Ilona Zrínyi²⁹.

²⁶ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 317.

²⁷ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 318.

²⁸ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 413.

²⁹ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc: Fejezetek a Vallomásokból*, translated by Domján Elek, Edited by Benkő Samu, Bukarest 1976, 28.

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The Protestant historiography has a negative opinion of Zsófia Báthory, also because of Sárospatak. Francis II Rákóczi describes Zsófia Báthory as “My tenderly beloved grandmother, your pious maid, who was, according to human opinion, a saintly life”³⁰. He appreciated her education in the Jesuit school. Neuhausba often played chess with the headmaster of the seminary, which he was proud of³¹. He was faithful to the rules of the Church. “You gave grace in the enjoyment of the sacraments,” he wrote³². He reported with satisfaction that Pope Ince XII. had received him with the greatest respect and honoured him by presenting him with two small caskets of the relics of the saints³³. On his way he visited the shrine of Loreto. The young Francis II Rákóczi was imperial in appearance; his Catholicism played a part in this. He considered Leo a “princely person” whose goodness was abused by many³⁴. In 1697, when Thököly conquered Patak and Tokaj, he studied Ambrosius’ hymn³⁵. He went so far in his loyalty that he avoided contact with Hungarians, and his difficulty with the Hungarian language contributed to this. He also had the idea of exchanging his estates in Hungary for a foreign principality³⁶. His Catholicism was also influenced by his hostility towards his stepfather, Imre Thököly. He believed that he was trying to take his stepfather’s life and property. Thököly was a Lutheran. He writes that he tried to poison³⁷ him and let a snake into their bedroom³⁸. “If Thököly is elected prince, your religion and your church will be in trouble”, he writes³⁹.

This unconditional obedience was reversed in 1701. He was then 25 years old. The court of Vienna intercepted his letter, which he sent to the hostile French king. Although his letter did not contain any conspiracy against Vienna, he was arrested and imprisoned in Vienna Prison. It was here that his maternal

³⁰ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 29.

³¹ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 52.

³² *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 78.

³³ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 79.

³⁴ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 59.

³⁵ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 106.

³⁶ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 118.

³⁷ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 24.

³⁸ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 31–32.

³⁹ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 177.

grandfather Peter Zrínyi was executed, therefore he was convinced that he would also receive a severe sentence. Captain Lehmann, the commander of the castle guard, aided in his escape.

He escaped from prison on the 6th of November 1701. It was a Monday, a day he spent the rest of his life in prison to commemorate: he lived on only bread and water on this day. "Towards the end of my imprisonment, I read the Scriptures, more out of curiosity than for spiritual nourishment ..." ⁴⁰. After his escape from prison, he fled to Poland. The trials of life followed: a defeated fight for freedom, a family life torn apart, a life of hiding on the run, the title of prince without a principality.

Then came the trials of life: a defeated war of independence, a family life torn apart, a life in hiding, a princely title, without principedom.

The reason for all this was summed up in a single statement: "What shall I say to you, my sweet soul, for I want to find a way out?" ⁴¹.

The Hamartiology of Confessions

a. The reality and interpretation of sin in the Confessions

This is the first title that Francis II. Rákóczi gave to his Confessions. He borrowed the title from Augustine. It is a unique genre within Christian theology: it is a conversation with God. Event testimonies and prayers are interwoven within the writings. Augustine approaches God by revealing his own life. Francis II Rákóczi does the same. This is how the work translated by Elek Domján came into being, a work in which the prince's private life, external events and his confessions and prayers to God are all included. Events and confessions cannot be separated. One justifies the other, they are intertwined.

Jansen's work, although entitled Augustine, does not follow this genre. It is a sum of theological propositions, based on the teachings of Augustine, the father of the Church.

⁴⁰ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 163.

⁴¹ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 191.

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The starting point of both the Church Fathers and Francis II Rákóczi spiritual formation and conversion is confession of sin. It is not a theological hamartiology, but a sincere, blameless confession of human fallibility and sin. “Whoever says that there is no sin in him is lying”, he writes⁴². To this the church father Augustine replies: “I became a great question to myself, and asked my soul why it was sad, and why it caused me so much grief...”⁴³. The prince visited Florence in 1693. The 17-year-old youth remembers ruefully that “My soul was full of the filthiness of sin, and I wallowed in the mud like an animal.”⁴⁴ The prince took the picture from Augustus: “Nearly nine years followed,” wrote the Father of the Church, “and during that time I wallowed here in the deep mud and darkness of falsehood, and when more than once I was about to rise, I only fell back”⁴⁵.

