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ANA-MARIA STAN

# Research Results Based on Non-Textual Sources and Their Interpretation for the History of Mendicant Economy

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**Abstract:** This introductory paper does not summarize the existing literature about the subject. It only aims to sketch some milestones on the basis of examples coming mostly from “Western” researches as comparison tools, but also from remarks concerning “Central-Eastern” Europe. It tries to show which non-textual sources have been explored at present in order to study the economic management of the Mendicant friaries, with which approaches and which results. Few of them have been exploited by now from this point of view. Consequently, numerous issues of key importance still need to be properly addressed, such as: 1) could the Friars in Central Europe be considered by the faithful of the time as (voluntary) “poor”? 2) Did the Friars have a more important role in production and exchanges? 3) Do the non-textual sources give a different image of the social strata that materially supported the friaries than the one provided by texts?

**Key words:** Central Europe, Mendicant friaries, economy, poverty, archaeology, non-textual sources

**Rezumat: Rezultatele cercetării surselor non-textuale și relevanța lor pentru studierea economiei mendicante** Acest studiu introductiv nu își propune să ofere o sinteză a cercetărilor existente dedicate economiei conventurilor mendicante. Principala miză este aceea de a stabili într-o manieră comparativă câteva repere analitice derivate atât din investigațiile istoriografiei occidentale asupra acestui subiect, cât și din observațiile referitoare la situația din Europa Central-Răsăriteană. Ca atare, scopul acestui studiu este acela de a evidenția sursele non-textuale folosite pentru a înțelege economia conventurilor mendicante, care au fost abordările la care s-a recurs și, în egală măsură, rezultatele la care s-a ajuns. Datorită faptului că sursele non-textuale au fost în mare parte neglijate, este esențială formularea câtorva subiecte de cercetare, cum ar fi: au fost Frații Mendicanți percepuți de către creștinii din Centrul și Estul Europei ca adoptând sărăcia în mod “voluntar”?; au jucat mendicanții un rol important în producția

bunurilor și într-o economie bazată pe schimb?; oferă sursele non-textuale o imagine diferită de cea desprinsă din sursele textuale în ceea ce privește grupurile sociale care au susținut conventurile mendicante?

**Cuvinte cheie:** Europa Centrală, conventuri mendicante, economie, sărăcie, arheologie, surse non-textuale

This set of essays brings together most of the papers presented at the Workshop of the MARGEC Program<sup>1</sup> that took place in Budapest, in the Central European University, on 21 –22 November 2013 – with a few additional articles dealing with a related theme.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the members of the Department of Medieval Studies, at the Central European University, namely Gábor Klaniczay, József Laszlovszky and Katalin Szende. They had a crucial role in setting up of the whole MARGEC program. Without their cooperation in building up both the scientific and institutional framework of this project, it would not exist. Firstly, they invited me to present, at a Workshop organized by József Laszlovszky about *Centres of Power and Spiritual Life in the Middle Ages and in the Early Modern Period*, the preliminary project of what became formally (one year later) the MARGEC project in October 2010. When I called for contributors in order to set up a research group during this very stimulating scientific meeting, I received many positive reactions from the participants. Secondly, Gábor Klaniczay, József Laszlovszky and Katalin Szende agreed to join the administrative framework of the program before submitting the application to the Agence Nationale de la Recherche – a long process punctuated by a whole series of administrative barriers. Next, József Laszlovszky undertook the task of collecting the archaeological sources of the program and, finally, organizing the Workshop of November 2013 at Central European University. Now, the *Studia* scientific journal, which is published by one of the five associated institutional partners of the MARGEC project, i.e. the Faculty of History and Philosophy of the Babeş-Bolyai University of

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<sup>1</sup> Acronym for “Marginality, Economy and Christianity. The material running of Mendicant friaries in Central Europe (ca 1220- ca 1550)”, collaborative research programme funded by the Agence Nationale de la Recherche (no. ANR-12-BSH3-0002). All details are available on the website of the programme: <http://margec.huma-num.fr>.

Cluj, undertakes the publication of the proceedings of this international symposium.

This meeting was entitled *Non-textual sources for the mendicant economy in East-central Europe (ca. 1220-ca. 1550): architecture, archaeology, urban topography*. It was the third workshop in the MARGEC Program. The first one (in 18 October 2011, in Rennes, several months before the formal beginning of the project) dealt with the state of research on Mendicant orders and Economy in Central Europe in the Middle Ages and Early Modern period, while the following workshop (23 March 2013, in Prague) spoke about the written sources.<sup>2</sup> The aim of the Budapest (CEU) Workshop was to provide the contributors of the MARGEC group with tools, methods and examples to exploit the non-textual sources dealing with the Mendicant economy in Central Europe between the thirteenth and the mid-sixteenth century.

This introductory paper will not summarize the existing literature about the subject – which is too scattered and meager to be properly summarized anyway.<sup>3</sup> It only aims to sketch some milestones on the basis of examples coming mostly from “Western” researches – starting with the valuable results of the Bériou-Chiffolleau’s inquiry published in 2009 in a thick volume called *Économie et Religion*<sup>4</sup> –, as comparison tools, but also from remarks concerning “Central-Eastern” Europe. In the absence of any overview,<sup>5</sup> I must confess that this introductory paper looks like a patchwork. Nevertheless, it will try to show which non-textual sources have been explored at present in order to study the economic management of the Mendicant friaries, with which approaches and which results.

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<sup>2</sup> Both of them have been published: ‘Le fonctionnement matériel des couvents mendiants en Europe centrale (vers 1220-vers 1550): bilan historiographique’, ed. Marie-Madeleine de Cevins, *Études franciscaines*, n. s. 6/1 (2013): 5–115; ‘Le fonctionnement matériel des couvents mendiants en Europe centrale (vers 1220-vers 1550): pour un inventaire des sources textuelles’, ed. Ludovic Viallet, *Hereditas Monasteriorum*, 3 (2013): 19–140.

<sup>3</sup> See the references listed in the following footnotes.

<sup>4</sup> Nicole Bériou – Jacques Chiffolleau (eds), *Économie et religion. L’expérience des ordres mendiants (XIII<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> s.)*, (Collection d’histoire et archéologie médiévales 21) (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Some elements concerning the Hungarian mendicant friaries are briefly mentioned in: Marie-Madeleine de Cevins, ‘Les frères mendiants et l’économie en Hongrie médiévale: l’état de la recherche’, *Études franciscaines*, n. s. 3/2 (2010): 166–207.

THE EXPLORED TYPES OF NON-TEXTUAL SOURCES

By “non-textual sources”, we mean all archeological sources, in a very broad sense, including every material hint of the Mendicant friars’ economy.

Within this group, one can roughly distinguish three under-groups comprising several under-types:

1) *the iconographical sources:*

- altarpieces, mural paintings, statues, carved decoration...
- illuminations

2) *the archaeological vestiges of the friaries:*

- buildings (in altimetric and planimetric views), including the materials used to build these buildings
- liturgical equipment and everyday furniture
- ecofacts (organic hints)

3) *the elements of urban (or semi-urban) topography* (i.e. all socio-spatial data that can help to see how the friaries integrated within their economic and social environment), in a global planimetric approach (outside the mendicant cloisters).

The amount of the non-textual sources that can be used for analyzing the Mendicant economy is indeed very small – judging from the few available mentioning in the existing literature. Let me give a few statistics to illustrate this foreseeable statement. In the volume *Économie et religion*, among twenty articles, only one is based (partly!) on non-textual sources. In the collaborative volume published in Spoleto in 2004 in the framework of the same collaborative project, only one article among twelve uses non-textual sources; moreover, its author is the same one who produced the earlier mentioned work: Joanna Cannon – dealing now with the representation of collection (in Central Italy).<sup>6</sup> In the thick Polish volume *Inter oeconomiam*, published in Cracow in 2012, none of the articles about the medieval and early modern periods uses archaeological or iconographical hints.<sup>7</sup> In fresh monographs, the

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<sup>6</sup> *L'economia dei conventi dei fratri minori e predicatori fino alla metà del Trecento. Atti del XXXI Convegno internazionale (Assisi, 9-11 ottobre 2003)*, (Spoleto: Centro italiano di Studi sull'alto medioevo, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Wiesław Długokęcki et al. (eds), *Inter oeconomiam caelestem et terrenam'. Mendykanci a zagadnienia ekonomiczne* [Mendicant friars and Economy], (Studia i Źródła Dominikańskiego Instytutu Historycznego w Krakowie 9), (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Esprit, 2011).

harvest is meager as well. See the PhD dissertation of Paul Bertrand (*Commerce avec Dame Pauvreté*): he only uses textual sources (charters, records, letters) when analyzing the material running of the Mendicant convents in Liège.<sup>8</sup> See the thesis of Jens Röhrkasten, *The Mendicant Houses of Medieval London*, especially the chapter about Economy (V): it does the same.<sup>9</sup>

Even the publications focusing on architecture and socio-topography are more often based on texts than non-textual sources. The PhD dissertation of Panayota Volti (*Les couvents mendiants et leur environnement à la fin du Moyen Âge*, 2003) draws on several pictures and maps... but they only go back to the eighteenth century.<sup>10</sup> In Central Europe, the PhD dissertation (defended at Central European University) of Kateřina Horníčková dealing with liturgical treasures in Bohemia in the late Middle Ages uses only very few objects.<sup>11</sup> Why? Because, as the author says, it is impossible to do much only with them. Kateřina Horníčková estimates that (roughly) only one percent of the pieces of the liturgical treasure of Bohemia survived. She was forced then to rely upon texts, i.e. sacristy inventories, among which a small handful come from Dominican churches of the Bohemian kingdom.

Among the types of sources listed above, only a few have been exploited until now for the study of Mendicant Economy. Many iconographical sources have been used, but mostly from an art history point of view. Besides, illuminations coming from Mendicant friaries are almost unknown (see the article of Marie Charbonnel). The vestiges of the still existing buildings have been analyzed since the nineteenth century but mainly (yet again) in order to answer stylistic questions – not questions from an economic point of view. The furniture inside the Mendicant friaries and churches has not been studied properly. Yet ecofacts have been investigated here and there, namely to determine what the friars ate, but rarely to know more about the supply of the

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Bertrand, *Commerce avec Dame Pauvreté. Structures et fonctions des couvents mendiants à Liège (XIII<sup>e</sup>–XIV<sup>e</sup> s.)* (Genève: Droz, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Jens Röhrkasten, *The Mendicant Houses of Medieval London, 1221–1539*, (Münster: Lit Verlag, Vita Regularis, 2004), chapter V (“Economic Aspects”), pp. 221–278.

<sup>10</sup> Panayota Volti, *Les couvents des ordres mendiants et leur environnement à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> Kateřina Horníčková, *In Heaven and on Earth. Church Treasure in Late Medieval Bohemia*, PhD directed by Gerhard Jaritz, Central European University, Department of Medieval Studies, 2009.

friaries or the cultivation efforts of the friars. Ever since the famous Le Goff's inquiry which began in the seventies, urban topography has been linked to the location and the prosperity of the Mendicant friaries – first in France, and then outside of France. That is about all.

In addition, the use of the non-textual sources raises a methodological problem that needs to be stressed here. Because of the academic separation between archaeologists, art historians and historians, many of the aforementioned studies, especially the old ones, do not precisely compare these sources to the data derived from texts. After all, it's very important to take into account the textual sources dealing with, for instance, the objects that were kept and used in the Mendicant friaries: the commissions of altarpieces and liturgical dishes; the sacristy inventories; the last wills (bequests) and donation charters that mention amounts of money given for renovating the buildings and the furniture (of the church and of the convent); the contracts signed with craftsmen, etc. And needless to say, when analyzing an illumination, one should never forget the text that is next to the images.

Moreover, we have to pay attention to the normative texts. Everybody knows that the mendicant legislation prohibited the *curiositates* and *superfluitates notabiles* in the decoration of buildings, and even the interiors of churches. This was true for the Franciscans<sup>12</sup> but also for the Dominicans: the Dominican *Liber constitutionum* (written by Humbert of Romans) prescribed a maximum size for buildings at the end of the thirteenth century, as Florent Cygler points it out in his paper published in the volume *L'economia*.<sup>13</sup>

## MATERIAL CULTURE AND POVERTY

To reach the goal that has been set up, one has to avoid two queries. The first is the esthetic / stylistic approach – not only because no Mendicant “style” can be proved for that time. Secondly, we must forget the allegation (very common in the “traditional” historiography) that if ever a mendicant friary had a marvelous church or golden liturgical dishes, it means that the friary was very wealthy, that it surely owned vast lands

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<sup>12</sup> Damien Ruiz, ‘La législation provinciale de l’Ordre des frères mineurs et la vie économique des couvents en France et en Italie (fin XIII<sup>e</sup> – milieu XIV<sup>e</sup> s.)’, in Bériou-Chiffolleau, *Économie et religion*, pp. 357–386.

<sup>13</sup> Florent Cygler, ‘L’économie des frères prêcheurs dans la législation de l’ordre (XIII<sup>e</sup>– début XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle)’, in *L'economia dei conventi*, p. 99.

or received a huge, steady income. We know now, from several works (which I will touch on later), that there was no systematic link between these realities: the buildings belonged to the friars but the liturgical treasures were considered to be the property of the *patronus*, the lay protector of the friary, who was neither a member of the community, nor even of the Order.

Several approaches – approximately seven – have been implemented so far to analyze the non-textual sources of the Mendicant friaries. The first could be called a «civilizational approach» as it considers the mendicant vestiges as hints of a specific (Mendicant) material culture. The proceedings of the conference (also an exhibition catalogue) in Krems (in 1982) organized for the eight-hundredth anniversary of Saint Francis' birth<sup>14</sup> illustrate perfectly this trend. That volume is the culmination of numerous studies about the Mendicants' (and all monks') material culture. They are mostly the work of Austrians, (coordinated by Gerhard Jaritz, among others) and started in the seventies.<sup>15</sup> They aimed to find out a “mendicant profile” in the Middle Ages. Combined with other indicators, this approach may also provide a glimpse into “Mendicant anthropology.”<sup>16</sup>

In spite of these early, challenging initiatives, the existing literature hardly establishes a «material culture» for the Mendicant friars during the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period, even regarding buildings. Specific architectural features shared by all Mendicant churches have been pointed out in Germany and East-Central Europe, namely the well-known *Hallenkirchen* (i.e. churches with a unique and large nave, without lateral naves). Moreover, most of the Mendicant churches in Central Europe and Germany had few carved decorations. But in Italy, as well as in many other places (England, Brittany, etc.), one can also find three aisled and richly decorated Mendicant churches – an answer to the wishes of laypeople, who wanted to make their mark as supporters of the friars. It remains thus difficult to define an archaeological mendicant “profile”.

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<sup>14</sup> *800 Jahre Franz von Assisi. Franziskanische Kunst und Kultur des Mittelalters* (Wien: Amt der NÖ Landesregierung, 1982).

<sup>15</sup> *Klösterliche Sachkultur des Spätmittelalters. Internationaler Kongress (Krems an der Donau, 18-21 sept. 1978)* (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1980).

<sup>16</sup> Ludovic Viallet, 'La réforme franciscaine au miroir de ses textes. Jalons pour une anthropologie du 'vivre franciscain' au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Quaestiones, Medii Aevi Novae*, 10 (2005): 331–344.



Not much has been written about the everyday life of friars. They seemingly wore simple cloth (a rope as a belt in the Franciscan order, etc.) and they used casual tools. No luxury object or valuable pieces of furniture were found in the friaries. Nevertheless, some items were imported from distant countries (as shown by Zoltán Soós in his article for the MARGEC Workshop 1, on the basis of the excavations performed at the site of the Franciscan friary of Țirgu Mureș<sup>17</sup>). Several investigations have showed that the Friars Minor ate a lot of meat – moreover, beef and not only pork –, in Transylvania,<sup>18</sup> as well as in Poland (in Inowrocław).<sup>19</sup> Admittedly, meat was varied and abundant in these regions. But in France or Italy, this feeding regime seems to be much more unusual.<sup>20</sup>

The second approach deals with the standard of poverty. Though well-worn, the topic of the compliance (or non-compliance) with the rule of absolute poverty is still an open question, especially but not exclusively regarding the Franciscans. This approach obviously crosses the previous query: one has to determine whether the buildings, the decoration, the furniture, the food, and the clothing of the friars were « poor » or not.

Based on the literature, the answer is quite clear. All studies that combine texts and artifacts state that the Mendicant friars did not

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<sup>17</sup> Zoltán Soós, 'Les Mendiants dans l'économie de la Transylvanie médiévale: l'exemple des Franciscains de Marosvásárhely (Țirgu Mureș)', in 'Le fonctionnement matériel: bilan historiographique', pp. 57-82.

<sup>18</sup> Soós, 'Les Mendiants dans l'économie'; Marie-Madeleine de Cevins, 'Le franciscanisme à table. Les pratiques alimentaires des Frères mineurs en Europe centrale à la fin du Moyen Âge', in Sandrine Costamagno (ed), *Histoire de l'alimentation humaine. Entre choix et contraintes*, Actes du 138<sup>e</sup> congrès national des sociétés historiques et scientifiques (Rennes, 22-27 avril 2013), (Paris: Éditions du CTHS, 2014), pp. 238-249 – [www.cths.fr/ed/edition.php?id=6817](http://www.cths.fr/ed/edition.php?id=6817).

<sup>19</sup> Marek Derwich, 'Le fonctionnement matériel des couvents mendiants polonais du XIII<sup>e</sup> au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: bilan historiographique et exemple franciscain', in 'Le fonctionnement matériel: bilan historiographique', pp. 19-29, here pp. 27-28. He based this article on: Aleksandra Cofta-Broniewska (ed), *Zaplecze gospodarcze konwentu oo. franciszkanów w Inowrocławiu od połowy XIII w. do połowy XV w.* [The economic basis of the Franciscan friars in Inowrocław from the mid-13<sup>th</sup> till the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century], (Studia i materiały do dziejów Kujaw, Seria Archeologia 15) (Inowrocław-Poznań: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza, 1979).

<sup>20</sup> Clément Lenoble, *L'exercice de la pauvreté. Économie et religion chez les Franciscains d'Avignon (XIII<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> s.)* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2013).

comply with the prohibition of the *superfluitates*, as early as the mid-thirteenth century. At least, that is the way we see it now and that is the way some people (inside and outside the Mendicant orders) described the situation then. Actually, we know (from texts and archaeological sources) that the Mendicant friars had got a «capital» (or a «temporal») made first of buildings, *codices*, etc. In addition, these goods belonged to the friars as true *possessions*, according to the Dominican legislation.<sup>21</sup>

About the buildings, non-compliance to the rule of *necessitas* is already shown by the texts. The *admonitiones* of the general Dominican chapters in the second half of the thirteenth century and several acts of the general chapters of the same period<sup>22</sup> reveal that the Dominican leaders were compelled to “go backwards” (regarding the size of buildings, for instance) before the end of the century.<sup>23</sup>

This non-compliance is confirmed everywhere by the archaeological data. Many statues, carvings, altarpieces, and colorful stained-glass windows ornamented the Mendicant churches and convents, as everybody knows. But this was not limited to the sanctuaries. The cells of the friars could be quite comfortable (in northern France, according to Panayota Volti).<sup>24</sup> Some friars used fine decorated knives (like in Tîrgu Mureş, as established by Zoltán Soós<sup>25</sup>), as well as mirrors, beautiful seals, precious stones, gold and silver objects, and let us not forget the illuminated manuscripts especially in Dominican friaries. Stables, horses, carts (*currus*), strictly forbidden by the rule, are also revealed by excavations: horse bones and harness pieces were found for example in Inowrocław.<sup>26</sup> We also know about large amounts of food stocks (in Tîrgu Mureş<sup>27</sup> and in Visegrád<sup>28</sup>). In short, practice was far from principles.

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<sup>21</sup> Cygler, ‘L’économie des frères prêcheurs’, pp. 96–97.

<sup>22</sup> Cygler, ‘L’économie des frères prêcheurs’, pp. 103–104.

<sup>23</sup> Cygler, ‘L’économie des frères prêcheurs’, p. 104.

<sup>24</sup> Volti, *Les couvents mendiants*, pp. 169–170.

<sup>25</sup> Soós, ‘Les Mendiants dans l’économie’.

