

Eszterházy Károly Catholic University

Doctoral School of History

**Szabolcs Hursán**

**The library of Louis Ernest Batthyány  
(1743)**

**Thesis of doctoral (PhD) dissertation**

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## 1. Background of the research, problem statement

Louis Ernest Batthyány (1696–1765) was a person of outstanding importance in Hungarian history, yet we only have a mosaic picture of his life. In this plays a major role the general lack of interest in the Hungarian aristocracy that lived in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The most significant publication on the life of the last Hungarian national palatine is the 2017 study volume edited by Péter Móricz, in which not a single study covers the 28-year period of Louis Batthyány's at the Hungarian Court Chancellery in Vienna. The 1743 catalogue of Louis Batthyány's library in Vienna in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was also unknown to the research.

The starting point of the dissertation was the research program related to the young researcher position granted for the period between 2016 and 2019, the objective of which was to explore the Batthyány book material in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. It was already known at the beginning of the research that the sources in the Academic Library – various library documents, catalogues and, of course, primarily the volumes themselves – are predominantly related to the sons of Louis Ernest Batthyány, and thus are not related to the topic and period of the dissertation in the strict sense. In any case, from the point of view of the dissertation, we do not consider the work carried out in the framework of the project to be unnecessary, mainly because it provided a solid basis for the formulation of statements about the library of Louis Batthyány.

We hardly have a detailed summary on the book literacy of the Hungarian aristocracy lived in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. An exception is the publication on the library of Pál Esterházy through Edina Zvara and István Monok, but Pál Esterházy's book literacy reflects a culture of a generation earlier. We were able to formulate many questions regarding the library of Louis Batthyány. To what extent is it related to the holdings of the Batthyány library of Rohonc and Kisbér, donated in 1838–39 to the Academy Library? What was the fate of the library, what happened to the volumes after the death of Louis Batthyány? What people influenced Louis Batthyány and thus the image of the library? What clues do we find about the use of the library?

## 2. Methods, places and sources of research

Regarding questions important to the research, we encountered an almost complete lack of sources, but in other places, an almost unfathomable abundance of sources to be browsed. In many cases, the research affected completely new, hitherto unexplored areas, while we were also faced with the fact that there is not enough information available in the literature on relevant research topics that seem important, or that they are not accurate enough. Since the research was determined by the uncertainty regarding the emergence of relevant sources and the precise interpretation of the sources, we tried to exploit the possibilities in the exploration of the catalogue that is the subject of the source publication.

When researching the contents of the library listed in the catalogue, the material of the Academic Library was of course the starting point. Documents, letters and reports related to the donation of the Batthyány libraries, the various catalogs included with the donation and, of course, the book material in the Academic Library itself served as primary sources. Over time, the scope of the research was extended to include two collections where it could be assumed that Lajos Batthyány's books might also appear. These were the Library of the Museum of Applied Arts, where we mainly find the books of the brother, Charles Batthyány, and the Cathedral Library of Esztergom, connected to the Palatine's son, József Batthyány (1727–1799). In addition to the book collections, we first of all tried to find information related to Louis Batthyány's library in the National Archives of Hungary. As the main feature of the research here, it is worth highlighting that, in contrast to the vast amount of documents available regarding the wide-ranging activities of Louis Batthyány, we can speak of the tendentious lack of book sources in the Batthyány archive, which was known even before the literature.

In two places, we found remarkable information related to the book material in the catalogue. Regarding the origin of the library, we can speculate on the basis of the letters to Eleonóra Strattmann, which she wrote to her sons, mainly to Louis Batthyány, in the first half of the 1710s. Clues indicating the use of the library appear in the correspondence of Louis Batthyány's son, Adam Wenceslaus Batthyány (1722–1787). The library-related documents all come from after the catalogue was created and, apart from a list of Adam Wenceslaus Batthyány's books, they have no connection to the 1743 catalogue. We browsed the letters written by Louis Batthyány in vain, we did not find any information about readings. In addition, we also researched the manuscript material of the National Széchényi Library. To

our surprise, we found here the most outstanding source of the entire research in terms of information value, namely the biography in Latin, entitled *B. Ludovici data biographica*, which summarizes the life of Louis Batthyány in five pages until his resignation from the chancellorship in 1746. Despite its easy accessibility, the source has not been known to research until now.