On the origin of sin, the church father and the prince all testify in the same way. Augustine, a monk, writes: “... I have almost gone to hell, taking with me all my sins ... with which we all die in Adam”⁴⁶. According to the prince, human nature “wanted to know good and evil in Adam ...”⁴⁷. Jansen deals with the question of “De origine peccatum” in Volume I of his Augustine. “Adamum peccasse admittunt” - “Adam was allowed to sin”, Jansen writes, and the entry of sin into human life is linked to the first human pair. Jansen’s important problem points beyond this question. He is interested in the question of Pelagianism. In the third book of Volume I of his work – Tomi prima, liber tertius – he deals with the heresies of Pelagius. He divides the question historically into two parts. In the first part he deals with the question of original sin in relation to the teachings of Augustine, Origen and Ambrose. In the second part, he analyses the post-Augustinian theses of Beda, Remigius III. Ince and Urbanus IV. He concludes that ‘Originale peccatum est toti speciei humanae commune’ (Original sin is peculiar to the whole human race)⁴⁸. Jansen describes as heresy Pelagius’ teaching that Adam

⁴² *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 307.

⁴³ *Szent Ágoston vallomásai*, translated by Dr. Vass József, Szent István Társulat, Budapest 2023, 126.

⁴⁴ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 76.

⁴⁵ *Szent Ágoston Vallomásai* 108.

⁴⁶ *Szent Ágoston Vallomásai* 186.

⁴⁷ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 404.

⁴⁸ *Jansen Augustinus* II 269.

sinned only to his own detriment and that this did not affect his remnant. “Parvulos in eo statu nasci automant, in quo fuit Adam ante lapsum?” Jansen asks. His reply is to ask further, “Parvulis sine baptismo morientibus Pelagiani tribuunt vitam aeternam?” In other words, children are born in the state Adam was in before the Fall and whether children who die without baptism are granted eternal life according to the Pelagians⁴⁹. According to Francis II Rákóczi, “Sin is inherited from Adam ... it remains in the ignorance of the good ...”⁵⁰.

The unsettling question remains: does God want all this? The question is dialectical in itself and demands the same answer. Augustine writes: “In a mysterious and inexpressible way, what happens against His will does not happen outside His will. For it would not happen if He did not allow it to happen. And being good, He would not allow evil to happen if, as omnipotent, He could not bring good out of evil”⁵¹.

Francis II Rákóczi also experienced this dilemma in his personal life. “I was a bleached coffin”, he writes⁵². “What I can write about the past is an odious sin”⁵³. Augustine’s confession is echoed in his next lament, “There are very many things I want, because the will to do them you have put in me, but I cannot bear to do them”⁵⁴. The Augustinian thesis is expressed in this: man “potuit non peccare” before the sin, and “non potuit non peccare” after the sin. The phrase is expressive in its imagery: “That armed soldier of sin guarded the dwelling place of my heart”⁵⁵. Recalling February 1711, when he returned to Poland for the second time, he wrote: “... I went into the country polluted with the sins of a private man, and I returned to Poland polluted with the sins of a prince”⁵⁶. Recalling his stay in Warsaw, he writes: “I voluntarily put on the frogs of Satan and was led by sensuality”⁵⁷.

⁴⁹ Jansen *Augustinus* II 551.

⁵⁰ *II Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 404.

⁵¹ *Szent Ágoston Vallomásai* 110.

⁵² *II Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 76.

⁵³ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 143.

⁵⁴ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 131.

⁵⁵ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 175.

⁵⁶ *II Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 201.

⁵⁷ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 191.

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These confessions recall the penitential prayers and supplications of Augustine. “I have walked in darkness and on the plain, I have sought thee beside me, and have not found the God of my heart: I have gone to the bottom of the sea and despaired of ever finding the truth”⁵⁸. Jansen put it this way: “Omnis peccans avertit se a Deo, at ad creaturam se convertit”: “all sinners turn away from God and turn to the creature”⁵⁹.