<sup>26</sup> Derwich, ‘Le fonctionnement matériel des couvents mendiants polonais’, p. 27.

<sup>27</sup> Soós, ‘Les Mendiants dans l’économie’.

<sup>28</sup> Gergely Buzás et al., ‘A visegrádi ferences kolostor’ (The Franciscan friary of Visegrád), in Andrea Haris (ed), *Koldulórendi építészet a középkori Magyarországon. Tanulmányok* (Művészettörténet-Műemlékvédelem VII), (Budapest: Országos Műemlékvédelmi Hivatal, 1994), pp. 281–300; translated in English: ‘The Franciscan

The staging of Poverty, i.e. the iconographical discourse of the Mendicant friars about poverty – and more generally, the image of themselves that the friars tried to spread – has started to be explored, on the basis of the images showing them as *mendicantes* or, at least, as « poor ».

The role of collection – which had such a prominent role at the beginning of Mendicant history – seems very small. In the Italian Mendicant friaries, Joanna Cannon hardly found any images showing a friar in the action of collecting alms. Instead of this, she found images depicting Saint Francis or Saint Dominic giving alms to the “involuntary” poor: Saint Francis giving his mantel to the poor knight, Saint Dominic giving bread to his disciples, which was a very common picture in the refectories of the Mendicant friaries in France, as well as in Italy.<sup>29</sup> Some specific attributes can be related to collection: the bag upon the shoulders, as well as the baskets in the friars’ hands. Sometimes, a wine barrel stands next to the friars, which helps to identify them in a crowd.<sup>30</sup> These attributes meant alms collection without doubt. But the point remains that there is a lack of images showing begging friars.

#### MICRO- AND MACRO-ECONOMIC APPROACHES AND THEIR LIMITS

A micro-economic approach (at the level of each friary) has been implemented in order to estimate the place of artistic commissions and the cost of the repair work (on the buildings) in the budget of the friaries. Yet, compared to other religious orders’ and secular churches, the issue of works of art in the budget of friaries has not been properly studied so far, as was deplored by Joanna Cannon.<sup>31</sup> We are presented with many hints that could be exploited: the size of the works, the price of the materials, the quality of the execution, etc. Nevertheless, it’s quite impossible to estimate the importance of art works in the economy of the friaries without using written accounts.

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Friary of Visegrád’, in József Laszlovszky (ed), *Medieval Visegrád. Royal Castle, Palace, Town and Franciscan Friary* (Budapest: ELTE Régészeti Intézet, 1995), pp. 26–33.

<sup>29</sup> Joanna Cannon, ‘Panem petant in signum paupertatis: l’image de la quête des aumônes chez les frères d’Italie centrale’, in Bériou–Chiffolleau, *Économie et religion*, pp. 501–533.

<sup>30</sup> Cannon, ‘Panem petant’, pp. 507 and 511.

<sup>31</sup> Joanna Cannon, ‘Sources for the Study of the Role of Art and Architecture within the Economy of the Mendicant Convents of Central Italy: A Preliminary Survey’, in *L’economia dei conventi*, p. 215.

From the contracts of the painters, Joanna Cannon states that even the most beautiful works of art did not cost a penny to the Mendicant friars. For instance, the famous Madonna Rucellai was paid for by a confraternity which was thoroughly linked to the Dominican friary Santa Maria Novella in Florence.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, Michele Bacci observes (based on the accounts and the contracts) that the pieces of the liturgical treasures came from donations, not from purchase.<sup>33</sup> These remarks confirm that the possession of such objects by the friars did not have any consequences on their wealth or on their level of comfort.

Urban topography has been related to Mendicant economy by Le Goff's inquiry.<sup>34</sup> It has helped to understand which environments the friars were looking for, before founding a new friary. Le Goff's group inquiry showed first the strong preference of the friars for already existing or developing towns in France and Italy during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Erik Fügedi stated that this preference is also visible in medieval Hungary, though with important size and chronological differences.<sup>35</sup> Since then, the "Le Goff's model" has been corrected and balanced even in France and Italy, mainly with consideration to the Friars Minor, and especially about the Observant friaries which were founded in market-places, in very small towns, and even in small villages.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Cannon, 'Sources for the Study of the Role of Art'.

<sup>33</sup> Michele Bacci, 'Les frères, les legs et l'art : les investissements pour l'augmentation du culte divin', in Bériou-Chiffolleau, *Économie et religion*, pp. 563–590.

<sup>34</sup> Jacques Le Goff, 'Apostolat mendiant et fait urbain dans la France médiévale: l'implantation des ordres mendiants. Programme - questionnaire pour une enquête', *Annales*, 23 (1968): 335–352; Jacques Le Goff, 'Apostolat mendiant et fait urbain: l'implantation géographique et sociologique des ordres mendiants (XIII<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles)', *Revue d'Histoire de l'Église de France*, 54 (1968): 69–76; Jacques Le Goff, 'Enquête sur "Implantation des ordres mendiants et fait urbain dans la France médiévale', *Annales E.S.C.*, 24 (1969): 833; Jacques Le Goff, 'Ordres mendiants et urbanisation dans la France médiévale', *Annales E.S.C.*, 25 (1970): 924–946; Jacques Le Goff, 'Le dossier des Mendiants', in 1274 – *Année charnière. Mutations et continuités. Lyon-Paris, 30 septembre-5 octobre 1974* (Paris, 1977), pp. 211–222.

<sup>35</sup> Erik Fügedi, 'La formation des villes et les ordres mendiants en Hongrie', *Annales E.S.C.*, 25 (1970): 966–987; in Hungarian: 'Koldulórendek és városfejlődés Magyarországon', *Századok*, 106 (1972): 69–95.

<sup>36</sup> Hungarian examples in Marie-Madeleine de Cevins, *Les franciscains observants hongrois de l'expansion à la débâcle (vers 1450–vers 1540)* (Bibliotheca Seraphico-Capuccina n°83), (Roma: Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, 2008), pp. 51–53.

Secondly, the so-called Le Goff's inquiry demonstrated that the friars tried to settle their convents next to important points (the so-called *points chauds*, "hot points"), i.e. market-places, gates, areas where a lot of people concentrated. On the other hand, the arriving friars tried to avoid parish churches and other secular or regular churches. That is partly the case in Central Europe – for instance, in the Hungarian towns.<sup>37</sup> A specific case is one of the friaries settled next to a royal residence, for instance in Visegrád<sup>38</sup>. This would have led to an economic role for the friars.

Another macro-economic approach is precisely the integration of the friars within the local economy (in handcraft production, in commercial exchanges, etc.), based on the artifacts that were excavated on the site of the friaries (craftwork objects, tools, etc.). This just started to be studied a few years ago, on the basis of archaeological evidence, but also written sources.

The friaries stimulated commercial exchanges: some foreign products were found on the site of Mendicant friaries. Above all, the friars participated in both agricultural and craftwork production. They produced wine (not only for their own consumption), as we know from written accounts (in Sopron<sup>39</sup>) and also from remains of barrels and wine presses. They had livestock activities: animal bones and horns have been excavated on several sites, like in the Polish Franciscan convent of Inowrocław.<sup>40</sup> Craftwork production was also important. In some Mendicant images, for instance in St John of Latran, Joanna Cannon found friars holding tools in their hands.<sup>41</sup> But the best evidence is the remains of tools and workshops that have been excavated in several places.<sup>42</sup>

Last, a social approach, has been implemented, to identify which strata of society supported the friars. The urban topography already

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<sup>37</sup> Marie-Madeleine de Cevins, *L'Église dans les villes hongroises à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Budapest-Paris-Szeged: METEM, 2003), pp. 52–53; also in Hungarian: *Az Egyház a későközépkori magyar városokban*, (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 2003).

<sup>38</sup> Buzás et alii, 'A visegrádi ferences kolostor'.

<sup>39</sup> Tibor Neumann, 'A soproni ferences kolostor a középkor végén' (The Franciscan friary of Sopron at the end of the Middle Ages), in Norbert Medgyesy-Schmikli – István Ötvös – Sándor Óze (eds), *Nyolcszáz esztendő a ferences rend. Tanulmányok a rend lelkiségéről, történeti hivatásáról és kulturális-művészeti szerepéről*, (2 vols, Budapest: Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem, 2013), vol. 2, pp. 136–152.

<sup>40</sup> Derwich, 'Le fonctionnement matériel des couvents mendiants polonais', pp. 26–27.

<sup>41</sup> Cannon, 'Sources for the Study of the Role of Art', p. 256, figs 4 and 5.

<sup>42</sup> Soós, 'Les Mendiants dans l'économie'.

mentioned provides us with socio-topographical indicators. It confirms that there was a strong link – a link of *caritas*, but a link of dependence too – between the Mendicant friaries and towns, between Mendicant friars and their neighbors and donors – mainly city dwellers.

The friaries' benefactors can be identified not only from the texts but also from archaeological hints: the tombstones of laymen or clergymen buried in Mendicant churches and cemeteries, as well as the coats of arms of donors carved on keystones, painted on pavement, or on the background of altarpieces and on the walls of the church and friary.<sup>43</sup> We also find representations of the donors, kneeling on liturgical objects of smaller size, sometimes recording their names. Some of these commissioners were already dead, other still living at the time of the artwork's execution.<sup>44</sup> Most of them were nobles or burghers. But one can meet also with friars: four Dominicans kneel in the lower part of the head-reliquary of Saint Dominic in Bologna.<sup>45</sup> It means that the friars too commissioned works of art! This fact ensures what we already knew from the charters of donation (for instance in Liège): Mendicant friars were involved in the creation of art. All this shed a new light on the issue of the support of the Mendicant friaries (internal or external support). In addition, it also tells much about the way the friars experienced both common and individual poverty.

To sum it up, only very few non-textual sources have been exploited by now from the point of view of the Mendicant economy in Europe during the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period. The results of the previous inquiries are scarce and fragmentary. Consequently, numerous issues of key importance still need to be properly addressed. Among others, three of them can be mentioned. First, considering their material environment and level of comfort (buildings, furniture, etc.), could the Friars (in Central Europe) be considered by the faithful of the time as (voluntary) "poor"?<sup>46</sup> Secondly, because of the specific economic situation of Central Europe (a mostly agrarian economy, where towns were small and crafts little specialized), did the Friars have a more important role in production and exchange – that is, a better integration in the local economy than in the rest of Europe? Lastly, do the non-

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<sup>43</sup> Volti, *Les couvents mendiants*, p. 147.

<sup>44</sup> Cannon, 'Sources for the Study of the Role of Art', pp. 251–252.

<sup>45</sup> Cannon, 'Sources for the Study of the Role of Art', pp. 252–255.

<sup>46</sup> This was the topic of the latest MARGEC conference (21–23 May 2015, in Wrocław).

textual sources give a different image of the social strata that materially supported the friaries than the one provided by texts - mostly produced by/for wealthy people? The papers provided in the following pages begin to answer these crucial issues.

# New Results on the Mendicant Economy in Medieval Hungary: Spatial Distribution, Urban(?) Context

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**Abstract:** In Western Europe the mendicant economy is discussed mainly in urban context. However, the different orders followed different strategies in acquiring the support of the faithful, and thus their social background differed, too. In East Central Europe, the most urban were the Dominicans, the Carmelites and the Franciscan Conventuals, while the most rural were the Austin Hermits. In the case of the Franciscan Observants one can observe a close connection between political activity, intensive royal and aristocratic support, and economic success which resulted in unusual forms of alms donations. The unprecedented success of the Observants was also due to the common aim of the political elite and of the friars to stop Ottoman expansion. Since the economic and political roles played by the bourgeoisie in Western Europe were partly taken over by the nobility they became the “natural” supporter of the mendicants, especially of the Franciscans in this part of Europe. Due to these factors the Hungarian mendicant provinces were the largest in East Central Europe from the late fourteenth until the early sixteenth century.

**Key words:** Central Europe, Mendicant Orders, monastic network, social contacts, economy, settlement system

**Rezumat: Noi rezultate asupra cercetării economiei mendicante în Ungaria medievală: distribuire spațială, context urban(?)**  
Istoriografia occidentală continuă să dezbată problematica economiei mendicante în special din perspectiva contextului urban. Cu toate acestea, diferitele ordine mendicante au adoptat strategii diverse pentru a obține susținerea laicilor, ceea ce înseamnă că se poate vorbi de o susținere marcată, în ultimă analiză, de diferențe sociale. Pentru Centrul și Estul Europei se poate considera că Ordinul Dominican, cel al Carmeliților și al Franciscanilor Conventuali au avut un accentuat profil urban, în timp ce, augustinienii eremiți s-au distins datorită profilului lor rural. În ceea ce îi privește pe franciscanii observanți este lesne sesizabilă legătura strânsă între activitatea politică, puternica



susținere regală și succesul economic bazat pe forme mai degrabă neconvenționale ale obținerii de donații. Succesul observațiilor, neegalat de niciun alt ordin mendicant, s-a datorat și unui scop asumat în comun de către frați și elita politică și anume stoparea expansiunii otomane. Deoarece rolul politic și economic jucat de burghezie în Europa Occidentală a fost parțial preluat de către nobilime în spațiul Europei Central-Răsăritene nu este surprinzător că reprezentanții acestei categorii sociale au devenit suporterii mendicanților, îndeosebi ai franciscanilor. Acest specific al susținerii Fraților Mendicanți explică de ce provinciile mendicante ale Regatului maghiar au fost cele mai extinse în Centrul și Estul Europei în perioada cuprinsă între sfârșitul secolului al XIV-lea și începutul secolului al XVI-lea.

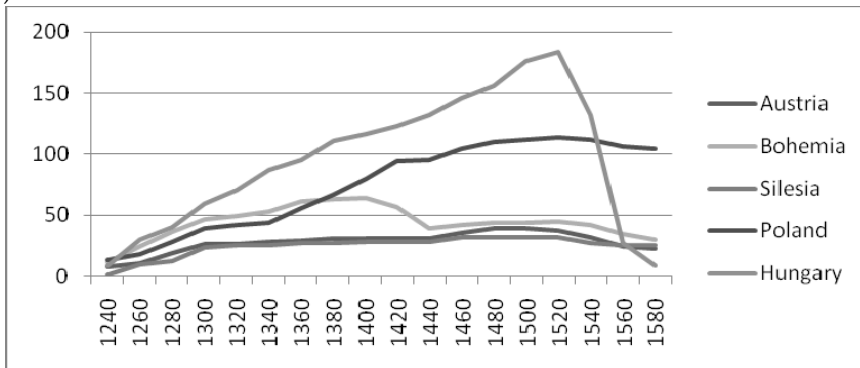
**Cuvinte cheie:** Europa Centrală, ordine mendicante, rețea monastică, contacte sociale, economie, sistem de implantare teritorială

When speaking about the economy of the mendicant orders we soon arrive at questions connected to the social environment and to the characteristics of the mendicant network itself – independent from the actual orders. In Western Europe the mendicant economy is discussed more or less exclusively in an urban context. But does Le Goff's model really work in this East Central part of the continent? How did this set of friaries emerge? Which social and political factors contributed to its formation and how did it change throughout the centuries? In the following I will try to answer these questions and to present how the changing topography of the mendicant network can help us understand the mendicant economy.

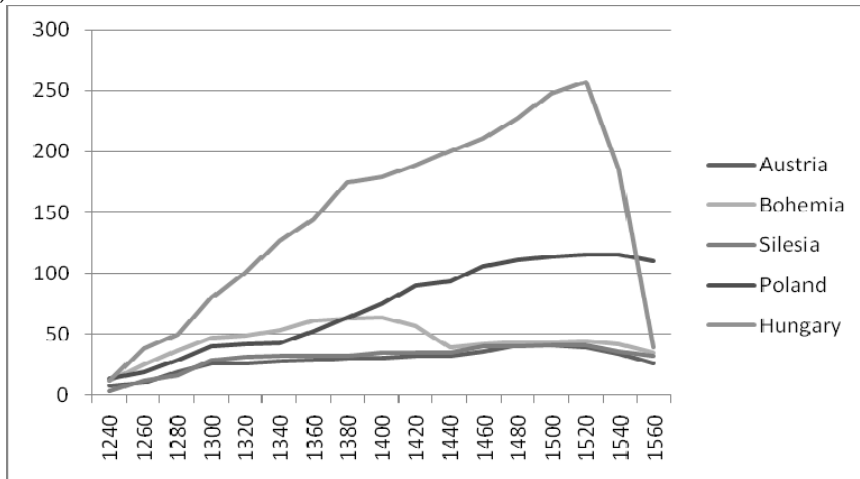
Year	Austria	Bohemia	Silesia and Lusace	Poland	Hungary	Sum
1240	8	12	3	14	12	49
1260	11	25	12	19	38	105
1280	19	37	16	29	50	151
1300	26	47	31	40	80	224
1320	26	49	33	42	100	250
1340	28	53	34	44	127	286
1360	29	61	35	56	144	325
1380	31	63	35	67	175	371

<b>1400</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>393</b>
1420	32	57	38	97	189	413
1440	32	39	38	100	200	409
1460	36	42	42	113	211	444
1480	41	44	42	119	227	473
<b>1500</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>496</b>
1520	39	45	43	123	257	507
1540	34	42	35	116	185	417
1560	26	35	30	114	39	246

Table 1: The evolution of the mendicant network in East Central European countries  
A)



B)



Graph 1: The evolution of the mendicant network in East Central European countries (A: without the Paulines; B: with the Paulines)

As far as the evolution of mendicant networks in this region is concerned the patterns are strikingly different both regarding numbers and tendencies. (**Table 1, Graph 1**) It is also worth mentioning that the characteristic pattern of the graph's lines does not fundamentally change if we include the Paulines too, but the differences only become more exaggerated.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century the number of mendicant and Pauline monasteries in Hungary were more than 250, with an average of 15-16 friars living in them. The average number of individuals in the friaries counted, not including the Pauline monasteries, was around 17. While the Dominican and the Observant Franciscan communities were usually larger (~20 friars or more), the Conventuals, the Austin Hermits and the Carmelites had smaller convents. The lowest number of monks could be found in the Pauline monasteries.

Supposing similar or slightly higher numbers in the other countries of the region, the picture is rather interesting. By the end of the Middle Ages (around 1500), the population of the East Central European region, excluding the Hungarian Kingdom, was 6-6.5 million, according to the data given in the work edited by Jean-Pierre Bardet and Jacques Dupaquier<sup>1</sup> and in the volume by Carlo M. Cipolla.<sup>2</sup> The population of Bohemia was ~1.7 million, that of Poland and Silesia ~4 million,<sup>3</sup> that of

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Pierre Bardet – Jacques Dupaquier (éds), *Histoire des populations de l'Europe* (3 vols, Paris: Fayard, 1997–1999). I am grateful to Mr Peter Őri (Hungarian Demographic Research Institute) who called my attention to this volume. Furthermore see the comprehensive data of György Granasztói, 'Magyarország történeti demográfiájának longitudinális vizsgálata' [Longitudinal analysis of the historical demography of Hungary], in József Kovacsics (ed), *Magyarország történeti demográfiája (896–1996)* [Historical demography of Hungary] (Budapest: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 1997), pp. 173–180, here: pp. 174 and 177.

<sup>2</sup> Carlo M. Cipolla (ed), *Bevölkerungsgeschichte Europas. Mittelalter bis Neuzeit* (München: Piper, 1971).

<sup>3</sup> In the case of Poland the deviation of the population estimates is extremely large. Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski (*Poland a Historical Atlas* [New York: Hippocrene Books, 1987]) estimated the population of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at 7.5 million in 1493, out of which 3.25 million would be the population of Poland itself. He gives a population density of 15 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> (p. 92), i.e. he counts with 216 667 km<sup>2</sup> for the territory of the Polish Kingdom at the end of the fifteenth century. Henryk Samsonowicz, 'Probe einer demographischen Einschätzung Polens um das Jahr 1500', *Studia Historiae Oeconomicae*, 22 (1997): 17–24) gives an even higher population: 3,5–4 million. However, Sławomir Gawlas, 'Polen – eine Ständegesellschaft an der Peripherie des lateinischen Europa' in Rainer Christof

Austria (i.e. Lower and Upper Austria and Styria) ~0.8 million.<sup>4</sup> Assuming similar proportions to those found in Hungary, the number of mendicant and Pauline monasteries should be around 330 in the Bohemian, Polish and Austrian territories, with ~5300 friars living in them. Even if we take into consideration the consequences of the Hussite movement, the figures would be 290 and 4800. However, there were not more than 239 friaries with 4000-4200 friars at most.