### 3. New results

Louis Batthyány's library was previously completely unknown, and previous historical research only touched upon Louis Batthyány's life. Through the catalogue of Louis Batthyány, after almost a century of obscurity following Adam I Batthyány (1610–1659), we have the opportunity to gain an insight into the book literacy of the Batthyánys. This feature proved to be a hardship and advantage for the completed dissertation. The relevance of the research is self-evident: we were able to make many new discoveries and open a window to previously unknown connections. At the same time, in connection with the book material that looks back over a long period of time, we could only formulate assumptions, and we were forced to leave many unsewn threads behind. It can be assumed that subsequent research will correct the findings in the dissertation in many places.

During the preparation of the dissertation, in accordance with the characteristics of the research, great emphasis was placed on finding relevant sources. The efforts here were not always crowned with success, in any case, the work carried out brought several novelties to the surface, and it was possible to find sources that could serve as a sufficient starting point for the formulation of valid statements and questions. The review of the Batthyány book material of the Academic Library ended with a negative result from the point of view that – contrary to the relevant comments of Ferenc Toldy – among the volumes of the former Batthyány book donations still existing today, we did not find a well-defined, reliably identifiable group of books from the 1743 catalogue of Louis Batthyány. In addition to the few volumes here, in the Library of the Museum of Applied Arts, we managed to find books that can be assumed to be from the library of Louis Batthyány. In addition to the book collections, we first of all tried to find information about Louis Batthyány's book literacy in the National Archives of Hungary. Although we did not find any relevant library data in most of the reviewed source groups, through the letters of Eleonore Strattmann (1672–1741), the mother of Louis Batthyány and Adam Wenceslaus Batthyány, we were able to shed light on the background and use of the library we analyzed.

Based on the letters he wrote to his son studying in Salzburg between 1712 and 1714, it can be stated that Eleonore Strattmann built the career of her sons, above all Louis Batthyány, based on the letters, with a high degree of awareness and careful attention to detail. She took care of Louis Batthyány's books and readings, she managed to get her son to learn from prepared mentors, she tried to equip her son with the various competencies of social life, and she also helped him build relationships. Overall, Eleonore Strattmann set the requirement of the ideal of *honnête homme* to her son. After the university years, the next important stage in the formation of Louis Batthyány's education may have been the trip to Western Europe in 1715–16. In his letters to Eleonore Strattmann in 1716, Louis, who was on his European trip at the time and was staying in Paris, which was considered the main destination, encourages him to buy books. He entrusts the selection of books to the patronage of none other than Georg Wilhelm von Hohendorf, who was a political confidant of Eugene of Savoy and, incidentally, his main book collecting agent. After the time of the letters to Paris, we did not find any lines referring to books or readings in Strattmann's letters to Eleonore's son, and we searched Louis Batthyány's correspondence to no avail.

Due to the lack of sources, primarily related to the acquisition of volumes, we could basically only make indirect conclusions about the background of the library and how it was formed. The ratio of languages in Louis Batthyány's catalogue clearly shows the main directions of orientation – first with French, second with Latin, which is not far behind. For Louis Batthyány, above all, two cultural environments, partly overlapping and partly opposing, could serve as the background for orientation. One of them was the common Latin-language world of the contemporary Republic of Letters, which Batthyány was able to completely master at the University of Salzburg, which provided Thomist philosophy training. The other is the modern French culture, which represented an extremely complex cultural environment, the central part of which, in any case, was the intellectual orientation characterized as a political, social, and aesthetic path-finding fueled by rationalism largely inspired by natural science, which is commonly referred to as the (early) Enlightenment. In connection with the German language, we can point to the education of the Holy Roman Empire as the third main field of orientation. The presence of literature from Germany – supplemented by authors from northern Protestant countries such as Grotius, Pufendorf or Locke – meant a cross-denominational cultural horizon. The overall picture of education in Louis Batthyány's catalogue is eclectic, which includes several unique features in addition to the characteristics of the era. The library of Louis Batthyány can be considered unique in Hungarian conditions

of the time, which – mainly due to the shortcomings of research into the book literacy of the contemporary aristocracy – is difficult to compare with other collections.