In connection with the mention of the concept of sin, we must speak of the remarks in the Confessions of Francis II Rákóczi criticising the Jesuit order.

Augustine is not mentioned in connection with this question. Francis II Rákóczi takes an opposing position to Jesuitism, especially on the question of harmatology.

The prince studied for three years at the Jesuit college in Neuhaus, Bohemia. This took place between 1688 and 1690, when he was between 12 and 14 years old. He did not regret this period. He writes of it fondly, “Everywhere I was loved by all through your grace, and everywhere I was received with cordial courtesy, and as I grieved no one, I was not grieved by anyone”⁶⁰. But he has other memories of the same time. He participated in the congregations of the Order. “I understood the letter”, he writes, “but I did not know the spirit”⁶¹.

His disputes with the Jesuit order that came later. It became clear that neither Archbishop Leopold Kollonich nor the order had a sincere attitude towards Francis II Rákóczi: they wanted to persuade him to join the Order. The aim of the Order was to acquire the property of the Rákóczians. This would have been aided by the right of sonship under Hungarian law. “It was precisely those who,” he writes, “out of sincere goodwill towards me, convinced me that this was not my vocation”⁶². Archbishop Kollonich “Henceforth proved himself my enemy in all things with the Jesuits”⁶³. But later he was still a Jesuit confessor and, remembering the year 1695, he writes positively about this father⁶⁴. Remembering his imprisonment in Vienna,

⁵⁸ *Szent Ágoston Vallomásai* 161.

⁵⁹ Jansen *Augustinus* II 204.

⁶⁰ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 55.

⁶¹ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 55.

⁶² *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 66.

⁶³ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 67.

⁶⁴ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 92.

he also clarified the question of the guilt of lying as there is a conflict of principle between confession and Jesuit morality. “I shuddered at lying, but after the opinions of some insane theologians, I seriously persuaded myself that to maintain reason, and even to lie itself... was to save life. I curse thee, O Lord, now for this my deed, and confess with a sore heart that it was sinful in thy sight”⁶⁵. This statement of Rákóczi is in essence the Jesuit concept of sin, as the end justifies the means in his criticism of morality. The following criticisms are also unmistakable: “They limit their liberty, and make princes burn and punish with death those who, living in error and darkness, gather in your name and sing the same prayers and psalms which the Church has ordained for your glory... and in whom the pride of life is mostly manifested!”⁶⁶. “They exhort and flatter you to occupy the stone churches of heretics that are being built, but they destroy the spiritual temple of love, which is truly your dwelling place”⁶⁷.

His comment on the reading of the Bible is Jansenist in spirit. “I read the Scriptures towards the end of my imprisonment, more out of curiosity than for spiritual food, because I believed, according to the doctrine which had become common among the ultramontanes, that it was not necessary to study and meditate on them, because they forbade believers from doing so, and that is why I never read them before”⁶⁸. The Jesuit-influenced princes believed they were infallible, reading the books of the casuists and then appealing to examples and theologians whose teaching serves as a cloak⁶⁹.

He concludes his reflections along these lines, “Enlighten my understanding, that I may remember”⁷⁰.

b. The question of grace in the Confessions.

On this question, Francis II Rákóczi unmistakably draws on the teachings of Augustine the Theologian and Jansen. The “Confessions” of the prince follow the work of the church father. It is very similar to it. This is clear from the invocations

⁶⁵ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 155.

⁶⁶ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 182.

⁶⁷ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 182.

⁶⁸ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 166.

⁶⁹ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 184.

⁷⁰ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 132.

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of God in the meditations and prayers at the beginning and end. In addition to piety and humility, God's invocations of the prince also reflect turns of language and ingenuity. His addresses are found in the same or similar ways in the Confessions of the Father of the Church. Here are these addresses, first in the Confessions of the Prince, then in those of the Fathers of the Church: Lord, my Creator Shepherd (172, I. 46), Light and eternal truth (178, II. 92, II. 318, I. 168), Ineffable sweet reality (226, II. 130), Love of hearts (291, I. 90), Light of my heart (380, II. 218), Salvation of my soul (392, II. 169), The incomprehensible order of earthly life (394, II. 80), My supreme good (201, II. 66), The happiness of my soul (170), Kings, king, prince, lord (172), Eternal mercy (175), Eternal wisdom (213), Boundless mercy (224), Inscrutable wisdom (259), The sweetness of my heart (267), The light of my world (287), The better part of my soul (306), Sweet delight (382). There are also some names that occur only in Francis II Rákóczi, and in his Confessions there is more prayer and reflection than in Augustine's.