When analyzing the single countries within the region the picture appears unequal. While the rates of population and of monasteries approximately correspond to each other in the case of Austria and Silesia, the three major kingdoms of East Central Europe show certain

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Schwingen - Christian Hesse - Peter Moraw (eds), *Europa im späten Mittelalter: Politik, Gesellschaft, Kultur* (München: Oldenbourg, 2005), pp. 237-262, here: p. 243 supposed a population density of 13-14 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> meaning, for the territory given by Pogonowski, a population of around 3 million inhabitants. In the introduction of the volume published by the Polish Academy of Sciences in 1975 Stanislaw Borowski, 'Population Growth in the Polish Territories', in *The Population of Poland*, edited by the Committee of Demography of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Warszawa: PWN, 1975), p. 8 gave the three core territories of the Polish Kingdom (Lesser Poland, Greater Poland, Masovia) a size of ~146000 km<sup>2</sup>. The territories taken from the Teutonic Order in the second half of the fifteenth century were ~36000 km<sup>2</sup>. Altogether the territory of Poland around 1500 was about 182.000 km<sup>2</sup>. According to his data the population was in this period around 2370000, which means a population density of 13 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> (Borowski, 'Population Growth', p. 11). Complete with Galicia (~42000 km<sup>2</sup>) the country's territory reached 225000 km<sup>2</sup>, and its population was 3 million. But Galicia - being an Orthodox province - was at that point a missionary region, the monastic network of which remained far behind the other parts of the kingdom.

It is peculiar that all the cited works estimate the population density of the Polish Kingdom higher than that of contemporaneous Hungary, however, the mendicant network of the two countries differed radically from each other and they occupied the two extremities of the imaginary scale in the region. The explanation is probably connected to differences in the settlement system, as well as to economic and maybe spiritual reasons, but their investigation goes beyond the framework of this study. It is, however, significant that even in the twentieth century about 15 per cent of the Polish population lived in farmsteads or hamlets and this proportion may have been even higher in the Middle Ages.

<sup>4</sup> For data on Lower and Upper Austria and on Styria I used the relevant parts of the *Historisches Ortslexikon. Statistische Dokumentation zur Bevölkerungs- und Siedlungsgeschichte* (Datenbestand 31.8.2013) (<http://www.oeaw.ac.at/vid/download/histortslexikon/>) (last access: 19.10.2014), beside the works mentioned above.

anomalies. The density of the monastic network of Poland and Bohemia are much lower, while that of Hungary is much higher (**Table 2**):

Country	Territory km <sup>2</sup>	Population 1500	%	Nr of friaries (A)	%	Nr of friaries (B)	%
Hungary	307169	3500000*	36,84	181	45,59	247	51,78
Austria	47554	780000	8,21	38	9,57	41	8,60
Silesia	40319	620000	6,52	30	7,56	32	6,71
Bohemia	74289	1700000	17,89	44	11,08	44	9,22
Poland	224090	2900000**	30,54	104	26,20	113	23,69
Total	693421	9500000		397		477	

**Table 2:** Estimated population of ECE and the mendicant friaries not including Paulines (A), and the mendicant and Pauline monasteries (B) around 1500

(\*according to András Kubinyi's estimation only ~3300000

\*\*some of the Polish literature gives a higher number, 3250000 for 1493)

In Bohemia, there were 64 mendicant friaries before the Hussite wars which represented 20.58% of all friaries of the region. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the rates of the other territories (without the Paulines) were: Austria - 31 (9.97%), Poland - 74 (23.79%), Silesia - 25 (8.04%), Hungary - 117 (37.62%). The set of mendicant friaries in the Hungarian Kingdom around 1400 corresponded to the proportion of the population within the region, but the percentage significantly rose until 1500. The list completed with the Pauline monasteries shows this anomaly already by 1400 (Hungary 179 [47.61%], Austria 31 [8.24%], Silesia 27 [7.18%], Bohemia 64 [17.02%], Poland 75 [19.95%]). (Cf. **Graph 1**)

To take Western European examples for comparison, France had e.g. about 600 mendicant friaries around 1450.<sup>5</sup> In the very same period,

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<sup>5</sup> Alain Guerreau, 'Analyse factorielle et analyses statistiques classiques: le cas des ordres mendiants dans la France médiévale', *Annales. É.S.C.*, 36/5 (1981): 869-912, here: p. 873 (609 friaries). French literature usually gives the figures on the basis of the actual territory of France. Considering the territory of the fifteenth-century French Kingdom, this number is somewhat lower, around 550. (At the beginning of the sixteenth century France possessed Flanders, but did not possess Alsace, Lorraine,

there were around 290 friaries in East Central Europe and 140 of them in the territory of Hungary. In the mid-fifteenth century the population of France was approximately 13 million, while East Central Europe's can be estimated at 8.5 million. This means that the mendicant network of France was in that period denser than in this part of Europe, and this remains true even if we count the Pauline monasteries which represented a large proportion especially in Hungary (~70 houses in the whole region). However, in the latter case, the difference between the numbers of inhabitants per monastery becomes much smaller (21700 ↔ 27100 and 22400, respectively). If we take but Hungary and France, the picture changes dramatically, since there were ~3 million inhabitants and ~210 convents in Hungary which means ~14,350 inhabitants per monastery (without the Paulines ~20,650). Thus the Hungarian Kingdom reached in this period a density of mendicant monasteries comparable with France.

Around 1500, East Central Europe's proportion is already somewhat higher: in France approximately 683 convents existed among 15.5 million inhabitants,<sup>6</sup> while in East Central Europe these numbers are around 400 and 9.5 million. However, one has to realize that the additional foundations appeared mainly in the territory of Medieval Hungary. Counted without the Paulines more than 50 percent of the almost 80 new friaries were in Hungary. When adding the Paulines too, the proportions are even more unequal, since two thirds of the twelve new monasteries were Hungarian. This means that 60 percent of the more than 90 new monastic houses were in Hungary.

Despite widespread opinion, we can see that around 1500 the mendicant network of Hungary was not at all underdeveloped compared to Western Europe. In this period the population of Hungary was a little bit more than 20 percent of the population of France, but the number of mendicant friaries was 28 percent. The difference is somewhat smaller when comparing Hungary to the German territories (population ~30, friaries ~35 percent).

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Franche Comté, Savoy and Corse. In the comparisons the territory and population around 1500 are provided.)

<sup>6</sup> Richard Wilder Emery, *The Friars in Medieval France. A Catalogue of the French Mendicant Convents, 1200-1550* (New York-London: Columbia University Press, 1962), p. 16. Emery speaks about ~670 convents, but counting them one by one, the result is a bit higher.

In the time of the abolition of monastic houses under Henry VIII there were 50 Dominican, 57 Franciscan, 37 Carmelite and 33 Austin Hermits' friaries in England, and around 3000 friars lived in them.<sup>7</sup> This means the numbers of friars and of friaries were similar in the 1530s in England and in Hungary even if the estimated population of England was lower (~2.7 million).<sup>8</sup>

However, the subsisting – not very plentiful – data indicate that in France or in other Western European regions and even in some parts of East Central Europe the number of friars living in some of the friaries was higher than in Hungary. But the average could not be much higher. In fact, there were some very famous, large friaries in Western and Southern Europe where the size of the convents exceeded considerably the size of the Hungarian friaries (e.g. the Cologne Carmelite friary, the Dominican friaries of Paris and Toulouse, the friaries of Bruges, but also those of Wrocław in Silesia). Nevertheless, there were many more average-sized or even little friaries beside these huge ones. As far as the discussed period is concerned, according to Knowles the average number of friars in the English friaries dropped from 25 in the thirteenth century to fifteen in the fifteenth.<sup>9</sup> Emery supposes similar numbers in Late Medieval France.<sup>10</sup>

As for the Dominican Order, the Hungarian convents were doubtlessly smaller than the French, Spanish or South German ones, since the average number of friars was around 30-35 in the latter

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<sup>7</sup> Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Schools: From Roman Britain to Renaissance England* (New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 259.

<sup>8</sup> E. Edward Anthony Wrigley – Roger S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541–1871. A Reconstruction*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 210. Based on these data the proportion of the mendicant friars within the English society was ~1.1 %.

<sup>9</sup> David Knowles, *Religious Houses: England and Wales* (London: Longmans, 1953), p. 363. If we add the Welsh data the number of friaries goes up to 187, the population of friars to around 3150, while the general population was around 3 million.

<sup>10</sup> Emery, *The Friars in Medieval France*, pp. 4-5. Emery calculated with 25 as an average number of convent members in the mendicant orders by the end of the thirteenth century, but the orders show very different patterns from the earliest period of their history. Hinnebusch e.g. counted with 37 friars per convent in England at the beginning of the fourteenth century which means about 1800 friars in the English province. Cf. William A. Hinnebusch OP, *The Early English Friars Preachers* (Roma: Istituto Storico Domenicano, 1951), p. 275.

regions.<sup>11</sup> But the numbers are similar to what we see in Hungary in other countries of East Central Europe. The Polish historian Jerzy Kłoczowski who dealt with the Polish mendicant friaries 50 years ago also pointed to the fact that even if some urban friaries such as those of Wrocław or of Cracow were very large (e.g. in late fifteenth-century Wrocław, there were 66 Dominican, 71 Observant Franciscan, 31 Conventual Franciscan and 41 Austin Hermits – all together 209 mendicant friars), most of the friaries were small, with the minimum number of religious adherents.<sup>12</sup>

Concerning the Franciscan friaries in Burgundy and Auvergne, as well as in Silesia and in Upper Lusatia belonging to the Bohemian crown, data were collected by Ludovic Viallet. The average number of friars per convent was in both regions around 12–14, and it rarely reached 20 which is more or less the same as the Hungarian data.<sup>13</sup>

In the Low German province, the Carmelite convents were much larger by the end of the fourteenth century: in 1384 e.g. there were all together 474 friars in the seventeen friaries, which means an average of 28 friars (however, in Cologne alone there were 95 Carmelites at this time, and even fifty years later, in 1433 the convent had 92 members; thus the average without Cologne was about 23–24 friars).<sup>14</sup> But we must not generalize with these data since the Low German province existed in one of the most developed and most populated regions of medieval Europe. Data from other Carmelite friaries show that the average was not higher than twenty. The friary of Lienz (Tirol) e.g. was planned in the mid-fourteenth century for twelve friars, but by the end

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<sup>11</sup> In Aragon e.g. some 500 Dominican friars lived in 14 friaries by the end of the fourteenth century (thus the average was ~35). Michael A. Vargas, *Taming a Brood of Vipers. Conflict and Change in Fourteenth-Century Dominican Convents* (The Medieval and Early Modern Iberian World, 42), (Leiden–Boston–Tokyo: Brill, 2011), pp. 99–124.

<sup>12</sup> Jerzy Kłoczowski, 'Les ordres mendiants en Pologne à la fin du Moyen Âge', *Acta Poloniae historica*, 15 (1967): 5–38, here p. 11. On the following pages, the author argued for a higher average of between 20–25 friars per convent for the whole period between the thirteenth and the sixteenth century. According to his opinion 3200–4000 mendicant friars should have lived in Poland at the end of the Middle Ages. However, this statement seems to be very doubtful, especially for the Lithuanian and Russian territories.

<sup>13</sup> I am grateful for the kindly provided information by my colleague Ludovic Viallet.

<sup>14</sup> Hans Joachim Schmidt, 'L'économie des Carmes contrôlée par les visiteurs en Germania inferior' in Nicole Bériou – Jacques Chiffolleau (eds), *Économie et religion. L'expérience des ordres mendiants (XIII<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> s.)*, (Collection d'histoire et archéologie médiévales 21) (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2009), pp. 247–269, here p. 251.



of the century the convent already had twenty members. Thus it became one of the largest friaries in the Upper German province, and one of the schools of the Order was transferred there.<sup>15</sup>

Based on this series of data we can say that the medieval Kingdom of Hungary could sustain as many mendicant friars as France for instance. Still, according to the general opinion, France surpasses Hungary if we take into consideration the abbeys and the nunneries. But the economic background of these institutions was completely different in both regions since they had landed estates and did not live on alms. In a later phase of the research it would be worth including them into the analysis, but for this a detailed investigation would be needed.

The following table shows the relations between the population, the urban character and the mendicant friaries in the countries north of the Alps, around 1500. (**Table 3**) The numbers contain the smaller, regionally known orders, such as the Order of Saint William, the Crutched Friars,<sup>16</sup> the Trinitarians, the Servite and the Pauline Orders.<sup>17</sup> The territory of the Low Countries is divided between France and Germany, as it was in the Middle Ages. Similarly reflecting the situation around 1500, Alsace and the three dioceses Metz, Toul and Verdun, as well as the County of Burgundy (Franche Comté) are counted as the territory of the Holy Roman Empire. According to this, I have calibrated

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<sup>15</sup> Alfons Žák, *Österreichisches Klosterbuch* (Wien–Leipzig: Heinrich Kirsch, 1911), p. 212; Florentin Nothegger, *Sondernummer der Osttiroler Heimatblätter zum 600 jährigen Bestand des Karmeliten-Franziskanerklosters in Lienz* (Lienz, 1949).

<sup>16</sup> The Crutched Friars (Fratres Cruciferi) presented a serious dilemma since there were rather different communities under this name in different parts of Western Europe. Ultimately I decided to include them in England and on the continent, but I have left them out in Ireland because there they founded houses only at the end of the twelfth and the very beginning of the thirteenth century, all of them running hospitals. This decision was also supported by the fact that the order was there treated as canon's community.

<sup>17</sup> The so called "four big mendicant orders" (Franciscans, Dominicans, Austin Hermits and Carmelites) became an axiom of the research ever since the investigation initiated by Le Goff. This perspective can be more or less justified in France or in England, but in other regions of Europe the picture is quite different. The Carmelites were hardly present in certain parts of Europe (e.g. in Scandinavia or in Hungary), while other communities could be rather important in smaller regions as it happened to the Wilhelmities on the French-German border region or the Paulines in Hungary. Among the smaller orders, the Paulines became the most significant with regard to the number of monasteries and of provinces, and thus they can be ranked fifth after the bigger orders.

the population numbers. Italy is missing from this comparison because of the simple reason that I could not find reliable data for either the population or the evolution of the mendicant network there. Of course, this has to be emended in a later phase of the research.

Country	Population	Number of friaries (A)	Number of friaries (B)	P/F	Urban proportion (%)	Population proportion (%)	Friary proportion (A, %)	Friary proportion (B, %)	Friaries/ 10.000 km <sup>2</sup> (B)
France	15500000	635	683	22694	36,7	33,79	31,02	30,30	13,5
England	2700000	184	196	13776	61,7	5,89	8,99	8,70	13,0
Ireland	2000000	129	130	15385	17,7	4,36	6,30	5,77	15,4
Wales	300000	10	11	27273	18,2	0,65	0,49	0,49	5,8
Scotland	600000	36	42	14286	52,4	1,31	1,76	1,86	5,4
Denmark	550000	40	40	13750	57,5	1,20	1,95	1,77	6,8
Norway, Sweden*	940000	37	37	25405	32,4	2,05	1,81	1,64	0,8
Germany	12000000	487	538	22305	49,4	26,16	23,87	23,79	10,3
Switzerland	500000	22	23	21739	47,8	1,09	1,07	1,02	8,4
Austria	780000	39	41	19024	41,5	1,70	1,91	1,82	7,7
Bohemia**	1700000	44	44	38636	47,7	3,71	2,15	1,95	5,9
Silesia, Lusatia	820000	39	41	20000	20,5	1,79	1,91	1,82	7,7
Poland	2900000	104	113	26106	26,6	6,32	5,08	5,01	5,0
Ducal Prussia	180000	6	6	30000	0,0	0,39	0,29	0,27	4,2
Hungary	3500000	181	247	14170	34,0	7,63	8,84	10,96	8,0
Croatia, Dalmatia***	900000	54	62	14516	56,5	1,96	2,64	2,75	8,1
Sum	45870000	2047	2254	20350	42,74				8,3

\* Including the Finnish territories. In Norway and Sweden alone the population per friary was ~20000.

\*\* For the total territory of the Bohemian Kingdom, with Silesia and Lusatia, the urban proportion is 34.9%.

\*\*\* The populations of Croatia and Dalmatia are counted with the hinterland (Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania).

**Table 3:** Relations between the mendicant network and the number of inhabitants in Europe North of the Alps

In Europe north of the Alps there were 8–8.5 mendicant houses per 10 000 km<sup>2</sup>, and the capita per friaries was around 20 000–22 000. This average can be found in Norway and Sweden (without the Finnish territories), in Germany, in Austria, in Switzerland, as well as in Silesia and Lusatia. In France, in Poland and in Scandinavia including Finland the number of people sustaining a friary was a little bit higher, while in Wales, in Bohemia and in Ducal Prussia it was much higher. In fact it is only Bohemia that does not fit into this series, but the reason for this situation was clearly the effect of the Hussite wars. The two others in the aforementioned grouping were small peripheral regions of Latin Christianity. At the other end of the imaginary scale we can find England, Scotland, Ireland, Denmark, furthermore Hungary, Croatia and Dalmatia where the number of population sustaining a friary was around 14 000–15 000.<sup>18</sup>

In the next column one can see the “fait urbain”, i.e. the urban character of the mendicant friaries. The statement of Jacques Le Goff concerning the link between the urban development and the settling of mendicant friars, formulated in the 1970s, became almost an axiom of the historical approach to the mendicant phenomenon. However, there was and remains certain criticism of the thesis from its beginning (e.g. the Hungarian Erik Fügedi who applied Le Goff’s method in the medieval Kingdom of Hungary, or the French historian Ludovic Viallet) indicating that the settling of the mendicant orders was not strictly connected to the urban centers.<sup>19</sup> The Hungarian medievalist András Kubinyi came to the same conclusion based on the functional analysis of urbanisation in Hungary,<sup>20</sup> and all their arguments were supported

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<sup>18</sup> Ireland shows a totally extreme image around 1500 since the Observant Franciscans and the Franciscan Tertiaries founded a large number of new houses in a very short period, especially in the northern part of the island. The country was in a similarly odd situation with regard to the urban character of the mendicants (see below). The problem should be investigated by including the whole monastic network of Ireland, but this is certainly not the subject of the present paper.

<sup>19</sup> Erik Fügedi, ‘Koldulórendek és városfejlődés Magyarországon’, *Századok*, 106 (1972): 69–95, here pp. 88–92 (the article has been published earlier in French: ‘La formation des villes et les ordres mendiants en Hongrie’, *Annales E.S.C.*, 25 (1970): 966–987); Ludovic Viallet, ‘Pratiques de la quête chez les religieux mendiants (Moyen Âge – Époque moderne)’, *Revue Mabillon*, n. s. 23 (2012): 263–271.