In the catalogue of Louis Batthyány, several thematic groups referring to specific influences and interests can be distinguished. One of the most important features of the book material is the pronounced presence of Jansenism, with the main works of authors such as Pascal, Quesnel, Arnould, Letourneux, to mention only the most important ones. We can only guess what effect one characteristic feature of the current of ideas, the negative assessment of the Jesuit order, had on Louis Batthyány. As a special sign of interest, we can mention the collection of documents from the 1731 trial of a Jesuit father that caused a scandal in Europe. The Jesuits are present with the works of several important authors – Segneri, Croiset, Bourdaloue — in the Theologici section of the catalogue, however, it is difficult to judge to what extent this presence constitutes a counterweight to Jansenism (they are not listed closely with their polemical or controversial works). In connection with Jansenism, it can be mentioned that Francis II Rákóczi can be an important point of reference for us in several ways (his friendship with the father of Louis, Adam II Batthyány (1662–1703), his French education, etc.). We can even risk such a juxtaposition that while Francis II Rákóczi's thinking – conformed more rigidly to the direction set by Jansenism – was characterized by a view condemning the "Spanish maxims", during the examination of the library of Louis Batthyány, we are presented with an image of a culture that was more open to more nuanced and complex ways of political and moral thinking. Balthasar Gracián's *L'Homme de cour* is worth highlighting as a key work of literature of courtly conduct, which plays a pivotal role in the catalogue. The personal connection to the life of Louis Batthyány can best be demonstrated in a well-defined group of travelogues, dictionaries, and language books, which volumes were certainly acquired in connection with Louis Batthyány's trip to Europe. The significance of the publication discussing the divorce case of Marquis Gesvres, mentioned in Hohendorf's letter, which he met in Paris, lies in the fact that it represents a concrete example of the influence of the trip to Western Europe on the interests of Louis Batthyány. Biographical literature, works discussing the history of individual European countries and, of course, the history of Hungary (in her letters Eleonore expressed special joy, over her sons asking for Hungarian historical books) are significant groups of the History section. Political theory, pamphlets aimed at current politics (mainly from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century) and the literature of diplomacy are typical of the Politics section. In the volumes of Roman and imperial law, Louis Batthyány's studies and the tasks of his

chancellery work are echoed. Due to the importance of domestic legal knowledge, we can highlight the legal synapse of the jesuit János Szegedi. One of the most significant lines of the entire catalogue is the works of fiction: historical fiction, gallant literature (with several enduringly popular authors and women writers) and contemporary French drama. The importance of fiction practice, art theory and ancient literature is simultaneously exemplified by Boileau's translation of Longinus, the *Traite de la sublime*. The works conveying modern language, education and moral ideals point to the importance attributed to education. In the background of the appearance of several works, we can clearly think that they were acquired by Louis Batthyány in connection with the upbringing of his sons. In connection with this can be highlighted a manuscript, which informs about, that Louis' son, József, translated Cornelius Nepos into German.

It is an exciting question as to what kind of personal influences, in addition to Louis Batthyány's interest, shaped the image of the library. Although we can basically only make assumptions, from this point of view we can separate several layers of the library's material. It is almost certain that a part of the library dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century antecedents – or at least to the collection of a person or persons belonging to a generation before Louis Batthyány (along with the obvious fact that Louis Batthyány may have acquired some of the books from the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and older). Several clues indicate that a part of the library could also be traced back to Lajos Batthyány's father, Adam II Batthyány. Although the signs pointing in this direction seem individually convincing, it has not yet been possible to point out such a clear connection, on the basis of which this origin could be placed on a firm basis. In the background especially of the pamphlets written with current political aims of the War of the Spanish Succession – Adam II Batthyány is no longer alive at that time – we can assume the influence of another person who showed political interest at this time. It is possible to imagine that in this series of books we see the influence of Louis's mentor from Salzburg, Caspar Florentin von Consbruch, who played a prominent role on the stage of great politics at this very time. The influence of the Strattmann kinship cannot be ruled out either.

The dominant French aspect of the library can be safely attributed to Eleonore Strattmann, who, based on her letters, considered her son's acquisition of French literacy to be a matter of her heart. Several of statements Eleonore Strattmann lead us to conclude that she had an independent opinion in the areas of politics and culture that – according to the public opinion of the time – belonged to the world of men. At the same time, it raises the question of which volumes or parts of the library can be attributed to Eleonore Strattmann in some way. We also

do not know if Eleonore Strattmann had a library. Nevertheless, based on certain works of spiritual and educational literature, as well as fiction, especially novels, a circle of works can be drawn, behind which it is obvious to assume a female reader. The comments on Louis Batthyány's readings and book literacy, which can be read in Eleonore Strattmann's letters, can be attributed special importance because their author tried to shape his son's upbringing along a planned pedagogical program. In addition, Eleonore Strattmann also wanted to influence the upbringing of Louis Batthyány's sons – an example of which is the political letters written with her grandchildren. If we take the existing sources as a starting point, the image of Louis Batthyány's library may have been most influenced by his Parisian host, Georg Wilhelm von Hohendorf. Based on his own letter, contemporary comments about him, and his library, we have much more reason to look for the source of his strong literary orientation in Hohendorf than in Eleonore Strattmann. During his stay in Vienna, many other persons and environments may have influenced Louis Batthyány's education. Of those that can be mentioned, the circle of Eugene of Savoy should be mentioned separately.