All these are invocations pleading for mercy and forgiveness of sins. All of this suggests that it is at this point that the prince comes closest to the Church and, indirectly, to Jansen. Indirectly, because Jansen's work belongs to a different theological genre. In the case of both the Church Fathers and the Prince, these addresses demonstrate that both are in conversation, in dialogue with God. "Remember, Lord, I don't think you have forgotten ...", the prince converses. He seeks mercy through strong repentance⁷¹. Remembering his journey to Italy and his behaviour, he writes: "I have not known your mercy in sin... Act, Lord, that in the bitterness of my heart I may remember it with tears of repentance"⁷². He goes on to state, "But your grace was with me, Lord, and as grace I freely received it"⁷³. But man is undeserving of grace⁷⁴, grace is the only condition for obtaining salvation. To emphasize this is to exclude the idea of merit, and on this point, we must underline the nature and value of Reform Catholicism. Francis II Rákóczi speaks of the resurrection of the body and the idea of the end of the world, based on Jansenist influences⁷⁵. The gift and acceptance of grace depends on God alone. Therefore,

⁷¹ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 65.

⁷² *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 70.

⁷³ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 80.

⁷⁴ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 73.

⁷⁵ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 225.

grace is irresistible⁷⁶. At this point he calls grace mercy. His most beautiful confession of Christ to the prince is: “It is by your grace that I love you ... love thyself in me and through me, O Jesus!”⁷⁷. “You give grace for yourself,” he says, and in so doing he excludes all human worthiness, merit, dignity.

Jansen also argues with Pelagius’ teaching in his chapter on grace. “*Gratia Dei a Pelagianis admittitur, sed non ad sensum catholicorum*” – that is, Pelagian doctrine of grace is not the same as Catholic doctrine of grace⁷⁸. “*Gratia Christi efficax humanae voluntati dominatur*” – “Of the efficacious grace of Christ dominated by the human will.” Pelagianus or semipelagianus is considered a mistake by Jansen⁷⁹. He is referring here to the unconditional and irresistible grace of which Francis II Rákóczi often writes. “*Gratia in statu etiam innocentiae accessaria fuit ad bene operandum*”⁸⁰. Even in a state of integrity, grace contributes to good works,” Jansen concludes. He is referring to the idea of all-sufficient grace, which we encounter in the work of Francis II Rákóczi. In all such definite statements there is a questioning of merit.

On this point, we must refer specifically to the influence of Augustine’s teaching. In his Confessions, the prince also directly mentions Augustine’s name. In this essay I will refer to only a few such passages. On the 19th of October 1718, he recalls the voyage he made to the French coast. Five years have passed since that event, and so he writes: “After the confession of my sin, let my pen and tongue therefore speak thy great things, let my understanding meditate ... and I will justly cry out with thy servant Augustine, ‘Who am I that I should love thee, whose goodness is not satisfied by allowing thee to love thee, but commanding thee to love thee’”⁸¹.

The prince asks after salvation: “... it is said that fear itself is sufficient for salvation; for this is equivalent to saying that a man can be saved without faith... Yet far be it from me to believe anything else on this question, so abstract and so

⁷⁶ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 75.

⁷⁷ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 94.

⁷⁸ Jansen *Augustinus* II 238.

⁷⁹ Jansen *Augustinus* II 498.

⁸⁰ Jansen *Augustinus* II 458.

⁸¹ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 251.

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controversial in this century, than the teaching of your servant Augustine, which the Mother Church has followed for centuries”⁸².

A third of the prince’s argument with Augustine is in the last sentences of his Autobiography: “If, however, the interpretation of efficacious grace and the cooperation of man is perhaps not general, it has its foundation in the 23rd chapter of Book X of the Confessions of your St. Augustine. Confirm me, then, O, eternal truth, if what I have written is suitable to you”⁸³. It is no accident that he ends his autobiography with this very sentence.