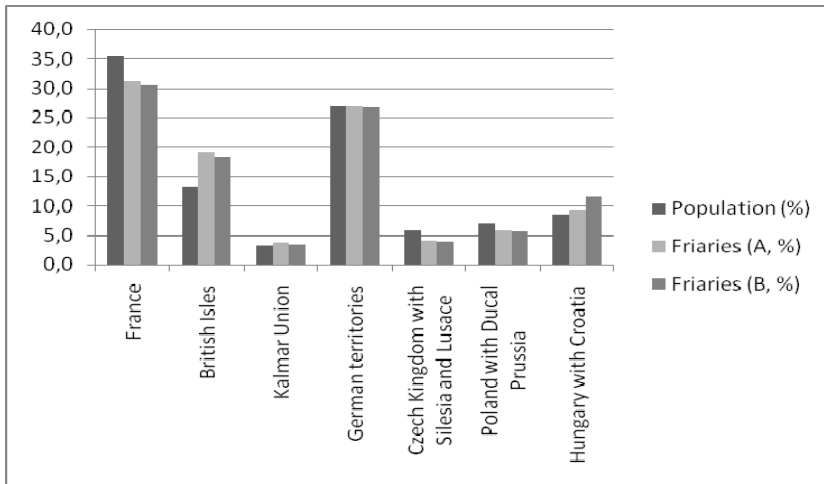
<sup>20</sup> András Kubinyi, ‘Központi helyek a középkor végi Abaúj, Borsod, Heves és Torna megyékben’, [Central places in the counties Abaúj, Borsod, Heves and Torna by the end of the Middle Ages], *Hermann Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve*. 37 (1999), pp. 499–518, here pp. 502–503.

recently with further data from the research of mendicant economy.<sup>21</sup> Of course, the link between the urban centers and the mendicant orders cannot be denied even in those regions where the spreading of these orders was not primarily based on the towns. Thus it is worth having a look at our data from this point of view, as well. If we consider “urban” those settlements which had at least two friaries, the comparison seems to be more or less adequate and valid for most of Europe (the settlements with one single friary were regarded by Le Goff himself and his colleagues as *bourgades*, i.e. not real towns). When comparing the two columns, we can see that there is no strict relation between the sustaining capacity and the urban character, e.g. Hungary – just like England – could sustain a rather high number of friaries, but in terms of urbanization the two countries were very far from each other. (cf. **Graph 2**) In the territories known for their high grade of urbanization, the proportion of urban friaries was in fact high, around 60 per cent. The only surprise seems to be France where this number is somewhat lower. (For the urbanization see also **Table 4** and **5**)

	OCarm	OESA	OFM	OP	Sum
Vienna		1	2	1	5
Cracow	1	1	2	1	5
Buda	1	1	2	1	5
Prague		1	2	1	4
Wroclaw		1	2	1	4
Pécs	1	1	1	1	4
Nagyvárad		1	2	1	4
Graz			2	1	3
Brno		1	1	1	3
Gdansk	1		1	1	3
Esztergom		1	1	1	3
Székesfehérvár		1	1	1	3
Szeged			2	1	3

**Table 4:** Towns with three or more mendicant friaries in East Central Europe ~1500 (not including the Pauline houses) Towns with two friaries: Austria 3, the Czech lands 7, Hungary 19, Poland 4, Silesia 1.

<sup>21</sup> Beatrix F. Romhányi, *Kolduló barátok, gazdálkodó szerzetesek. Koldulórendi gazdálkodás a középkori Magyarországon.* [Begging friars, husbanding religious. Mendicant economy in medieval Hungary.] DSc Dissertation, Manuscript, 2013. Available online: [http://real-d.mtak.hu/688/7/dc\\_702\\_13\\_doktori\\_mu.pdf](http://real-d.mtak.hu/688/7/dc_702_13_doktori_mu.pdf) (last access: 23.7.2015)



**Graph 2:** The capacity of sustaining mendicant friaries in different regions of Europe (middle column [A] without smaller orders, right column [B] with smaller orders)

The following graphs are based on the above table. It is clear that the countries of East Central Europe are rather different around 1500. The first two graphs show the average population per friary (axis x) and the density of the network of friaries (axis y).

As far as the density is concerned, the average (without the smaller orders, A) is represented by the German territories, Denmark and Dalmatia. Significantly lower density can be seen in the northern peripheries of the continent (Finland, Norway, Sweden), while higher density is characteristic for the western regions (England, Ireland, France). Scotland and Wales, Hungary, Poland and Ducal Prussia are somewhat below the average. When completing the data with the smaller orders (B) the image changes: Hungary moves to the territories with average density.

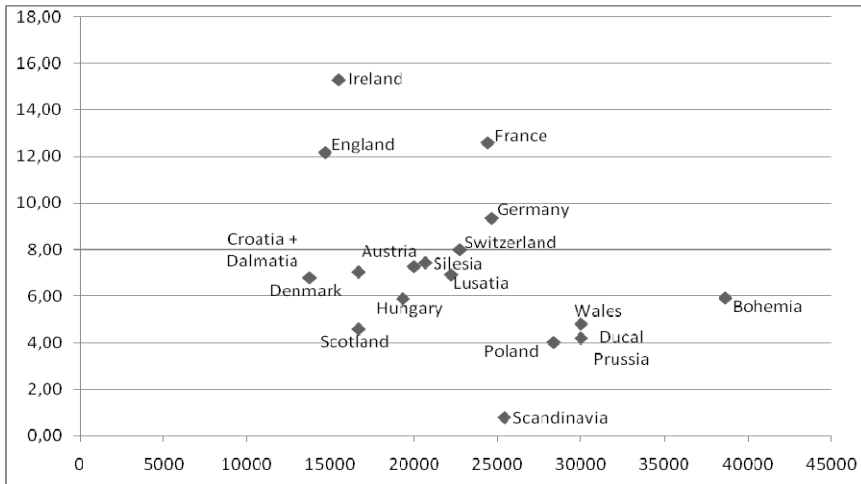
If we consider the average number of people sustaining a friary, the groups are slightly different. In the late Middle Ages, the Czech lands – because of the Hussite movement – stand alone on the upper end of the scale. Two small, peripheral territories are also above the average: Ducal Prussia and Wales – to a smaller extent Poland can be included – while Austria, Hungary and Silesia are around the average. Considerably less people were sufficient to sustain a mendicant friary on the British Isles and in Denmark, and Dalmatia is also close to this group. When we take the smaller orders into consideration (B), the situation changes: Poland reaches the average, while Hungary joins the group of Dalmatia, Denmark and England.

One has to emphasize that the two graphs show only one set period; we should collect more data to present the changes over time. Nevertheless, even based on this set of data we can say that the countries of East Central Europe did not form one group as far as the density of the mendicant network and the capacity to sustain friaries are concerned. Several factors can be supposed in the background: beside demographic and economic reasons we also have to count with the effects of religious (Hussite movement) and political (anti-Ottoman wars) influences. It is also quite clear that the late medieval Kingdom of Hungary cannot be regarded as a peripheral region in this period and, from this point of view, at least no more peripheral than the highly urbanized England. Moreover, we cannot detect any sign of economic or demographic crisis around 1500. However, it would be worth rethinking the position of Poland and of Ireland, but for that further data on the economic conditions and the settlement network would be needed.

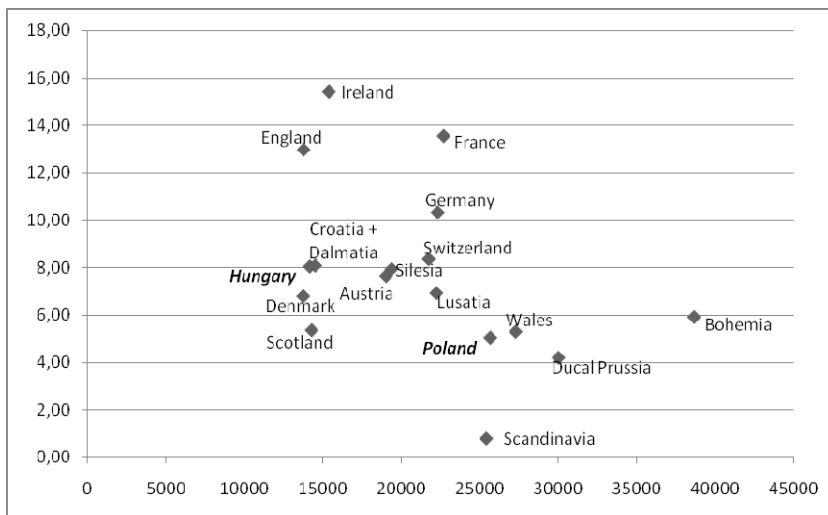
Regarding the density of the mendicant network, data suggest that in some regions – e.g. England or Denmark – these networks emerged in a period when there was a much higher population density in the given areas. It is not too difficult to identify the cause of the demographic crisis, the Black Death, which resulted in no second flourishing period of these orders in the late Middle Ages; the number of friaries hardly grew if at all. Nevertheless, it is important that the crisis did not cause the massive dissolution of the friaries, but rather the usual number of friars went down from about 25 to 15 or so. This suggest that the economic capacity did not collapse, i.e. even fewer people were able to sustain the large number of friaries. **(Graph 3)** One has to admit that the population numbers are, of course, based on “guesstimation”, but the proportions reflect more or less the reality.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> According to these data I think that the population of Hungary around 1500 could not be lower than 3.5 million. Otherwise, the number of people sustaining a friary would be much below the data of England and Denmark which is hardly believable. The difference between Kubinyi's data (András Kubinyi – József Laszlovszky, 'Népességtörténeti kérdések a késő középkori Magyarországon: népesség, népcsoportok, gazdálkodás' [Demographic questions in Late Medieval Hungary: Population, Ethnic Groups, Economy], in András Kubinyi et al. (eds), *Gazdaság és gazdálkodás a középkori Magyarországon: gazdaságtörténet, anyagi kultúra, régészet* [Budapest: Martin Opitz, 2008], pp. 37–48) and this estimation (200 000) was probably concentrated in Transdanubia and in Slavonia. At least this is what the changes of the mendicant network suggest. About the demographic development of medieval Hungary see: Beatrix F. Romhányi, 'Kolostorhálózat – településhálózat – népesség. A középkori Magyar Királyság demográfiai helyzetének változásaihoz'



(A) Density of the mendicant network and the population per friary around 1500, not including the smaller orders ( $x$ =population/friary;  $y$ =friary/10 000 km<sup>2</sup>)



Density of the mendicant network and the population per friary around 1500, including the smaller orders ( $x$ =population/friary;  $y$ =friary/10 000 km<sup>2</sup>)

**Graph 3:** Demographic correlations of the mendicant networks in Europe north of the Alps

Friary/town	England	Wales	Ireland	Scotland	Austria	Czech lands	Switzerland	Ducal Prussia	Denmark	Scandinavia	France	Poland	Hungary	Dalmatia and Croatia	Germany	Sum
2	19	1	5	5	3	9	1		10	6	45	7	18	14	59	205
3	8		3	4	2	1	3		1		18	2	7	1	24	73
4	11		1	1		2					11		1	1	9	38
5	3				1						8		2		6	20
6													1			1
7											4	1	1			6
larger towns	41	1	9	10	6	12	4	0	11	6	86	10	30	16	101	343
urban friaries	121	2	23	26	17	29	11	0	23	12	256	27	84	35	262	929
all friaries	196	11	130	42	41	87	23	6	40	37	683	122	247	62	538	2267
"fait urbain"	61,7	18,2	17,7	61,9	41,5	33,3	47,8	0,0	57,5	32,4	37,5	22,1	34,0	56,5	48,7	41,0

**Table 5:** Towns with two or more friaries in the different regions around 1500, including the smaller orders  
(The friaries of the Low Countries, i.e. today's Belgium and Netherlands are included to those of France and Germany.)

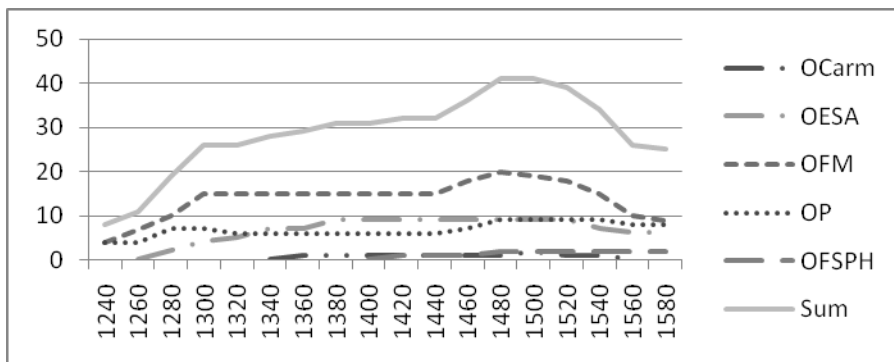
#### THE DYNAMICS OF EXPANSION

Further questions can be asked concerning the expansion of the mendicant orders in the different regions. One of the typical patterns is the quick expansion, long stabilization and slow decline – sometimes with a smaller flourishing period in the Late Middle Ages – which can be observed in some East Central European cases (Austria, Silesia). In Bohemia the double decline is clearly the result of the Hussite movement and of the sixteenth-century Reformation. The effect of the Hussite movement is reflected in the network of the neighboring territories, too, especially in Austria and Silesia after 1440. The ascendancy of the Polish graph is much slower than in the other countries of the region. One also has to take into consideration that it represents only the Polish part of the Commonwealth, while the spreading of the mendicant orders (especially of the Observant Franciscans) continued in Lithuanian

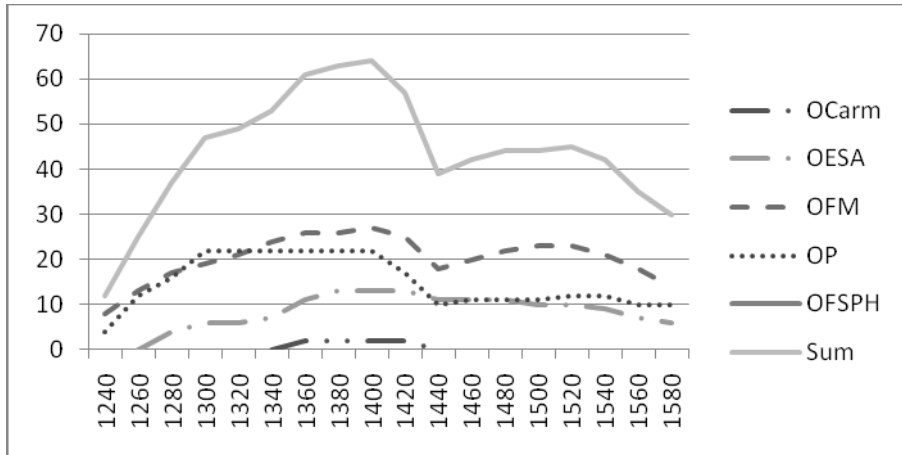


territory even after the 1520s. Therefore the presently slightly declining character would become ascendant were the whole territory of Poland and Lithuania taken into account. (**Graphs 4–11**)

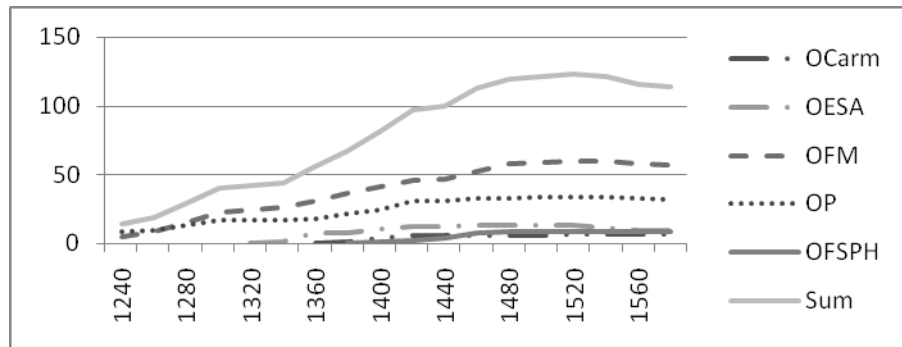
Ultimately, despite the differences, the character of most of the graphs is still similar since there is a shorter or longer stabilization level in them. There are two exceptions: Hungary and Germany where the graphs are constantly ascending until the first quarter of the sixteenth century when they suddenly break down. The prime mover of this pre-Reformation increase in Hungary was the Franciscan Order, while in Germany all the mendicant orders contributed to it to some extent, but the most important were the Franciscans and the Carmelites. As for the German territories, the background of the feature was the different rhythm of development in the different regions. However, this regional diversity cannot be observed in Hungary. The reasons of the sudden collapse are probably similar in the two countries: in Germany the Reformation and the wars of religion, in Hungary the Reformation and the Ottoman wars. An even more abrupt decline of the mendicant orders happened in England and in the territories of the Kalmar Union. In the first case the decrees of King Henry VIII can easily be identified, while in the second it was the quick and undisturbed evolution of the Protestant Reformation which led to the same result. It is especially interesting when compared with Bohemia where the Hussite movement – as hostile as it was towards certain religious communities – could not so deeply affect the monastic network.



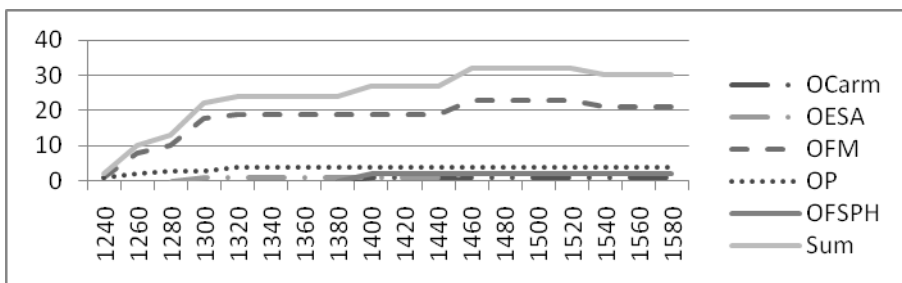
Graph 4: Mendicant network of Austria (1240–1580)



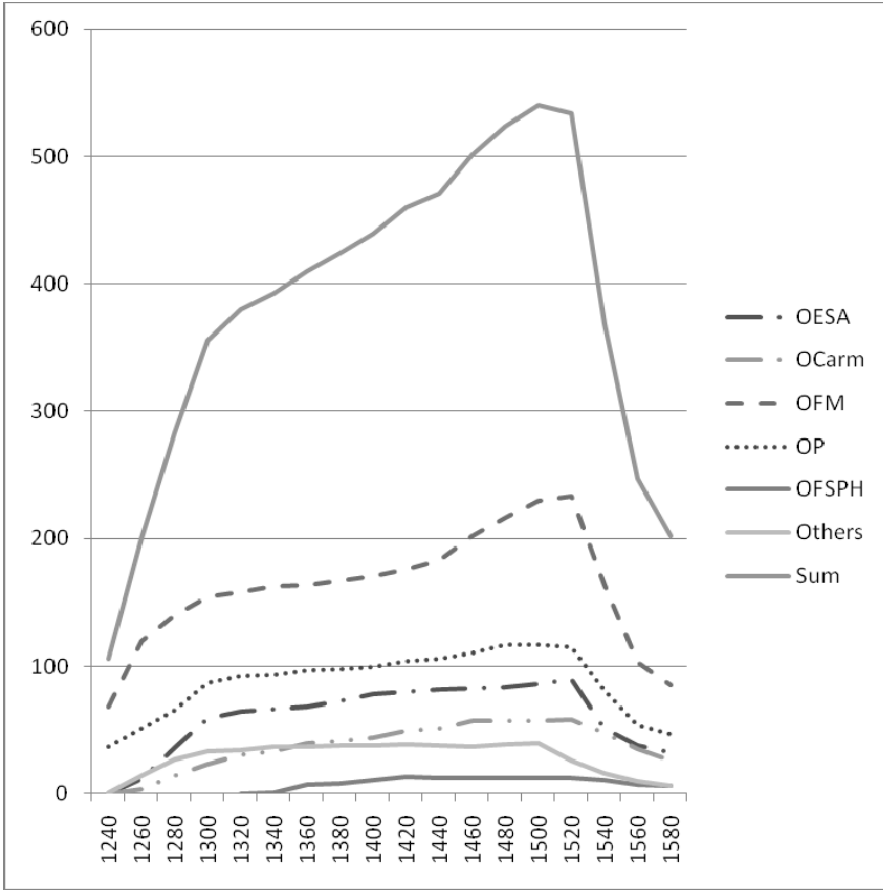
Graph 5: Mendicant network of Bohemia (1240-1580)



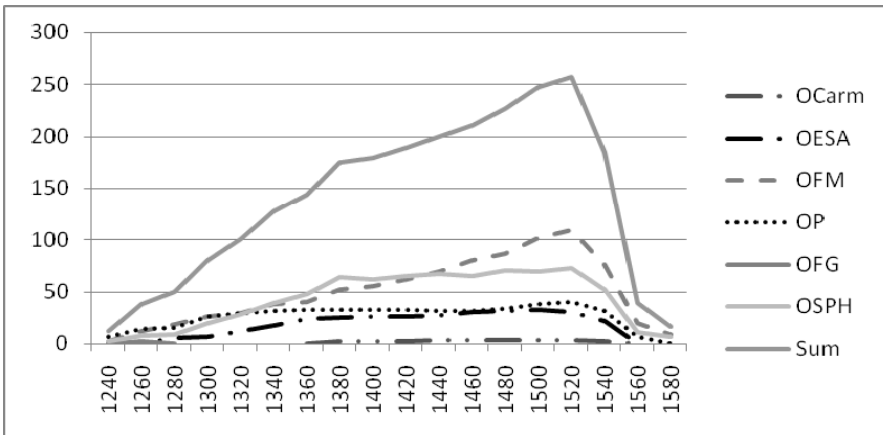
Graph 6: Mendicant network of Poland (1240-1580)