As the user of the library, we clearly got to know Louis Batthyány's son, Adam Wenceslaus Batthyány. We know that many volumes came to Pozsony (Bratislava) for the use of Adam Wenceslaus Batthyány, who could turn the books in his early twenties, preparing for the post of Locotenential Council in 1742-43. In connection with the reception of the book material by Adam Wenceslaus, the most remarkable characteristic is the foregrounding of interest in fiction, which can also be read from books and other sources. We can see a very specific pattern emerge in that, while Louis Batthyány had a unique political weight (with direct historical significance as the last national palatine of the country), his lineal descendants, his son Adam Wenceslaus, his grandson Prince Louis II (1753–1806) and his great-grandson, Prince Philip (1781–1870) – at least as far as we can judge from the mosaics of their lives – kept themselves away from politics, and the focus of their lives was much more on fiction and cultural patronage. It is particularly interesting that the origin of the phenomenon does not seem to originate from the the political and social historical changes of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Matthias Bel the famous scholar writes as early as 1744 (when Louis Batthyány had not yet reached the peak of his career) that Adam Wenceslaus wanted to continue his life away from public affairs. It is an exciting question to what exactly and to what extent this orientation can be traced back, since we already encounter a similar phenomenon with Hohendorf and even with Eugene of Savoy. By the way, Adam Wenceslaus may have been a problematic personality based on the sources, he also got involved in confusing cases and



accumulated a large amount of debt. Although we basically lose track of Louis Batthyány's library after the mentions of the early 1750s, it is likely that most of it was scattered in the hands of Adam Wenceslaus Batthyány.

The work carried out yielded interesting results beyond the strictly book-historical aspects. We found several sources of special value from the point of view of further research. Volumes with the possessor inscription of Leporini, the history teacher of the later Emperor and King Joseph II, Georg Wilhelm von Hohendorf's only letter to Louis Batthyány, or the biography of Louis Batthyány found in the National Széchenyi Library can be considered as such. The previously unknown relationships of Louis Batthyány came to light. His mentors were special personalities. His Latin teacher, Consbruch, had unique political experience. One of the most exciting questions can be raised in connection with Hohendorf's role, namely, what could have been the relationship between Louis Batthyány and his brother Charles (1697–1772) with Eugene of Savoy, in which the mediation of Eleonore Strattmann obviously played a decisive role. We also got to know such little-known persons as important characters in the life of Louis Batthyány, such as Princess Longueval, who provided support during the Salzburg period (whose identification is not clear even now), or Eleonore Strattmann's sister-in-law, Eleonore Therese Schellart, from whom originates the Viennese *fideicommissum*. A book tells about the meeting with the Marquis Gesvres, whom he met during his stay in Paris. In connection with Louis Batthyány's patronage efforts, we were able to meet the Benedictine monk Odo Koptik and Sámuel Szilágyi, the Reformed chancellor's clerk. An exciting question is whether there was a connection with Franz Anton von Sporck, who was considered a committed supporter of Jansenism. This may be indicated by the fact that in the Geography section we can also find a work from 1712 showing the Sporck estates. Franz Anton's daughter, Maria Eleonore von Sporck, is also present in the catalogue with two German translations.

The French-dominant book material projects trends that became general in domestic conditions only later (even in the case of the aristocracy only at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century). One of them is secularization. In the libraries of the three generations of the Batthyány family, we can observe a strong secularization process taking place from the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the nature of which can be formulated as, on the one hand, religious culture was replaced by scientific or practical interest, and on the other hand, fiction took the place of religion (especially thinking here of female readers). Louis Batthyány's 1743 catalogue also contains a rather small proportion of theological literature. In

the books of Theodore Batthyány (1729–1812), the Palatine's son, in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, bound according to different subjects, theology no longer even forms an independent group. Among the tens of thousands of volumes linked to it, we find only a few books of a religious nature. When Theodore Batthyány's son, the paladin's grandson, József Antal Batthyány (1762–1828), decided in 1817 to select the Kisbér library, it meant the removal of the theological material to Rohonc, practically discarding it – along with classical philosophical works, political, legal, medical and natural science, technological and economic literature. In Kisbér, the Hungarian-related, historical, fiction or art volumes remained.