We should not expect the prince’s reform Catholicism to be Protestant or Calvinist at the same time. He does profess his belief in effective grace, but at the same time he also gives room to the views of his church. Here he says: “From these it is clear, first, that efficacious grace does not compel, but entices to good...in these, moreover, man also contributes: for he follows the persuasive word or guidance of grace with joy and gladness”⁸⁴. Francis II Rákóczi also visited the monastery of the Order of St. Augustine in the forest of Saint-Germain near Paris. He also rented a room there during his hunts thus he knew the life of the Order itself. He was also well acquainted with Augustine’s Confessions. Remembering the French court and his life there, he writes: “My heart was not at rest until it was converted to you”⁸⁵. Later, he adds, “You created man for yourself, only in you can he find rest”⁸⁶. Here the father of the Church formulates for himself the familiar proposition, “For thou hast created us for thyself, and our hearts are restless until they are at rest”⁸⁷.

In the Confessions of Francis II Rákóczi, one should not look for clear formulations concerning predestination. On his journey to Italy, he used the pseudonym Borsheim. This made it easier to blend into the hustle and bustle of life. His experience of Venice is remarkable: he considered the city a nest of sin.

“I could not lift up my eyes to behold and admire thy forbearance and mercy, whereby thou hast preserved this city floating in a sea of transgressions and heinous sins and suspended the arm of thy justice over so many thousands of

⁸² *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 307–308.

⁸³ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 439.

⁸⁴ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 438–439.

⁸⁵ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 259.

⁸⁶ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 358.

⁸⁷ *Szent Ágoston Vallomásai* I. 2.

people living a pagan life under the name of Christians”⁸⁸. At the same time, he wrote, “...I should perish if I were brought before thy judgment seat, for thou art just, but do thy works depend on the measure of justice and mercy?”⁸⁹. Against the background of his doubts there is the certainty, “Thou hast finished my salvation”⁹⁰. For man there remains nothing but “To will that which thou hast done”⁹¹.

Francis II. Rákóczi asks, with the fear and hope of the confessor, “Tell me what will be done with me according to thy will?”⁹². “Wilt thou save all men, or only the elect?”⁹³. “O void, but in the end an endless destiny... tell my understanding justice, or wilt thou have mercy on me, a vessel of righteousness, or a vessel of shame?”⁹⁴. His personal pains also ask questions of God: “... You alone know why you wanted this three-year-old child to be afflicted with illness for a whole year! And so, he withered away, and slowly, imperceptibly, slowly faded away, like a burning candle on a fiery fire ...”⁹⁵. Despite his bitterness, he begins his outburst with “Wonderful are your judgments, Lord!” There is bitterness in his outburst: “O God ... you so arrange this change according to your eternal decrees, that man, to whom you have subjected all your created things, may neither trust in good fortune nor despair in adversity: thus you truly play with his lot in life, as you hold it in your hand, sometimes loving it, sometimes restraining it, governing his life ...”⁹⁶. If he could see the fate in it, he would not have written down sentences like these: “At the end of your endless journeys, the depth of your wisdom”⁹⁷, and that one “Must pray for thy will”⁹⁸. “Let your will be glorified in me”⁹⁹. “Fate is

⁸⁸ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 73.

⁸⁹ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 75.

⁹⁰ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 77.

⁹¹ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 166.

⁹² *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 382.

⁹³ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 396.

⁹⁴ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 402–403.

⁹⁵ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 122.

⁹⁶ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 109.

⁹⁷ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 404.

⁹⁸ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 408.

⁹⁹ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 183.

hidden in the measure of your truth”¹⁰⁰. He concludes his doubts with the uplifting, clear thought, “I will you therefore, because you have willed that I should will you”¹⁰¹.

Jansen discusses the idea of predestination in several places, including the name of God, election, destiny, grace, Pelagius, semi-Pelagianism, etc. But most of the time he analyses this question in relation to Augustine Jansen. His final statement is “Deum velle omnes homines salvos fieri” – “God wills the salvation of all”. Jansen distinguishes predestination from predetermination¹⁰².