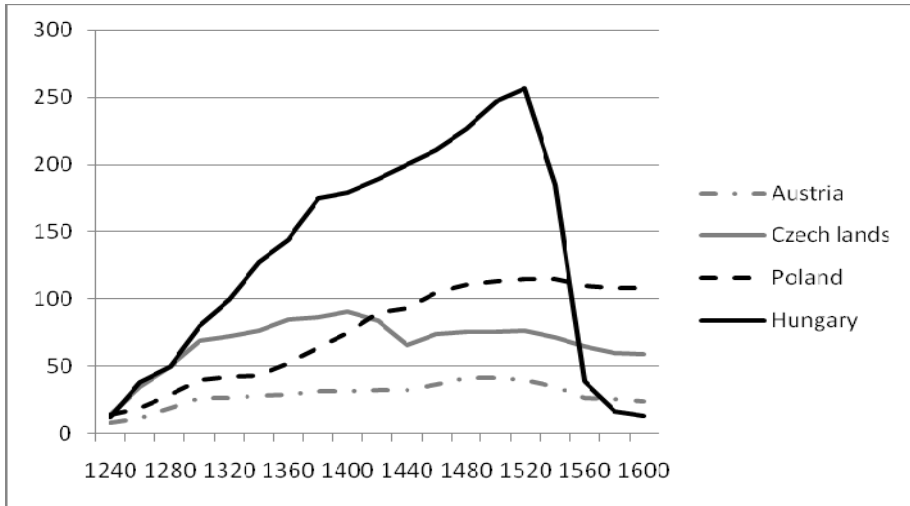
Graph 7: Mendicant network of Silesia (1240-1580)



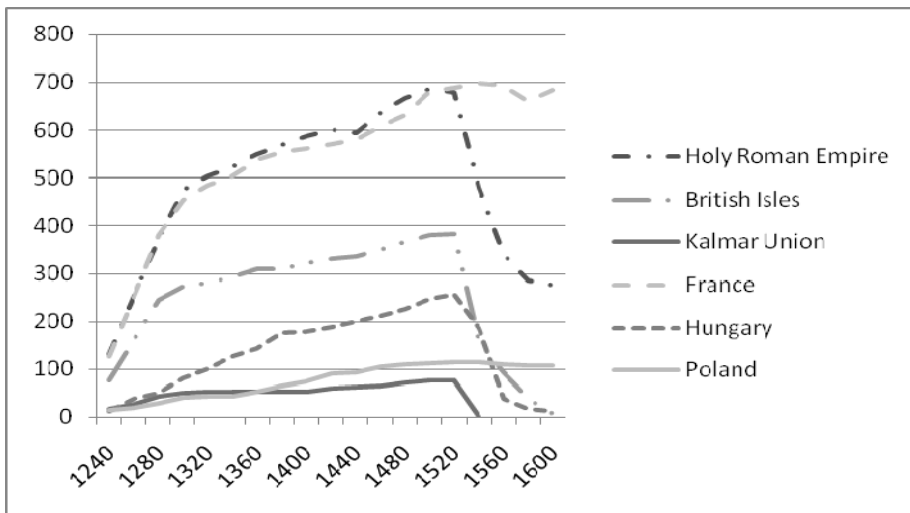
Graph 8: Mendicant network of Germany (1240–1580)



Graph 9: Mendicant network of Hungary (1240–1580)



Graph 10: Mendicant network of East Central Europe (1240-1600)



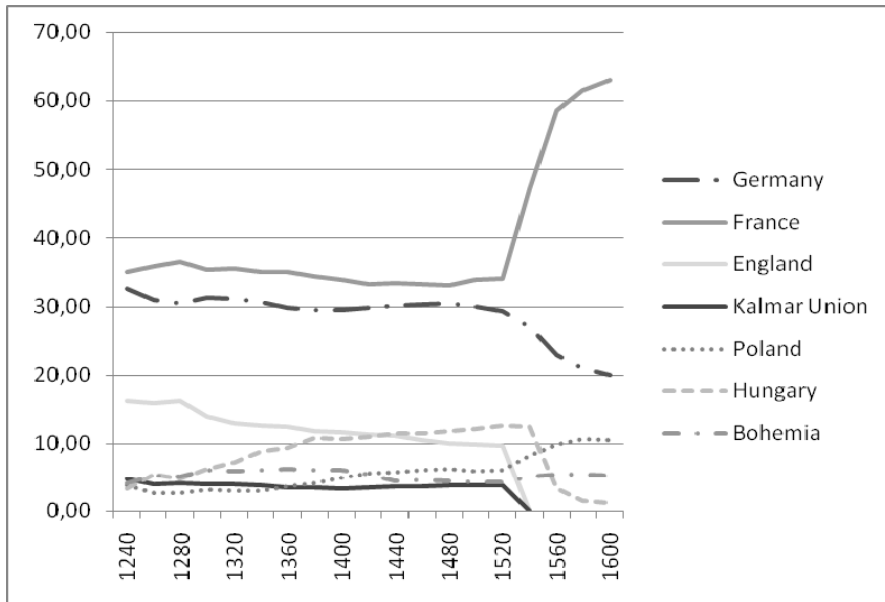
Graph 11: Mendicant network of the Ultramontane Europe (1240-1600)

Finally it is worthwhile to have a look at the proportions of the different regions within the mendicant network of Ultramontane Europe. The following graph shows the changing percentage of the mendicant network of the different regions from the thirteenth to the early sixteenth century. The seven regions – the French Kingdom, the German territories (without Northern Italy), England including Wales, the Hungarian Kingdom with Croatia, the Czech Lands, Poland with

Royal Prussia but without Lithuania, and finally the Kalmar Union – represented till the end of the fourteenth century more than 90 percent of the mendicant friaries, and their proportion was still over 85 percent in the fifteenth century. The period of increase in the thirteenth century caused almost everywhere certain oscillations, and the sixteenth-century Reformation turned everything over. Thus, we can evaluate the period between 1280 and 1520. (**Graph 12**)

As we can see France was leading throughout the Middle Ages, although the proportion of the French friaries decreased to some extent. The next is Germany reaching its stabilization level around 1280 and showing a consolidated trend from the 1360s till the Reformation. This means that parallel to the increasing population there were constantly new foundations even after the big wave of increase in the thirteenth century. In the early period England occupied the third position, but from the fourteenth century on its proportion within Europe decreased gradually. The reason for this feature is that the mendicant network had been established by 1300 and there were none or very few new foundations later.

In the first half of the thirteenth century, the mendicant network of the three East Central European countries started to develop simultaneously, but Hungary soon left this group behind. It is also noteworthy that the mendicant network of Bohemia and of Poland reached a leveling off by the end of this period, while the Hungarian model was slowly but constantly ascendant. This means that the proportion of the Hungarian mendicant friaries within Europe grew from the thirteenth till the early sixteenth century. At the beginning of the fifteenth century England and Hungary even changed their position in the ranking. Another point of interest could be the position of Bohemia and Poland. In the case of the former, we have to notice that the Hussite Wars affected only temporarily the network of friaries. Although there were significant changes as far as the orders are concerned, the position of Bohemian Kingdom remained unchanged. This was also due to spectacular development in Moravia and especially in Silesia. In Poland, the interesting point is the two periods of growth, around 1400 and at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The economic and demographic background of this feature needs further research.



Graph 12: Percentage of different European regions within the complete mendicant network

The spectacular expansion of the mendicant network in late medieval Hungary, mainly due to the intensive spread of the Observants, can be explained by several factors. One of the most important ones was the changing political situation, namely the Ottoman expansion and its consequences. Furthermore, one has to stress the changing demographic situation. The increasing Ottoman pressure and the mass immigration of an Orthodox population into the southern regions of Hungary, mainly to Temes County and to eastern part of Szerém County, resulted in the disappearance of the Franciscan friaries in these regions. In other regions, however, significant development can also be detected. Intensive economic growth, especially in Western Hungary, led to the emergence of a dense network of mendicant friaries. Since there were no towns in most of these regions, tight links between the friaries and the aristocratic or noble residences can be proven („Visegrád-type friaries”). The most characteristic examples of this type are e.g. Ozora (OFM obs.), Kusaly (Coșeiu, OFM obs.), Csákány (OFM obs.), Palota (OFM obs.) Coborszentmihály (Sombor, OP), Simontornya (OP) and Lövő (OESA). This phenomenon had economic consequences too since the founders had to take a greater part in sustaining these

friaries as the alms coming from the local population were insufficient. Beside the aristocratic and noble families, strong royal support is also visible till the end of Middle Ages which can be described in economic terms, as well.

However, the different orders followed different strategies in acquiring the support of the faithful, and thus their social background differed too. The most urban were the (early) Dominicans, the Carmelites and the Franciscan Conventuals, while the most rural were the Austin Hermits. In fact, the most „aristocratic” of these orders were the Franciscan Observants,<sup>23</sup> though in some respects we can view the Dominican Observants in the same category. There was a close connection between political activity, intensive royal and aristocratic support, and economic success which resulted in unusual forms of alms donations.

All these factors contributed to the Hungarian mendicant provinces being the largest in East Central Europe from the late fourteenth till the early sixteenth century. If the mendicant presence was not so much connected to the urban settlements as it was in some southern and western regions of Europe, this was the result of the different social structure. In Hungary, the economic and political roles played by the bourgeoisie in Western Europe were to some extent taken over by the nobility which became the “natural” supporter of the mendicants, especially of the Franciscans in this part of Europe. The unprecedented success of the Observants was furthermore due to the common aim of the political elite and of the friars to stop Ottoman expansion.

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<sup>23</sup> The close links to the Hungarian aristocracy, as well as the non-urban character of the Observant presence in Hungary have already been recorded by Marie-Madeleine de Cevins in her large volume on the history of the Franciscan Observants in Late Medieval Hungary. Marie-Madeleine de Cevins, *Les franciscains observants hongrois de l'expansion à la débâcle (vers 1450 - vers 1540)* (Roma: Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, 2008), pp. 132-139, 146.

# Mendicant Friaries as Hosts of Diets in Medieval Hungary A Short Overview\*

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**Abstract:** In this paper I aim to combine political history and topography to highlight a less frequently discussed role of the Franciscans and Dominicans in Hungary between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries: their houses as hosts of diets. In the centre of the Hungarian Kingdom in Buda and Pest Mendicant friaries hosted parts of the negotiations connected to diets on a number of occasions. Apart from that historical scholarship usually associates Franciscan friaries at Győr and Szeged as hosts to diets of 1455 and 1444, 1459 and 1495 respectively. Recent scholarship demonstrated that at least part of the diet held at Tata in 1510 was at the Franciscan friary. The paper apart from analyzing the surviving written evidence connected to the listed diets aims at drawing attention to the special role of these houses in the political life of the country.

**Key words:** Mendicant Orders, political history, topography, diets, Franciscans, Dominicans

**Rezumat:** Conventurile mendicante ca locuri de găzduire a dietelor în Ungaria medievală. O punere de problemă. În acest articol îmi propun să combin istoria politică și topografia pentru a evidenția un aspect mai puțin discutat al rolului jucat de dominicani și franciscani în Ungaria între secolele XIII și XVI și anume, conventurile lor drept locuri de întâlnire a dietelor. În centrul regatului maghiar, la Buda și Pesta, conventurile mendicante au găzduit de mai multe ori o parte a negocierilor referitoare la diete. Mai mult, cercetarea istorică a asociat frecvent conventurile franciscane de la Győr și Szeged ca fiind locuri predilecte de găzduire a dietelor, cum s-a întâmplat cu cele ținute în anii 1444, 1455, 1459 și 1495. Mai recent, a fost de asemenea demonstrat că cel puțin o parte a lucrărilor dietei desfășurate la Tata în anul 1510 a

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avut loc în conventul franciscanilor. Scopul acestui articol nu este doar acela de a analiza sursele scrise supraviețuite în legătură cu mai sus amintitele diete, ci și acela de a atrage atenția asupra rolului extrem de important jucat de conventurile mendicante în viața politică a regatului.

**Cuvinte cheie:** ordine mendicante, istorie politică, topografie, diete, franciscani, dominicani

It is a commonplace that because of the heavily destroyed archives of the Franciscans and Dominicans in East-Central Europe, scholars of ecclesiastical history are forced to look at different sorts of evidence that have traditionally received less focus in research coming from Western Europe. Even in this volume, studies show the potential of using for instance archaeology, architectural history or topography to study the role or position of a certain order, or a specific friary in the life of medieval Hungary. In this paper I aim to combine political history and topography to highlight a less frequently discussed role of the Franciscans and Dominicans in Hungary between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries: their houses as hosts of diets.

In the following pages the focus will not be on specific careers of Franciscans or Dominicans and their activities in ecclesiastical circles or their lay connections but rather on the problem of the general involvement of the friaries in political life. When investigating the dietary life in late medieval Hungary it is striking that in many cases diets, or part of diets, were held in ecclesiastical spaces, including either at Franciscan or at Dominican friaries. The question is obvious then: Why there? In many cases the answer is self-evident – these churches or the enclosed areas (either courtyards, cloisters or refectories) of the friaries could host more people than any other buildings at a certain settlement where the nobility or the barons gathered. However, looking at actual settlements, the question seems less obvious and the answer seems to be more complex. What is the logic behind choosing certain institutions as the host place of a gathering of the barons and other members of the Hungarian nobility? Before turning to some cases, this study looks at the sources that can be of assistance when dealing with the problem.

## SOURCES

Writing the history of diets in late medieval Hungary is certainly a challenging task. Even finding the number of diets held in the Middle Ages is extremely difficult. Research in the last few years demonstrated

how little we know about diets of the Kingdom in the late fifteenth – early sixteenth centuries. Traditionally, the most dependable sources a historian can touch upon when studying diets are the decrees themselves issued by the king in their aftermath. There are dozens of diets however after which the kings never issued formal decrees or the decrees did not come down to us. But even if decrees survived and are known to scholars they usually tell very little about the downflow of a certain gathering and moreover about the location of diets.<sup>1</sup>

If the sources that we are dealing with were only royal decrees then we would have very limited information about the place of the diets in question as the decrees were usually issued either in Buda or at other places the king was temporarily resident, weeks after the events. It is only from the fifteenth century that there is a relatively wide variety of sources on the diets themselves. On the one hand there are more and more available charters issued during diets but what is certainly more important from the point of view of the present study are new kinds of sources, such as envoys' reports, which tell previously unknown details about the ways negotiations took place. Of course consulting the narrative sources is also fundamental as the works of Thuróczy, Bonfini and others also significantly contribute to our knowledge of the dietary life of Hungary. Despite the relatively ample research prospects there are only a few diets that have been treated in the scholarship in detail<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the problem, see amongst other studies: Norbert C. Tóth, 'Nádorváltás 1458-ban. Mátyás király első országgyűlésének időpontja' [Change of the palatine in 1458. The date of the first diet of King Matthias] *Turul*, 84 (2011): 98–101; Tibor Neumann, 'Királyi hatalom és országgyűlés a Jagelló-kor elején' [Royal power and diets at the beginning of the Jagellonian period], in Tamás Dobszay et al. (eds), *Rendiség és parlamentarizmus Magyarországon: A kezdetektől 1918-ig* [Estate system and dietary life in Hungary from the beginnings to 1918] (Budapest: Argumentum, 2013), pp. 46–54 and on the problem of the diets held in the second half of the reign of Wladislas II, see Gábor Mikó, 'Ismeretlen országgyűlési emlék a Jagelló-korból' [Unknown parliamentary record from the Jagellonian period], *Történelmi Szemle*, 56 (2014): 455–480 (all with significant literature relevant for the topic).

<sup>2</sup> See the example of the diets at Pest-Buda in 1490: Tibor Neumann, 'II. Ulászló koronázása és első rendeletei (Egy ismeretlen országgyűlésről és koronázási dekrétumról)' [The coronation and first decrees of Wladislas II (On an unknown diet and the coronation decree)], *Századok*, 142 (2008): 315–337; Tata (1510): Bálint Lakatos, 'A tatai országgyűlés és diplomáciai háttere (1508–1510)', in László János (ed), *A diplomácia választóján: 500 éve volt Tatán országgyűlés* [At the cross roads of diplomacy. The diet of Tata took place 500 years ago] (*Annales Tataienses*, 6) (Tata:

and even less has been written on the course of the diets themselves.<sup>3</sup> The present survey is however not intending to describe the complete history of diets in medieval Hungary and their connection with ecclesiastical institutions, but rather a few case studies are used to highlight the importance of the problem.

Most of the diets between the late thirteenth and the early sixteenth century were held in the so-called *medium regni*, the central part of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary with Buda and Pest in the centre. However a royal assembly meant much more at that time than a meeting of all the estates at a certain place and negotiations on certain problems. Two relevant questions are considered in these lines with regard to the organization of the diets: where exactly have the diets been held and what was the role of the Mendicants at these gatherings?

#### DIETS AND THE MENDICANT FRIARIES AT PEST

The first occasion when Mendicant houses were certainly involved at a diet is one in 1298. That year the nobility was called to gather at the church of the Franciscans at Pest (*nos...apud Ecclesiam Fratrum minorum in Pesth...cum omnibus Nobilibus Hungariae, singulis Saxonibus, Comanis, in unum convenientes*) after which they held a diet at the Fields of Rákos.<sup>4</sup> The diet itself or at least the parts that involved a

Komárom-Esztergom Megyei Múzeumok Igazgatósága, 2010), pp. 29–65; Pest-Buda (1514): Norbert C. Tóth, 'Az 1514. márciusi országgyűlés. (Politikatörténeti események Magyarországon a parasztháború kitöréséig)' [The Diet in March 1514. Political Issues in Hungary till the Outbreak of the Peasant War], (in preparation) or Hatvan (1525): András Kubinyi, 'Politikai vitakultúra Magyarországon: Bácsi Ferenc szózata a hatvani országgyűléshez (1525), valamint egy latin verse' [Political culture in Hungary: The allocution of Ferenc Bácsi to the synod of Hatvan], in Tibor Almási – István Draskóczy – Éva Jancsó (eds), *Studia professoris – professor studiorum. Tanulmányok Érszegi Géza hatvanadik születésnapjára* [Studies in honour of Géza Érszegi for his sixtieth birthday], (Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltár, 2005), pp. 169–195 and András Kubinyi, 'Országgyűlési küzdelmek Magyarországon 1523–1525-ben' [Dietary struggles in Hungary between 1523 and 1525], in Tibor Neumann – György Rác (eds), *Honoris causa: tanulmányok Engel Pál tiszteletére* [Studies in honour of Pál Engel] (Társadalom- és Művelődéstörténeti tanulmányok, 40 = *Analecta Mediaevalia*, 3), (Budapest – Piliscsaba: MTA Történettudományi Intézet – Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem, 2009), pp. 125–148.

<sup>3</sup> The most important work in this respect is: András Kubinyi, 'A magyar országgyűlések tárgyalási rendje 1445–1526' [The order of discussions at the Hungarian diet, 1445–1526], *Jogtörténeti Szemle*, 8/2 (2006): 3–11.

<sup>4</sup> *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis I–XI*, ed. Georgius Fejér (Buda: Typis Typogr. Regia Universitatis Ungaricae, 1829–1844), VI/2, p. 131. For the

considerable number of nobles were held at the Fields of Rákos that surrounded the town of Pest, and most probably at least the opening mass was held in the church of the Franciscans, if nothing else.<sup>5</sup> The friary according to the literature may have been close to the thirteenth century wall in the eastern part of Pest,<sup>6</sup> next to the road that led to Kerepes. The only proof of it is the fact that the Franciscan church still stands there, but no archaeological or written evidence from the thirteenth century supports this. The only remains that were discovered under the present Baroque church building were identified as remains of a mosque from the Ottoman period.