A more complete processing of Strattmann's correspondence to Eleonora, focusing on her sons' studies, would be an obvious continuation of the present research. Researching Adam II Batthyány's life would certainly yield many interesting results. The history of the ducal branch of the Batthyány family in the 18<sup>th</sup> century can even be understood as a series of educational successes and failures. Eleonore Strattmann's efforts to ensure that her sons had a bright career were crowned with special success: Louis reached the top as a politician, Charles as a soldier and courtier. Among the children of Louis Batthyány, the careers of Antonia (1720–1797) and Joseph can be considered particularly successful: the former became a member of the highest circles as master of the court, and the latter not only held the highest domestic ecclesiastical dignity, but was also considered a confidential adviser to the ruling house. At the same time, Charles Batthyány has already been held responsible for Joseph II's unsuccessful upbringing. A letter written to his son, Eugene (1721–1742), who died tragically young, also reveals the image of a disgruntled father. Many aspects of the life of Louis Batthyány's first-born son, Adam Wenceslaus, allow us to speak of a kind of educational failure in his case. As far as we know, the sons of Louis Batthyány did not continue their studies within an institutional framework (with the exception of Joseph Batthyány, who entered the priesthood), but received private education. Family correspondence would serve as the primary source for learning about their upbringing and studies. By further analyzing Leporini's teaching activities, we can even make insights about Joseph II's upbringing.

In conclusion, it can be said that the hidden features of the life of the Batthyány family were revealed through the research. The frames that come before our eyes can be of particular interest to us even if we cannot always say exactly what we saw. The present work – despite all its imperfections – is, according to the author's intention, a step on the path that brings us

closer to answering the question of what it meant to belong to a prominent Hungarian magnate family in its most successful period.

## 4. Publications

Batthyány Lajos nádor (1696-1765) katalógusa különös tekintettel a magyar vonatkozású és antik anyagra, valamint a Theologici szakra, *Magyar Könyvszemle* 135 (2019) 2. sz. 138–172.

*Batthyány könyvtárak az Akadémiai Könyvtárban.* In: Teleki József: Tanulmányok az Akadémiai Könyvtár alapítójáról és a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia első elnökéről. Szerk. Molnár Andrea. Budapest, MTA, 2019. 196–216. (A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtárának Közleményei 40)

*Batthyány-könyvtárak adományozása a Magyar Tudós Társaságnak 1838–39-ben.* In: Doktoranduszok VII. és VIII. konferenciájának tanulmányai. Szerk. Rózsa Sándor. Eger, Eszterházy Károly Egyetem Líceum Kiadó, 81–102.

A kishéri Batthyány-könyvtár. Az 1838-ban a Magyar Tudós Társaságnak adományozott állomány rekonstrukciója és bemutatása. *Fons* 29. (2022) 4. sz. 421–460.

*Batthyány Lajos Ernő könyvtára (1743).* Budapest, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtár és Információs Központ, 2023. (A Kárpát-medence koraújkori könyvtárai 12)

### **Studies to be published:**

*Batthyány Libraries in the XVIIIth Century Hungary – a National Conference Bibliology and Cultural National Heritage, 17th edition* (Alba Iulia/Gyulafehérvár, 2023. 06. 15–16.) in the conference study volume: 275–287.

*Nyelvtanulás, nyelvhasználat és kommunikáció Gróf Batthyány II. Ádámné Strattmann Eleonóra (1672–1741) fiainak neveltetésében – Emlékezet és felejtés a magyar kultúrában: „térközök-időközök”* (Sopron – Eisenstadt, 2022. 08. 31. – 09. 03.) in the conference study volume.

*Batthyány Lajos kancellár és kéziratái – a VI. Scriptorium* (Veszprém, 2023. 05. 10–11.) in the conference study volume.

*A Batthyány család hercegi ágának könyvtárai a XVIII. században – az Elitek, udvarházak, kastélyok és paloták életvilágai* (Budapest, 2023. 05. 30.) in the conference study volume.

*Batthyányak és jezsuiták a XVIII. században – a Pray 300* (Budapest, 2023. 09. 11.) in the conference study volume.