With this statement, Jansen points out that this is the ultimate message of the doctrine of grace, that this is what the church father Augustine taught. Jansen deals with this question most thoroughly in Volume III of his work, in Chapter IX (which he calls the Liber) of which he says: “Gratia Christi Salvatoris qui est de praedestinatio hominum et angelorum” - “The grace of Christ the Redeemer is predestinated to men and angels”¹⁰³. Jansen continues, “Praedestinatio Dei respicit non solum bonum, sed etiam malum ... de praedestinatione ad vitam et ad mortem” – “God’s predestination has regard not only to good but also to evil - the predestination of life and death”¹⁰⁴. Jansen also addresses the position of angels in relation to predestination. Angelology was a specific issue of his time. “Angeli ad gloriam electi sunt, non electione gratia sed meritorum”¹⁰⁵ – “Angels are the glories of election, not for the choice of grace, but for merit”. “De causa praedestinationis ex parte Angelorum et hominum, eaque diversa” – “The cause of predestination differs in angels and man”¹⁰⁶. Jansen on Augustine the church father states, “Praedestinatio ex mente Augustini non consistit formaliter in praescientia se din praeparatione” – “Predestination, in Augustine’s sense, does not formally imply foreknowledge, but execution”¹⁰⁷. “Praedestinatorum numerus longe minor est quam reprobatorum” –

¹⁰⁰ II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza 181.

¹⁰¹ II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza 406.

¹⁰² Jansen *Augustinus* III 513.

¹⁰³ Jansen, *Augustinus* III 1154.

¹⁰⁴ Jansen, *Augustinus* III 1154.

¹⁰⁵ Jansen, *Augustinus* III 1155.

¹⁰⁶ Jansen, *Augustinus* III 1155.

¹⁰⁷ Jansen, *Augustinus* III 920.

“The number of the separated is much less than that of the reprobate”¹⁰⁸. The consequence of the double predestination is seen by Jansen: “Praedestinatis omnia cooperantur in bonum, sicut reprobis omnia in malum”¹⁰⁹ – “The separated cooperate in good, just as the reprobate in evil”. “Praedestinatorum typum gessit Iacob: reprobatorum, Esau et Chanaan”¹¹⁰ – “The type of the separated is Jacob, the type of the rejected is Esau and Canaan”.

Francis II Rákóczi was influenced by these precedents. The prince reached the ultimate consolation through the teaching of the church father Augustine Jansen: “There is nothing left for me but to mourn for your offences and to worship your testimonies in them”¹¹¹.

In conclusion, we must start from two statements concerning the Jansenist background of the Confessions of Francis II Rákóczi:

- a. He quotes and refers to no one in his 439-page work. “I have not dared to use the texts and expressions that I find throughout the scriptures, the holy fathers and devotional books”¹¹².
- b. “It has been said of me that I am a follower of Teacher Jansen”¹¹³. The background to this is that the Unigenitus bull condemned the Quesnel 101 thesis of the reference to Jansen’s teaching. The prince witnessed the controversy during his stay in France. He knew that Clement XI had excommunicated those who spoke against Unigenitus. The prince wanted to defend himself against possible accusations. This came to pass. The prince handed over the manuscript of the Confessions, Autobiography to the Archbishop of Ancyra, Vicar Apostolic, whom he considered “a man of all the signs of holy simplicity”. The Archbishop did not dare to criticise and gave it to an Italian preacher and a Franciscan friar to read. Rákóczi was shocked by the review. He wrote “... the meaning of all my lines has

¹⁰⁸ Jansen, *Augustinus* III 1056.

¹⁰⁹ Jansen, *Augustinus* III 1026.

¹¹⁰ Jansen, *Augustinus* III 1019.

¹¹¹ *Fejezetek a Vallomásokból* 65.

¹¹² *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 435.

¹¹³ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 365.

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been twisted, mutilated, erased, condemned by all kinds of papal bulls”¹¹⁴. The result of this astonishment was the final conclusion of this great work: “It is enough for me that you, Lord, know my heart, which hates Jansen’s condemned propositions, and does not deny man the freedom to do good or evil, nor to contribute to good, nor even to resist inward grace. If I do not follow St. Augustine’s and St. Thomas’ understanding of predestination and grace, far be it from me to deny freedom and cooperation”¹¹⁵. This may be called the compromise which Francis II Rákóczi made towards his church. The compromise of Descartes comes to mind, who was “forced” to do the same a hundred years earlier.

¹¹⁴ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 366.

¹¹⁵ *II. Rákóczi Ferenc önéletrajza* 437–438.