The memory of a diet of 1299 is preserved in a number of charters. The nobility met the barons and the king this time at the Dominican friary of Pest (*congregatione nostra in Pest in ecclesia fratrum Praedicatorum habita per nos adherant*).<sup>7</sup> The exact location of this friary is still unknown despite the existence of a number of charters referring to it. Earlier it was thought to have been previously located at the same place where it was established after the Ottoman occupation, but archaeological evidence proved that the present Baroque building (present-day church of the Loreto Sisters at 47/b Váci Street) replaced three medieval houses and not a church. Others suggested that the friary was slightly south of the

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decrees see also: János M. Bak et al. (eds) *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary. Decreta Regni Mediaevalis Hungariae* (5 vols, Bakersfield: Charles Schlacks Jr., 1989–2012), vol. 1, pp. 46–51.

<sup>5</sup> On the field of Rákos, see: Béla Iványi, *Adalékok régi országgyűléseink Rákos nevéhez* [Data to the Rákos name of our ancient diets] (Szeged: Tudományegyetem Barátainak Egyesülete, 1935). See also for the diets held in Rákos: László Szende, *A Rákos mezei országgyűlések története* [The history of diets at the field of Rákos] (Budapest: Papcsák Ügyvédi Iroda, 2010). See also: János M. Bak – András Vadas, 'Diets and Synods in Buda and Environs', in *Medieval Buda in Context*.

<sup>6</sup> Beatrix F. Romhányi, *Kolostorok és társaskáptalanok a középkori Magyarországon* [Monasteries and collegiate chapters in medieval Hungary] (Budapest: Pytheas, 2000), p. 51 and György Györffy, *Az Árpád-kori Magyarország történeti földrajza* [Historical geography of Hungary in the Árpadian period] (4 vols, Budapest: Akadémiai, 1998), vol. 4, p. 545 [henceforth: ÁMTF] and György Györffy, 'Budapest története az Árpád-korban' [The history of Budapest in the Árpadian Period], in László Gerevich (ed), *Budapest története I. Az Árpád-kor végéig* [The history of Budapest I. From Prehistory to the end of the Árpadian Period] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1973), pp. 283–284.

<sup>7</sup> Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára (Hungarian National Archives National Archive) Diplomatikai Levéltár (Collection of Diplomats) (MNL OL DL) 38 135.

late medieval town of Pest next to the Danube.<sup>8</sup> György Györffy, however, argued that the parish church of Szent(erszébet)falva (close to which village the Dominican friary was originally standing) was once at the present-day site of Szerb Street and the friary at the present-day Egyetem Square (within the thirteenth century wall, near the road leading to Szeged).<sup>9</sup> However just like the case of the Franciscan church this is only a presumption based on topographical observations (e.g. the general location of mendicant churches in the Central European towns) and other indirect evidence. It is not clear if it was only the opening mass or also some negotiations of the nobility and king which took place in the friary. The former is much more likely as the palatine Máté Csák and the king issued charters at Rákos (*Rakus*) around the same time.<sup>10</sup> Several barons as well as the palatine issued charters at the Field of Rákos again in 1300 which suggests a diet having taken place there but this time no reference was made to any friaries used during the meeting.<sup>11</sup>

The first more or less formal diet after the death of Andrew III took place at Rákos in 1307. On the 10<sup>th</sup> October, 1307 Amádé Aba, the palatine, along with some of the oligarchs accepted Charles I as king of Hungary. The charter putting down this agreement in writing was issued at the St Peter's church of the Franciscans which is that of the town of Pest. It is rather surprising that according to the charter, the church stood close to or at Rákos (*Actum hoc apud ecclesiam B. Petri in Rakus*) which implies a rather broad understanding of the regular location of diets, the Field of Rákos.<sup>12</sup> More is known about the diet called by the papal legate, Cardinal Gentile di Montefiore on the 27<sup>th</sup> November, 1308. The legate resided at Buda, whence he issued a number of letters from the 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 1308 to 21<sup>st</sup> April, 1309.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Albert Gárdonyi, 'Középkori települések Pest határában' [Medieval settlements in the borders of Pest], *Tanulmányok Budapest Múltjából*, 8 (1940): 14–27, here p. 23.

<sup>9</sup> ÁMTF, vol. 4, pp. 544–545.

<sup>10</sup> See for instance: MNL OL DL 7735; DL 76 182 and DL 76 184. For the latter ones, see: Tibor Szócs, *Az Árpád-kori nádorok és helyetteseik okleveleinek kritikai jegyzéke* [Critical calendar of the charters of the palatines and their vicars in the Árpadian period] (Budapest: MOL, 2012), pp. 245–246 (nr. 298–299).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 253–254 (nr. 314).

<sup>12</sup> MNL OL DL 39 259. Edited in Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. VIII/1, pp. 221–223. See also: Gárdonyi, *Középkori települések*, p. 24.

<sup>13</sup> Arnold Ipolyi et al. (eds), *Monumenta Vaticana historiam regni Hungariae illustrantia* (9 vols, Budapest: [Szent István Társulat], 1884–1909, repr. Budapest: METEM, 2000–2001), I/2: *Acta legationis cardinalis Gentilis. Gentilis bibornok magyarországi követségének okiratai 1307–1311*, pp. 60–99. For the charter issued 27 November 1308, see: Fejér,

Gentile held a diet called for the 18<sup>th</sup> November at Buda; however, the supporters of the Angevin king came with a sizeable number of troops, thus their meeting was held in Pest (rather at Rákos) where there was sufficient space for their encampments. According to the account of the diet, the barons met at the Dominican church of Pest. This time the church is mentioned to have been located near the Danube.<sup>14</sup> The account of the notary, Johannes de Pontecurum, not only refers to the location of the friary but also tells of the way the barons were seated on the left and the right of the legate Gentile di Montefiori during their meeting in the friary. It is rather questionable where exactly this meeting took place within the building but according to the account, even masses (nobles and burghers) of people were present apart from the “great men” which makes it unlikely that any part of the *claustrum* – e.g. the refectory – was used as the place of the gathering. However such organization – a table around which the listed barons and prelates were seated – may be likewise difficult to imagine in the available space of the church of the Dominicans. But this is not the only troubling point in this account; the location of the whole friary may be questioned. According to the above mentioned hypothesis of Györffy, the church stood close to the present-day Egyetem Square which is not particularly close to the Danube.<sup>15</sup> The only account of the church of the Dominicans pre-dating

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*Codex diplomaticus*, VIII/1, pp. 264–269 and Gyula Kristó et al. (eds), *Anjou-kori oklevéltár I–XV, XVII, XIX–XXXI, XXXIV, XXXVIII and XL* [Angevin cartulary] (Budapest and Szeged: JATE – Csongrád Megyei Levéltár, 1990–2014), vol. II (1306–1310), pp. 213–214 (nr. 494).

<sup>14</sup> “...ac in loco fratrum Predicatorum, iuxta flumen [Danubii] ipsum sito, cum ipso domino legato, prelatorum, baronum et nobilium dictarum personarum multitudo, cives etiam et advene copiosi, quos eximii spectaculi rumor ac vulgata cōventionis dicti concilii celebritas excitarat, insperate pacis admiratione stupidi, et tot discordiarum animorum unitatis increduli, pacisque avidi convenerunt (...) Actum, ut predicetur, in loco Predicatorum prope civitatem Pestensem, ultra Danubium, ex opposite dicti castris.” – *Acta legationis*, pp. 116 and 118. See furthermore: Enikő Csukovits, *Az Anjouk Magyarországon I. rész I. Károly és uralkodása (1301–1342)* [The Angevins in Hungary. Charles I and his reign] (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2012), pp. 60–61.

<sup>15</sup> The archaeologists of the Budapest History Museum located the friary, based on this account, closer to the Danube. See: Roland Perényi – András Végh (eds), *Budapest – Light and Shadow. The 1000 Years of a Capital* (Exhibition guide), (Budapest: Budapest History Museum, 2013), 20. See also the maps of András Végh’s article in: Balázs Nagy – Martyn C. Rady – Katalin Szende – András Vadas (eds), *Medieval Buda in Context*.

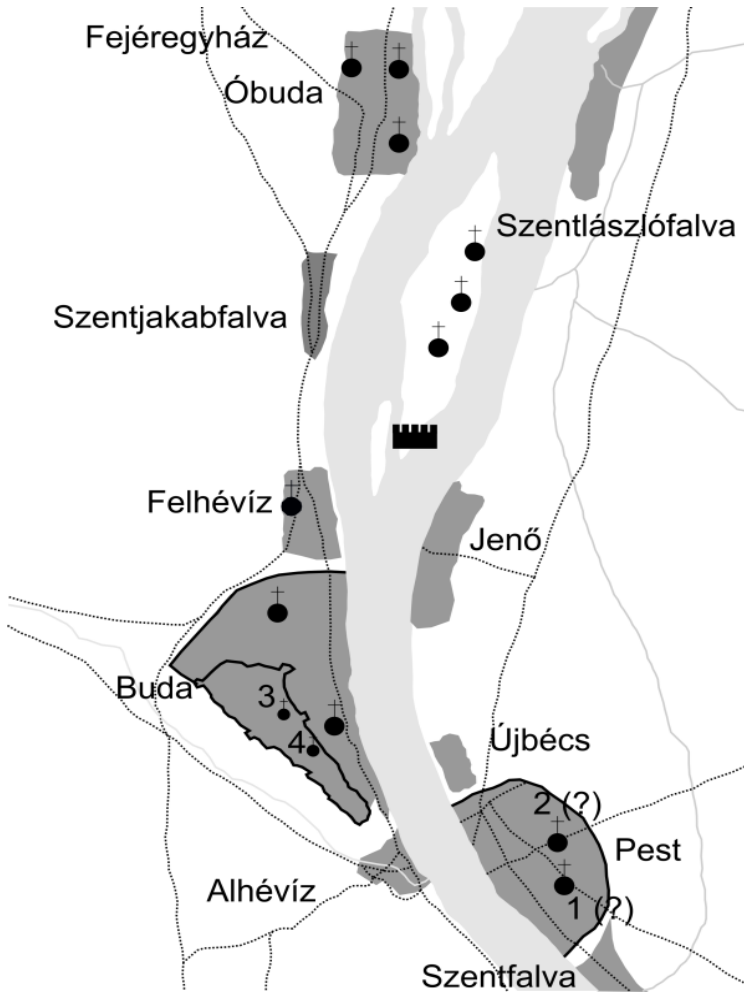


Fig. 1: The topography of Buda, Pest and Óbuda at the turn of the thirteenth century

this one is preserved from the time of the Mongol invasion. According to the work of Thomas of Split, one of the key sources on the invasion in the Hungarian Kingdom the friary was set to fire with “ten thousand

poor wretches" who had fled into the fortified building complex.<sup>16</sup> The number of course is heavily exaggerated but there is another problem when using this source to evaluate the early fourteenth century size of the friary. There is no proof of the same location of the Dominicans before and after the Mongols attacked Pest. Based on another reference though one might still believe that the friary built after the Mongol invasion was also significant in size: in 1309 some members of the high clergy from Transylvania such as Archdeacon Nicolaus not only stayed within the friary but so did his entourage and even their horses were kept there.<sup>17</sup>

### DIETS AND THE MENDICANT FRIARIES AT BUDA CASTLE

The location of the two Mendicant friaries – the Franciscan and the Dominican – at Buda has been extensively discussed in recent decades. The location of both institutions is at least peculiar. The Dominican friary may have been one of the first religious houses in Buda Castle as has been recently demonstrated by Enikő Spekner. The location of the friary leaves little doubt that the plot for the complex was provided by the king. The building in the late medieval period fell relatively far from the royal residence but the situation was somewhat different in the period of the foundation. The first royal palace on the Castle Hill was situated in the north-eastern part of the plateau fairly close to the Dominican friary. The situation changed over time as the *Kammerhof*, the first royal palace, lost its main function and became a property of the Pauline order in 1381. From the mid-fourteenth century a new royal palace complex was built at the southern part of the hill relatively far from the Dominican friary. The significance of the Dominican friary is well reflected in the use of the building as the host institution of the general chapter of the order in 1254. However the friary, according to our present knowledge, never hosted a diet.

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<sup>16</sup> "Nam venientibus Tartaris et locum fortiter impugnantibus communi exitio traditi sunt appositoque igni ad decem milia ferme hominum cum loco et rebus miserabiliter conflagrarunt" – Thomas of Split, *Historia Salonitanorum atque Spalatinorum pontificum / History of the Bishops of Salona and Split* (Central European Medieval Text Series, 4), eds Damir Karbić et al. (Budapest – New York: CEU Press, 2006), pp. 276–279, here pp. 278–279.

<sup>17</sup> *Acta legationis*, p. 167. See also: Zsigmond Jakó (ed), *Erdélyi okmánytár* [Transylvanian cartulary] (4 vols, Budapest: MOL, 1997–2015), vol. 2, p. 83 (nr. 152) and *Anjou-kori oklevéltár*, vol. 2, pp. 223–225 (nr. 514).



The Franciscans however, having settled in the late-thirteenth century, had their friary by one of the eastern gates of the town relatively close to the later palace complex.<sup>18</sup> The question of the centrality of the Franciscan friary in the early period depends on the existence of an early royal residence, apart from the above mentioned *Kammerhof* at the southern part of the Castle Hill. If so, then already from its foundation the friary was at an area between the royal palace and the civic town – a crucial place – but this area certainly became more attractive with the fourteenth-century development of the royal palace.<sup>19</sup> The early importance of the friary is reflected in the fact that a friar, Henricus, was the confessor of Agnes of Austria, queen consort to Andrew III. This may have been important in the choice of the friary as the burial place of the last Árpáadian king in 1301.<sup>20</sup>

From the mid-fifteenth century at least diets were organized at multiple locations in the ‘capital’ of the kingdom.<sup>21</sup> Of course Buda,

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<sup>18</sup> For a thorough analysis of the sources on the friary up to 1444, see: Balázs Kertész, ‘A budai ferences kolostor története 1444-ig’ [The history of the Buda Franciscan friary up to 1444], in Balázs Karlinszky (ed), *Szerzetesrendek a veszprémi egyházmegyében* [Religious orders in the diocese of Veszprém], (Veszprém: Veszprémi Érseki és Főképtalani Levéltár, [2014]), pp. 27–43.

<sup>19</sup> For this, see in details: András Végh, *Buda város középkori helyrajza* [The topography of medieval Buda] (Monumenta Historica Budapestinensia, 15–16) (2 vols, Budapest: Budapesti Történeti Múzeum, 2006–2008), vol. 1, passim, József Laszlovszky, ‘Crown, Gown and Town: Zones of Royal, Ecclesiastical and Civic Interaction in Medieval Buda and Visegrád’, in Derek Keene – Balázs Nagy – Katalin Szende (eds), *Segregation – Integration – Assimilation: Religious and Ethnic Groups in the Medieval Towns of Central and Eastern Europe* (Historical Urban Studies), (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 179–203 and Beatrix F. Romhányi, ‘The Monastic Topography of Medieval Buda’, in *Medieval Buda in Context*. See also: Katalin Szende, ‘How Far Back? Challenges and Limitations of Cadastral Maps for the Study of Urban Form in Hungarian Towns’, in Wilfried Ehbrecht (ed), *Städteatlanten. Vier Jahrzehnte Atlasarbeit in Europa* (Städteforschung. Reihe A: Darstellungen, 80), (Köln–Wien: Böhlau Verlag – Akademie Verlag, 2013), pp. 153–190.

<sup>20</sup> “...Interim anno Domini Mo CCCo Io in festo Sancti Felicis in Pincis idem rex Andreas in castro Budensi requieuit in Domino et sepultus est in ecclesia Sancti Iohannis Evangeliste apud Fratres Minores...” – Alexander Domanovszky (ed), *Chronici Hungarici compositio saeculi XIV*, in Emericus Szentpétery (ed), *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum tempore ducum regumque stirpis Arpadianae gestarum* (2 vols, Budapest: MTA, 1937), vol. 1, pp. 217–505, here p. 478.

<sup>21</sup> For the problem of Buda-Pest as capital: Lajos Bernát Kumorovitz, ‘Buda (és Pest) ‘fővárossá’ alakulásának kezdetei’ [The formation of Buda (and Pest) as ‘capital’ of Hungary], *Tanulmányok Budapest Múltjából*, 18 (1971): 7–57 and András Kubinyi,

especially the castle itself, could not host the masses who gathered from the different areas of the Kingdom during diets. The lesser nobles had their tents and most of their negotiations at the Fields of Rákos or sometimes in the city of Pest. However the prelates and members of the higher nobility met at Buda. As it was shown by András Kubinyi, despite their separation the two 'houses' met on a regular basis.<sup>22</sup> Gábor Mikó has shed light on the picture drawn by Kubinyi by demonstrating that in the early sixteenth century the lesser nobility, the members of the high nobility and the prelates communicated in writing during the diets but this of course does not rule out that the two 'houses' had common negotiations.<sup>23</sup> There were occasions when elected members of the lesser nobility were invited to the castle where the prelates and barons regularly met. By the Jagiello period the lesser nobles gathered regularly at Rákos to have roughly two week negotiations usually without reaching any agreement. Then they would elect delegates from amongst themselves who would continue the negotiations with the barons while the masses of the lesser nobility would return to their homes.

Still there were occasions when great numbers of people would have gathered at Buda. One of these was the opening of the diets which on a number of occasions in the late medieval period took place at the area in front of the royal palace right next to the St Sigismund's chapter and the Franciscan friary. Masses may have heard there when Simon de Begno supposedly proclaimed the papal bull of a crusade on the 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1514.<sup>24</sup> The particular location – between the civic town and the palace – of the Franciscan friary may be one of the reasons why this institution at least in the late medieval period was much more actively involved in the political life of the Kingdom than that of the Dominicans.

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'Buda, Magyarország középkori fővárosa' [Buda, the capital of medieval Hungary], *Tanulmányok Budapest múltjából*, 29 (2001): 11–22. See the English version in the volume: *Medieval Buda in Context*.

<sup>22</sup> András Kubinyi, 'A magyar országgyűlések', p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> Gábor Mikó, 'Ismeretlen országgyűlési emlék a Jagelló-korból' [Unknown parliamentary record from the Jagiellonian period], *Történelmi Szemle*, 56 (2014): 455–480.

<sup>24</sup> Jenő Szűcs, 'A ferences obszervancia és az 1514. évi parasztháború. Egy kódex tanúsága' [The Franciscan Observance and the peasant revolt of 1514. The witness of a codex], *Levél-tári Közlemények*, 43 (1972): 213–263, here pp. 213–214. See more recently on the events of 1514 with special regard to the two diets held that year: Norbert C. Tóth, 'Vita a keresztes hadjárat kihirdetéséről. Országgyűlés 1514 márciusában' [Debates around the proclamation of the crusade. Diet in March 1514], *Erdélyi Múzeum*, 77 (2015): 14–26.

The above-described pattern of late medieval diets took place for instance in May 1525. This time the elected members of the nobility gathered first at the Franciscans in Pest on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May while the royal council had their gathering in the castle. The day after an elected delegate of the royal council, István Podmanicki, bishop of Nitra met the nobility at the Franciscans in Pest, while the royal council gathered at the Franciscans at Buda. The following day masses of the nobility gathered at Rákos.<sup>25</sup> An overview of the political situation is not a focus of the present paper but it is worth noting that this diet was entirely unsuccessful and the discontented lesser nobility decided to gather armed at another diet at Hatvan (some 60 km east of Pest) in June. The diet was held at an open area surrounded with a fence. The king did not stay there during the diet, but he resided at the Premonstratensian abbey.<sup>26</sup> We do not have a clear indication in the sources but it is more than likely that not only did he reside there but part of the negotiations also took place within the walls of the abbey.

During the diet called for St George's Day in 1526 members of a secret noble association, the so-called "Kalandosok", gathered at the church of the Franciscans at Buda again indicating the role of the church. After two days of holding the diet at the area in front of the palace – described above –, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April the nobility agreed to elect one hundred from their number to continue the negotiations with the royal council<sup>27</sup> – these discussions again took place in the church of the Franciscans.<sup>28</sup>

One more place – not connected to any church institution – was also mentioned on a few occasions with regard to the gathering of the royal council. When the king was at Buda the royal council sometimes

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<sup>25</sup> The best source for the events of these days is the diary of Burgio, papal legate. See: Arnold Ipolyi et al. (eds), *Monumenta Vaticana*, vol. 2/1: *Relationes oratorum pontificiorum: 1524–1526*, pp. 188–195.

<sup>26</sup> "Item feria quinta post festum visitacionis beatissime virginis Marie, religiosis fratribus in Hathwan degentibus, apud quos Regia Maiestas hospicum habuit, iussu sue Maiestatis. pro hospitalitate eorundem dati sunt fl. XX." – Vilmos Fraknói, *II. Lajos számadási könyve 1525* [The account book of Louis II] (Budapest: Athaeneum, 1876), p. 190.

<sup>27</sup> "Et che li Signori havessero di andrae in San Johanne, et convenire cum loro, et foro eletti cento presone et lo resto di la nobilità si comenzó ad andar via." – *Monumenta Vaticana*, vol. 2/1, pp. 372–375 (the quotation is at p. 374). See also Kubinyi, 'A magyar országgyűlések', p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

met at the royal palace itself. For instance in 1521 Ferenc Battyáni, master of the butlers, in a letter sent to his brother Boldizsár, informs him that the barons gathered in the council chamber at the royal palace.<sup>29</sup> Battyáni notes that often they entered the palace at the morning, leaving only at vesper.<sup>30</sup> Again one of Battyáni's letter dated to the 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1525 tells of the pact of eleven prelates and barons which came to light in the palace of Buda (*in arce Budensi*).<sup>31</sup>

## MENDICANT CHURCHES AS HOSTS OF DIETS OUTSIDE OF PEST-BUDA

Though most of the diets were held in the so-called *medium regni* and moreover in the late medieval 'capital city' of the Hungarian Kingdom there are a number of instances when, because of political or military reasons, the king met the nobility at other locations. At these places as well as at Pest and Buda Mendicant friaries sometimes associated with diets either as hosts or as places of accommodation for some of the participants. In the following subchapter the aim is to give an overview of some friaries that hosted diets at these settlements.

### *Szeged*

The first time a friary is associated with a diet apart from the friaries at the centre of the realm is Szeged some 180 km south-southwest of Pest. A diet called by King Wladislas I met at the town in 1444.

The turbulent few days that Wladislas, the papal legate Juliano Cesarini, and János Hunyadi spent at Szeged in the first days of August 1444 has been subject to debates for decades now,<sup>32</sup> but from the point of

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<sup>29</sup> Its location is unknown. See: Károly Magyar, 'Et... introivit ad Hungariam sola germanica ancilla nomine Maria ...' Mary of Hungary and Buda', in Orsolya Réthelyi et al. (eds), *Mary of Hungary: The Queen and Her Court 1521–1531*, (Budapest: Budapest History Museum, 2005), pp. 97–119, here pp. 99–100 and András Kubinyi, 'A királyi udvar a késő középkori Magyarországon' [Royal court in late medieval Hungary], in Nóra G. Etényi – Ildikó Horn (eds), *Idővel paloták... Magyar udvari kultúra a 16-17. században* [Palaces in time... Hungarian courtly culture in the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries] (Budapest: Balassi, 2005), pp. 13–32.

<sup>30</sup> "et sepe cum mane castrum intrabimus, post vespas de consilio exhibimus" – MNL OL DL 104 405, 17 May 1521. Edited in: Béla Iványi, *A körmendi levéltár missilis levelei* [The letters of the archive of Körmend] (Körmendi Füzetek, 5) (Körmend: Rábavidék Ny., 1943), p. 29 (nr. 144). See: Kubinyi, 'A királyi udvar', pp. 17–18.

<sup>31</sup> MNL OL DL DL 24 148 and 28 149.

<sup>32</sup> The most detailed analysis of the events is still: Pál Engel, 'A szegedi eskü és a váradi béke: Adalék az 1444. év eseménytörténetéhez' [The oath of Szeged and the

view of this paper the most important element of these negotiations is the location. Unfortunately none of the charters<sup>33</sup> issued in those days at Szeged, neither the so-called “Oath of Szeged” preserved in the chronicle of Jan Długosz, nor Bonfini’s *Rerum Ungaricarum Decades* and Callimachus’ *Historia de rege Vladislao seu de clade Varnensi*, refer to the more exact location of the diet and the negotiations of the king and the Ottoman envoys that led to the short lived treaty of Oradea (or Szeged as it was erroneously called up to the 1970s).<sup>34</sup> The *Gesta Hungarorum* of János Thuróczy also mentions the diet being called to Szeged but no reference is made in his work to the specific locations at which the diet was held.<sup>35</sup> Despite the lack of direct information the secondary literature notes that the Holy Virgin church of the Franciscans was the home to the diet in 1444.<sup>36</sup> Some of the works, going back to the unreliable *Die Geschichten der Ungarn und ihrer Landsassen* of Ignaz Aurelius Fessler, suppose that 3000 people were present at the diet in the

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treaty of Oradea: contribution to the political history of the year 1444], in Éva H. Balázs – Erik Fügedi – Ferenc Maksay (eds), *Mályusz Elemér emlékkönyve. Társadalom- és művelődéstörténeti tanulmányok* [Elemér Mályusz honorary volume. Studies in social and intellectual history], (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1984), pp. 77–96. Published again in Pál Engel, *Honor, vár, ispánság. (Válogatott tanulmányok)* [Honour, castle, county: collected essays] (Millenniumi magyar történelem. Historikusok), ed. Enikő Csukovits (Budapest: Osiris, 2003), pp. 198–224.

<sup>33</sup> E.g. MNL OL DL 13 794 and 59 289.

<sup>34</sup> Joannes Dlugossius, *Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae Lib. XI et XII (1441–1444)*, ed. Jan Dąbrowski (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2001), p. 301–308; Antonius de Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum decades* (4 vols Bibliotheca Scriptorum Medii Recentisque Aevorum Saeculum XV), vols I–IV/1, eds Iosephus Fögel – Béla Iványi – Ladislaus Juhász, (Leipzig–Budapest: Teubner–Egyetemi Nyomda, 1936–1941); vol. IV/2: eds Margarita Kulcsár – Petrus Kulcsár (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1976), vol. III–6, pp. 115–130 and Philippus Callimachus, *Historia de rege Vladislao* (Bibliotheca Latina Medii et Recentioris Aevi, 3) ed. Irmina Lichonska (Varsoviae: PWM, 1961), Liber III. For the events of the year before the campaign that led to the defeat at Varna: *ibid.*, pp. 166–178.

<sup>35</sup> Johannes de Thurocz, *Chronica Hungarorum I* (Bibliotheca Scriptorum Medii Recentisque Aevorum. Series Nova, 7), eds Elisabeth Galántai – Julius Kristó (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1985), cap. 41.

<sup>36</sup> Gyula Kristó (ed), *Szeged története (A kezdetektől 1686-ig)* [The history of Szeged. From the beginning to 1686], (4 vols, Szeged: Somogyi Könyvtár, 1983), vol. 1, p. 439 (the part in question is the work of Péter Kulcsár); Sándor Bálint, *Szeged reneszánsz kori műveltsége* [The Renaissance culture of Szeged] (Humanizmus és reformáció, 5) (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1975), pp. 25–28; Ferenc Horváth, ‘A szegedi vár története’ [The history of the castle of Szeged], *Castrum Bene*, 4 (2006): pp. 5–30, here pp. 23–24.

courtyard of the Holy Virgin friary.<sup>37</sup> First, no medieval chronicle – referred by these works – mentions this<sup>38</sup> but it is even more doubtful if one looks at the place itself where the earlier Franciscan church of Szeged is located.

The Franciscans had two churches at medieval Szeged. Apart from the church of the Observant Franciscans founded in the late-fifteenth century that still stands in the so-called Alsóváros (Lower Town) there was another one that stood somewhere closer to the early Árpád-age castle.<sup>39</sup> According to our present knowledge it stood within the area surrounded by a fortification plank. The whole area of the plank may have accommodated 3000 armed nobles but certainly not the garden of the Franciscans. Despite the fact that there is no direct evidence of the friary of the Franciscans hosting the diet, this still may be the most acceptable location. On the one hand the king and the royal council – though not the whole of the nobility of course – are likely to have been residing in the fortified part of the town of Szeged. Within that area the most significant building at that time was supposedly the Franciscan church. One other indirect piece of evidence may also be listed here: according to the chronicle of Długosz, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August King Wladislas I took an oath to the Eucharist to continue the war against the Ottomans. This oath is likely to have taken place at a church, and despite the existence of a chapel of significant size in the inner castle, the Franciscan church may have been more suitable for such gathering. The next occasion when a diet can be associated with a friary was the one held again at Szeged in 1459.<sup>40</sup> Again no clear indication survives about the

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<sup>37</sup> Ignaz Aurelius Fessler, *Die Geschichten der Ungarn und ihrer Landsassen* (4 vols, Leipzig: Gleditsch, 1816), vol. 4, p. 587 and József Teleki, *Hunyadiak kora Magyarországon* [The age of the Hunyadis in Hungary] (12 vols, Budapest: Emich és Eisenfels, 1852–1863), vol. 1, pp. 393–394. Their data was once accepted by scholarship without any tracing of its origin.

<sup>38</sup> See note 32.

<sup>39</sup> On the topography of Szeged, see: András Kubinyi, *Városfejlődés és vásárhálózat a középkori Alföldön és az Alföld szélén* [Urban development and market network at the Great Hungarian Plain and at its edge] (*Dél-Alföldi évszázadok*, 14) (Szeged: Agapé, 2000). For the most recent findings on the urban structure: László Blazovich et al. (eds), *Szeged* (*Hungarian Atlas of Historic Towns*, 3), (Szeged: Csongrád Megyei Honismereti Egyesület, 2014). For the castle area and especially the first church of the Franciscans: Horváth, 'A szegedi vár', pp. 22–24.

<sup>40</sup> Kubinyi, *Városfejlődés és vásárhálózat*, p. 193. The diet was held again "ad civitatem nostram Zegediensem". For the critical edition of the decrees of the diet of 1459, see: Franciscus Döry et al. (eds), *Decreta regni Hungariae 1458–1490* (*A Magyar Országos*

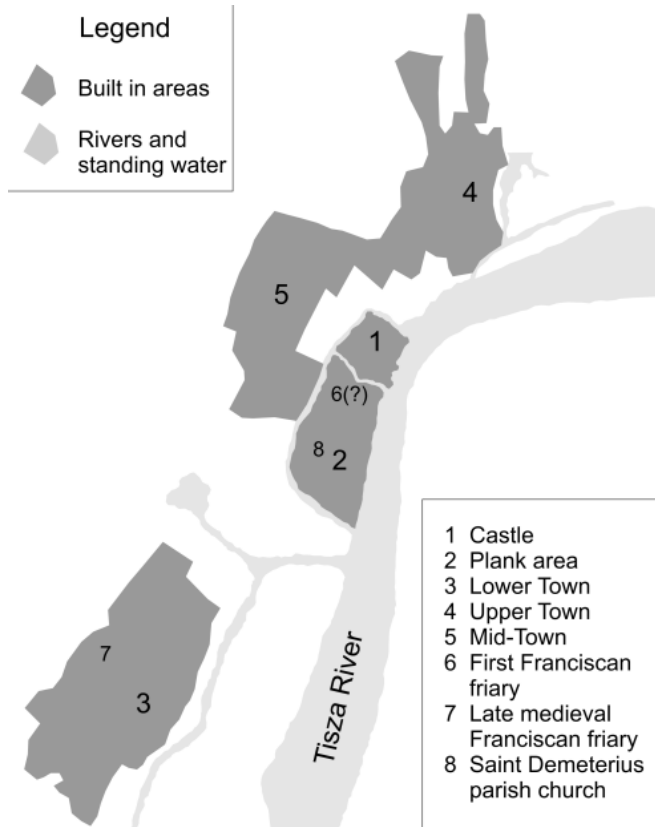


Fig. 2: Topography of Szeged in the sixteenth century (after Kubinyi and Blazovich [ed.])

location of this diet called by Matthias I. The decrees were issued at the *civitas*, the royal town, which may refer to the enclosed part of the town. In 1495 a less well-known diet was held again at Szeged. King Wladislas II called a diet for the 18<sup>th</sup> of October. The king arrived on the 22<sup>nd</sup> the latest and left no more than four days later.<sup>41</sup> Again no reference to the location

Levéltár kiadványai II. Forráskiadványok, 19), (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1989), pp. 107-118. For an English translation of the decrees, see: János M. Bak et al. (eds), *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, vol. 3: 1458-1490, pp. 9-14.

<sup>41</sup> Neumann, 'Királyi hatalom', pp. 49-50. Apart from Neumann the diet is referred to in: Gyula Kristó - Pál Engel - András Kubinyi, *Magyarország története, 1301-1526*

of the diet is known, but one of the charters leaves no doubt that the king resided again at the *civitas*.<sup>42</sup> This is important because by this time there was another church foundation of significant size in another part of Szeged, the church of the Observant Franciscans in the so-called Alsóváros (Lower Town) mentioned above, but this building was certainly not finished and the Lower Town was not then referred to as a *civitas*.

### Győr

The town of Győr hosted a diet called in 1455. Apart from masses of the Hungarian nobility and the prelates and barons, two prominent guests Đurađ Branković, the Serbian despot, and John of Capistrano, the famous Franciscan preacher were also at Győr during the days of the diet. Because of their presence not only Hungarian sources but sources on the life of Capistrano refer to the diet and the political meetings held between Hunyadi, Branković and the Franciscan friar.<sup>43</sup>

The calls for the diet that have come down to us unsurprisingly do not specify the location within the town where the diet was intended to take place.<sup>44</sup> The location of the diet of 1455 is anything but clear despite the fact that most of the scholars who dealt with the history of the town or with the development of the Franciscan order have

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[A History of Hungary, 1301 to 1526] (Osiris Tankönyvek). (Budapest: Osiris, 2005). See also: István Petrovics, 'Városi elit a középkori Dél-Magyarországon. Pécs, Szeged és Temesvár esete' [Urban elites in medieval Southern-Hungary. The case of Pécs, Szeged and Timișoara], *Urbis. Magyar Várostörténeti Évkönyv*, 3 (2008): 41–69, here p. 43.

<sup>42</sup> "Datum in civitate nostra Zegeadiensis" – MNL OL DL 20 298, 27 566; MNL OL DF 219 080 and 252 621.

<sup>43</sup> On the Hungarian chapter of the life of Capestrano, see: Ödön Bölcskey, *Capistranói Szent János élete és kora* [St Giovanni da Capestrano and his age] (2 vols, Székesfehérvár: Debreczeni István Könyvnyomdája, 1924), vol. 2, pp. 209–419. Specifically on the period of the diet of Győr: *ibid.*, pp. 233–247 and more recently: Stanko Andrić, 'Kapisztrán Szent János és Brankovics György: egy lehetetlen kompromisszum' [Giovanni da Capestrano and Đurađ Branković, an impossible compromise], in Peregrin Kálmán – László Veszprémy (eds), *Európa védelmében : Kapisztrán Szent János és a nándorfehérvári diadal emlékezete* [In the defense of Europe. Giovanni da Capestrano and the memory of the victory at Belgrade] (A Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum könyvtára), ([Budapest]: Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum – Line Design, 2013), pp. 31–51. The existing primary sources on the event are discussed in details in both works.

<sup>44</sup> MNL OL DL 81 210, edited in Zichy, ix, 498–499 (no 364); MNL OL DL 81 209. Edited in Zichy, vol. IX, 499 (nr. 365); DL 81 212 edited in Zichy, vol. IX, 501 (nr. 367).



suggested that the diet took place at the Franciscan friary.<sup>45</sup> Usually this view is justified by the fact that the castle would not have been able to accommodate the mass of people who attended the diet. On the one hand, the Franciscan friary was certainly no different in the sense of its own size constrictions. On the other hand, the friary was in the suburb of the town which means that the tents of the participants of the diet may have been erected around the area of the friary, but no indication of this is preserved in any of the narrative sources or charters to my knowledge. Based on the fact that some of the early gatherings of the Franciscans were held in the friary it may have been a significant church<sup>46</sup> but certainly not big enough to host the gathering of the whole of the nobility. The location of the friary itself has not been certainly established, though finding a location that could support the gathering of a diet may help support the suggestion of a certain place. György Györffy supposed that it stood eastwards of the centre of the town along the road leading to Buda fairly close to the supposed location of the Dominicans.<sup>47</sup> In 2004 traces of a Gothic building were excavated which were identified with the Franciscan friary with some incertitude.<sup>48</sup> If so then the church itself stood relatively far from the bishop's palace, the parish church, and the cathedral of the town.

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<sup>45</sup> Teleki, *Hunyadiak kora*, vol. 1, pp. 222–224; Károly Ráth, Győrvárosa története (folytatás és vége), [The history of the town of Győr (second and final part)] *Győri Közlöny* 98 (6 December 1863), 391–392, here 391; Fehér Ipoly, *Győr megye és város egyetemes leírása* [The general description of Győr county and town] (Budapest: Franklin Ny., 1874), 414–415; Karácsonyi, *Sz. Ferencz I*, 334, Vince Bedy, *Győr katolikus vallásos életének multja* [The Catholic religious life of the town of Győr] (Győregyházmegye multjából, 5) (Győr: Győregyházmegyei Alap Nyomdája, 1939), p. 32; Ferenc Jenei, 'Győr a magyar humanizmus korában' [Győr in the age of humanism], *Győri Szemle*, 11/3 (1940):121–142, here p. 126 (Published separately under the same title: Győr: Baross Ny., [1940]).

<sup>46</sup> Samu Borovszky, 'A ferencziek történetéhez' [The history of the Franciscans], *Történelmi Tár*, 18 (1895): 749–755, here pp. 752–755 and János Karácsonyi, *Szt. Ferencz rendjének története Magyarországon 1711-ig* [The history of the Franciscan Order in Hungary until 1711] (2 vols, Budapest: M. Tud. Akad., 1922), vol. 1, pp. 114–117 and 334.

<sup>47</sup> ÁMTF, vol. 2, pp. 598–600.

<sup>48</sup> Karácsonyi, *Szt. Ferencz rendjének története*, pp. 174–176. On the identification of the finds with the Franciscan friary, see: Eszter Szőnyi, 'Győr-belvárosi ásások' [Excavations at Győr-Downtown], *Arrabona*, 45/1 (2007): 109–148, here pp. 121–122, 143, 148 and Katalin Szende, 'How Far Back', pp. 175–176.

What one can clearly suppose is that John of Capistrano himself stayed in the friary during the period he was in the town. Amongst the sources the ones that concern the activity of Capistrano deserve special attention in the present paper. Giovanni da Tagliacozzo, a friar and companion of Capistrano, when describing the time Capistrano spent at Győr tells us that János Hunyadi, the regent at that time, so respected the friar that he would invite him to every meeting of the royal council as well as to the gatherings of the lesser nobles. Without trying to over-interpret the words of Tagliacozzo, one may believe that neither the secret (royal) council nor the lesser nobility had their gathering in the friary if Capistrano had to be invited to them.<sup>49</sup> (Though the invitation may also have meant simply that he had the right to take part at these meetings despite not having any official duty at the diet.) Also one has to consider that it is unlikely that the friary was not be home to any gathering during the diets as Capistrano himself, according to the contemporary and later chroniclers, was a key figure in settling disputes of the time. The place where he resided in these weeks was certainly the place where Hunyadi, Branković or members of the high clergy and barons turned up to meet Capistrano. Though no contemporary evidence tells of the friary as the location of the diet, and based on the account of Tagliacozzo one might assume that the royal council, with the bishop of Győr involved, may have met at the bishop's palace within the castle, and yet some meetings may have taken place at the Franciscans.

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<sup>49</sup> „Principes, barones, nobiles atque plebeii eum summopere diligebant et honorabant, quorum tanta multitudo confluebat ad eum, ut nonnisi latissimis campis aut maxima platea eos campere valebat. (...) Et cum tum rex abesset a regno, essetque ipsius regni gubernator et defensor illustris dominus Iohannes de Huniad, tantam iste devotionem pariter et amorem concepit in ipsum virum Dei Fr. Iohannem, ut quaecunq; essent pro regno tractanda tam in secretis, quam in publicis dietis, ipse cum aliis baronibus hunc vocabant, admittebant proferebantque, nihil sine suo consilio agere volentes.” The original text found in the Biblioteca Nazionale at Naples (Cod. IX. F. 62. [saec. XV]) was published by Leonard Lemmens, ‘Victoriae mirabilis divinitus de Turcis habitae, duce vener. beato Patre Fratrem Ioanne de Capistrano, series descripta per Fratrem Ioannem de Tagliacotio, illius cosium et comitem, atque beato Iacobo de Marchia directa’, *Acta Ordinis Minorum*, 25 (1906): 28–31, 62–68, 108–109, 188–190, 228–229, 290–292, 322–324, 352–357 and 399–404. The part in question is: *ibid.*, p. 29 (it has been published also as a separate volume with the same title: *Ad Claras Aquas [Quaracchi]: Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae*, 1906). I acknowledge György Galamb's help concerning Giovanni da Tagliacozzo.

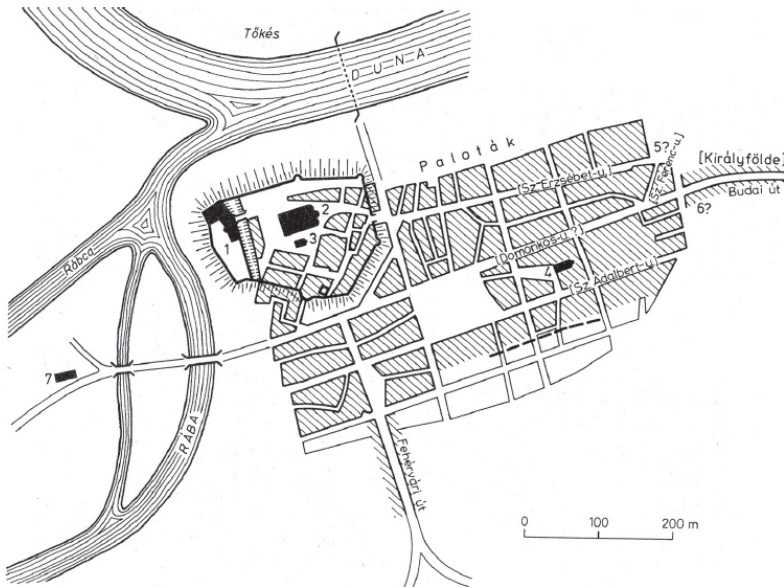


Fig. 3: The topography of Győr in the early fourteenth century (after Györffy)

### Tata

The *oppidum* of Tata was not amongst the major settlements of medieval Hungary. However its location close to the major power centres, Pest-Buda, Esztergom and Fehérvár – complemented with a royal castle, provided Tata an important position compared to its size from time to time. One of these examples is the year 1510 when the king and the nobility met there. The diet of Tata in 1510 is one of the few diets of which not only we do have exceptionally good source material but these sources have been researched recently in a systematic manner. Thanks to the studies of Bálint Lakatos and others, the sources kept in the Hungarian National Archives as well as the foreign correspondences related to this diet have been exhaustively studied. Amongst them, a report of a Venetian envoy Pietro Pasqualigo tells exceptional details of the location of one of the gatherings of the diet.<sup>50</sup> According to his report

<sup>50</sup> Bálint Lakatos, 'A tatai országgyűlés', see also Bálint Lakatos, 'Haag, Mrakes, Cuspinianus és Helianus. A német és francia követek tárgyalásai a magyar elittel az 1510-es tatai országgyűlés idején' [The negotiations of the German and French envoys with the Hungarian elite in 1510 during the diet of Tata], *Komárom-Esztergom Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei*, 17 (2011): 223–238.

dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 1510: *I went there and I found all the aforementioned prelates and barons seated in a circle at the uncovered courtyard of the Franciscan friary, all around, there was an innumerable crowd: in all the windows of the cells of the brothers and around on the roof there were people everywhere.*<sup>51</sup> Not only the choice of the Franciscan friary, but the relatively small town of Tata, are noteworthy as Wladislas II himself did not spend much time within the walls of the castle. During the period before the diet a plague epidemic burst through the country and that made the smaller settlements a more attractive setting than the major cities such as Buda, Esztergom, or Fehérvár. The Hungarian nobility originally gathered at Fehérvár for a diet in June 1510. After a few days the barons managed to persuade the nobles waiting for the opening of the diet at Fehérvár to elect forty delegates from amongst them who would then go to Tata. Originally the plan was to receive the delegates at the castle. However Wladislas did not want to take part in the long negotiations with the forty delegates – and it was not the normal habit by then – therefore their audience was relocated to the Franciscan friary. Despite the fact that the second negotiations took place at the castle already in the weeks before the diet, the friary was home to several important political meetings.

## CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK

Despite this short overview being far from complete, it is still more or less clear that the Mendicant churches were more important as places of diets than those of other orders or parish churches. The question already posed in the introduction is why? It is hard to draw conclusions based on a few cases discussed but some presumptions may still be formulated. First, the location of these churches within the towns in question was obviously a key factor. In the case of Pest, despite questions about the location of diets on the plain surrounding the town, there is no doubt that the Franciscan church was the one closest to Rákos. In the case of Buda as well, the Franciscans stood the closest to

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<sup>51</sup> “et cussi andato ritrovai tuti li prelati et baroni sentuti in circolo nela piazza scoperta del claustro de san Francesco circumstante innumerabili turba: essendo tute le fenestre de le cele di frati et tuti li tecti undique pieni di gente” – Reports of Pietro Pasqualigo, 1509–1512. Manuscript: Venezia, Biblioteca del Museo Correr a Venezia, Cod. Cicogna 2126. 100<sup>r</sup>. This part of the report is edited in Lakatos, ‘A tatai országgyűlés’, p. 29 (see the quote at note 1: *ibid.*, p. 52).

the late medieval royal palace along with the St Sigismund's church which however was less significant in size than the friary.<sup>52</sup> This factor, the size of these churches, should also be considered when we are trying to find the reason for the choice of these buildings as locations for parts of diets. Despite both friaries in the Buda Castle as discussed above being significant in size, both the German and Hungarian parishes actually became bigger buildings by the early sixteenth century. However there was an important advantage that friaries had over the parishes. These churches not only stood by themselves but were surrounded by a friary which could provide accommodation and/or food service. Also many of the meetings were not in the churches but rather in the refectories of the friaries which provided a much safer and more private place for political meetings than other locations in the towns. Providing accommodation during diets may have been a significant source of income for the friaries. Though the example comes from the Premonstratensians, it is telling that King Louis II when residing at their abbey at Hatvan during the above-mentioned diet in 1525 gave 20 florins to the monks for his and his retinue's upkeep. It does not mean however that during the diets the accommodation of those present was the friars' duty. For instance in 1510, during the diet of Tata, Pasqualigo refers to the attendees having their lunch somewhere other than the friary.<sup>53</sup>

It is also a question how much the social connections of the Franciscans and Dominicans played a role in the choice of one or another institution as the place of a diet.<sup>54</sup> The question is not only to

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<sup>52</sup> For the size of the St Sigismund chapel: István Feld, 'Beszámoló az egykori budai Szent Zsigmond templom és környéke feltárásáról' [Report on the excavation of the former St Sigismund church and its surroundings], *Budapest régiségei*, 33 (1999): 35-50. For the Franciscans, see: Júlia Altmann, 'Az óbudai és a budavári ferences templom és kolostor kutatásai' [Research of the Franciscan churches and friaries of Óbuda and Buda Castle], in Andrea Haris (ed), *Koldulórendi építészeti a középkori Magyarországon. Tanulmányok* [Mendicant architecture in medieval Hungary. Studies] (Művészettörténet - Műemlékvédelem, 7), (Budapest: Országos Műemlékvédelmi Hivatal, 1994), pp. 137-152 and Júlia Altmann - Pál Lővei, 'A budavári ferences templom építészeti elemei és sírkövei' [Architectural remains and tombstones from the Franciscan friary of Buda], *Budapest Régiségei*, 38 (2004): pp. 11-34.

<sup>53</sup> Lakatos, 'A tatai', p. 43 (esp. the quotation in note 92, *ibid.*, p. 58).

<sup>54</sup> See most recently: Balázs Kertész, 'A Gyulaiak és a ferencesek' [The Gyulai family and the Franciscans], in Attila Bárány - Kornél Szovák - Gábor Dreska (eds), *Arcana tabularii. Tanulmányok Solymosi László tiszteletére* [Studies in honour of László

what extent a certain baron or prelate was related to members of the orders but how much the kings favoured certain ecclesiastical institutions. If one looks at the alms giving customs of the members of the royal families it is certainly not evenly distributed. Beatrix Romhányi recently analysed the account book of Sigismund of Jagiello to see the proportion of the alms given to the different orders and religious houses. She demonstrated that from the alms given to the Mendicants orders, almost 80% went into the hands of Franciscans from which the Observants, and especially the Observant friary at Buda, profited the most.<sup>55</sup> Sigismund, coming from outside of the country, obviously went by the habits of Wladislas II and the court of the Jagiellos.

This short overview, despite its obvious incompleteness, still allows us to conclude that in the political life of Hungary the Mendicant orders were important - above all the Franciscans who from the fifteenth century became almost the exclusive hosts of diets amongst the ecclesiastical institutions. After the battle of Mohács the political centre of the kingdom shifted and by the mid-sixteenth century the usual place of the gatherings of the Hungarian estates was Pressburg. It already was home to some diets during the reign of Sigismund (1402 and 1435) and in 1523, but after Mohács and moreover after the loss of Buda, Pressburg became the capital (along with Vienna) of the Kingdom of Hungary.<sup>56</sup> It is worth noting that though the royal council met at the castle in 1523 during the diet, some negotiations may have taken place in the town

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Solymosi], (2 vols, Budapest–Debrecen: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia – Debreceni Egyetem – Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar – Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem, 2014), pp. 235–248 with a short but concise summary of the existing literature.

<sup>55</sup> Beatrix F. Romhányi, *Kolduló barátok, gazdálkodó szerzetesek. Koldulórendi gazdálkodás a késő középkori Magyarországon*. Unpublished dissertation submitted to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Budapest: [N. p.], 2013), pp. 218–231. Available online: [http://real-d.mtak.hu/688/7/dc\\_702\\_13\\_doktori\\_mu.pdf](http://real-d.mtak.hu/688/7/dc_702_13_doktori_mu.pdf) (last accessed: 28 April 2015) For the account book of the prince's stay in Hungary, see: Adorján Divéky (ed), *Zsigmond lengyel herceg budai számadásai* (Magyar Történelmi Tár, 26) (Budapest: MTA, 1914).

<sup>56</sup> Géza Pálffy, 'A Magyar Királyság új fővárosa: Pozsony a XVI. században' [The new capital of the Hungarian Kingdom: Pressburg in the sixteenth century], *Fons*, 20 (2013): 3–76.

itself and even the Franciscan friary may have served as a place for some meetings or to accommodate some who attended the diet.<sup>57</sup>

Already, the election of Ferdinand I as king of Hungary at the end of 1526 took place at Pressburg showing the shift of political power towards the Habsburg areas.<sup>58</sup> It is telling that the election took place nowhere other than the Franciscan friary of the town. This was not exceptional at all – from the mid-sixteenth century, the regular place of the gatherings of the ‘lower chamber’ at diets held at Pressburg was the refectory of the friary. This is well reflected in a note made by an envoy of the town of Sopron in 1578: “the friary where the people of the kingdom usually gather.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> See: István Zombori, *Jagelló–Habsburg rendezési kísérlet 1523-ban Krzysztof Szydłowiecki naplója alapján* [Jagiello – Habsburg dispute settling attempt in 1523 in light of the diary of Krzysztof Szydłowiecki]([Piliscsaba]: PPKÉ BTK, 2006), p. 281 and István Zombori, ‘A magyar királyi udvar 1523-ban. Krzysztof Szydłowiecki lengyel követ beszámolója’ [The Hungarian royal court in 1523. The diary of the Polish envoy, Krzysztof Szydłowiecki], in *Idővel paloták...*, pp. 33–44, here pp. 36–38.

<sup>58</sup> For the diet, see: Vilmos Fraknói, *Magyar országgyűlési emlékek: történeti bevezetésekkel* [Hungarian dietary records – with historical notes] (12 vols, Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1874), vol. 1, pp. 33–70.

<sup>59</sup> “in monasterio, ubi regnicolae regulariter convenire solent” – MNL Győr-Moson-Sopron Megye Soproni Levéltára (Sopron City Archive), Sopron Város Levéltára (Archive of the town of Sopron) Lad. X et K, Fasc. 7, No 222d. Quoted in Pálffy, ‘A Magyar Királyság új fővárosa’, p. 18. See also *ibid.*, pp. 20–21 for the diets held at the Franciscans in the sixteenth century.

# The Question of the Spatial Identification of the Brno and Jihlava Franciscans in the Late Middle Ages in Connection with the Poorer Social Strata Based on the Study of Taxation Records

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**Abstract:** It has sometimes been argued that a quite frequent location of Franciscan friaries close to town walls and/or town gates was due to their close proximity to the poor living there. The present article explores the correlation between the location of two Moravian Franciscan friaries situated in these areas and their spatial identification with the poorer strata around their friaries during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This will be considered in the light of research on social topography carried out for the late medieval Swiss towns. Thanks to their well preserved taxation records the towns of Brno and Jihlava will be examined. For Brno *rejstříky městské sbírky* (registers of the town's collection) and *berní knihy* (taxation books) will be studied, with a particular focus on the period between the years 1345 and 1365. For Jihlava *rejstříky městské sbírky* only survived, the most complete of them from between 1425 to 1442 will be analyzed.

**Key words:** Franciscan friaries, poorer strata, taxation records, social topography, Brno, Jihlava

**Rezumat:** Despre identificarea spațială a franciscanilor din Brno și Jihlava în Evul Mediu târziu. Analiza legăturii franciscanilor cu straturile sociale sărace în lumina registrelor de impozite A fost deseori invocat în cercetarea referitoare la topografia ordinelor mendicante faptul că franciscanii au preferat să-și construiască conventurile în apropierea zidurilor orașelor și/sau a porților de intrare în orașe datorită proximității săracilor care locuiau în aceste zone urbane. Prezentul articol își propune să investigheze conexiunea existentă între localizarea a două conventuri franciscane din Moravia în ariile locuite de săraci și identificarea lor spațială cu straturile sărace ale orașenimii din apropierea conventurilor lor în intervalul cronologic cuprins între secolele XIV și XV. Acest aspect va fi analizat



din perspectiva cercetărilor asupra topografiei sociale care a caracterizat orașele elvețiene în Evul Mediu târziu. Supraviețuirea registrelor de impozite ale orașelor Brno și Jihlava permite o atare analiză asupra conventurilor franciscane și a legăturilor lor cu populația săracă a acestor două orașe. Pentru Brno vor fi analizate *rejstříky městské sbírky* (registrele din colecțiile orașului) și *běrní knihy* (registrele de impozite), insistând asupra perioadei cuprinse între anii 1345-1365. Datorită faptului că pentru Jihlava nu au supraviețuit decât *rejstříky městské sbírky*, analiza acestei categorii de surse se va concentra asupra perioadei 1425-1442.

**Cuvinte cheie:** conventuri franciscane, categorii sociale sărace, registre de impozite, topografie socială, Brno, Jihlava

The present article explores the correlation between the location of the Franciscans and their spatial identification with the poorer people around their friaries during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in two Moravian towns. The location of the Brno and Jihlava Franciscan houses will be considered in order to determine the extent to which these friaries were situated close to where the poorer strata in the respective towns resided. This investigation will be carried out in light of the research methodologies on social topography previously used for late medieval Swiss towns.

The question of the placement of the mendicant friaries among the poorer strata of urban society has already been given scholarly attention. Some of the relevant scholars maintain a general, shared opinion when explaining the placement of the mendicant friaries in close proximity to the poor. Thus Vlček, Sommer and Foltýn argue that it was usual to find mendicant orders in the quarters of the poor.<sup>1</sup> Some, like Hoffmann, see the location of Mendicant friaries among the poorer strata to be rooted generally in the original ideals specifically promoted by the Dominicans and the Franciscans, such as charity.<sup>2</sup>

Gilomen's study, on the other hand, sees contrasting results. The author's analysis draws on the specific findings about social topography carried out in late medieval Swiss towns, and includes a physical

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<sup>1</sup> Pavel Vlček - Petr Sommer - Dušan Foltýn, *Encyklopedie českých klášterů* [The encyclopedia of the Bohemian monasteries] (Prague: Libri, 1998), p. 515. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

<sup>2</sup> František Hoffmann, *České město ve středověku* [A Bohemian town in the Middle Ages] (Prague: Panorama, 1992), p. 318.

identification of the location of the poor in connection with the Mendicant friaries.<sup>3</sup> The period Gilomen focuses on overlaps with that of the present article, so his study applies well to the research on the Moravian Franciscan friaries of Brno and Jihlava. His analysis can be compared and contrasted with the situation in Brno and Jihlava, especially in connection with Gilomen's argument that the poor and the rich were intermixed within urban settlements.<sup>4</sup>

The choice of the towns of Brno and Jihlava for a study of social topography is primarily motivated by the well-preserved taxation records for both towns. Before examining the poorer strata in both Brno and Jihlava, however, it is indispensable to mention the limitations that a study of the available records entails. It has to be borne in mind that the examined sources were compiled in order to keep a record of taxpayers in the respective towns and not to record discrepancies in their social status, despite such implications being inherent in tax-related documents. This is significant in that it brings about the question of the extent to which the taxpayers in the records could be called poor. Within the context of all the different groups of the Brno and Jihlava taxpayers examined, it may be, on the one hand, correct to call them poor, especially if they are contrasted with the affluent citizens of these towns. On the other hand, this would create an inaccurate picture because the studied records leave out different groups which could also be counted among the poor but do not appear in the documents. Beggars are an example of a group which was completely exempt from the records, which meant that their numbers were beyond any record. In the case of beggars in particular, it cannot be doubted that their numbers were not insignificant due to their indisputable presence in medieval towns.<sup>5</sup>

The definition of poverty adopted in this study is therefore based on the financial standing of the taxpayers from the Brno and Jihlava taxation records. Also, the term "poor taxpayers" is avoided and the more balanced term of "poorer taxpayers" is used when referring to this stratum because of both the economic definition of the taxpayers'

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<sup>3</sup> Hans-Jörg Gilomen, 'Stadtmauern und Bettelorden', in Brigitt Sigel (ed), *Stadt- und Landmauern*, vol. 1: Beiträge zum Stand der Forschung (Zürich: Vdf Hochschulverlag AG an der ETH Zürich, 1995), p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> Gilomen, 'Stadtmauern', p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> František Hoffmann, *Středověké město v Čechách a na Moravě* [A medieval town in Bohemia and Moravia] (Prague: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2010), p. 330.

poverty and the limitations of the taxation records regarding the other poorer groups.

In the fourteenth century, Brno was one of the most populous towns in the Czech Lands with a population of 8000.<sup>6</sup> The study of the Brno poorer strata will be based on *rejstříky městské sbírky* (registers of the town's collection). The Brno registers were compiled on an annual basis.<sup>7</sup> They specified the amount that taxpayers had to pay.<sup>8</sup> Attention will be given to the registers of the town's collection from the years 1345, 1346, 1347, 1348, 1350 and 1365. An almost year by year study of the taxation records has been undertaken not simply because the registers' completeness makes this possible. An equally important reason behind the examination of the poorer taxpayers over several consecutive years is meant to show that the mention of certain levels of taxation in a given year is not coincidental. Recurrent patterns in the records serve to strengthen the argument regarding specific taxpayers' lower financial standing.

To understand the language of the records, a basic grasp of the essential terms used in them is necessary. These include the expressions *tenetur*, *dedit* and *solvit*. The first signifies the amount one had to pay, the second how much one actually paid and the third means that the prescribed amount was fully paid.<sup>9</sup> Sums were calculated using different metric units. There was a *marca* (Czech *hřívna*) that comprised sixty four *grossi* (Czech *groše*), which was further divided into smaller units, of which a fourth was called *ferto* and a sixteenth *lot*.<sup>10</sup>

In the registers, with the exception of the year 1346, the poorer house owners were introduced by the term *item*, which distinguishes them from the tenants of a given house called *ibidem*.<sup>11</sup> The poorer house owners were often given a collective name of *pauperes* or *alii residentes*. Their houses could most frequently be found in the areas close to the town walls. The topographical situating of these houses could be

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<sup>6</sup> Hoffmann, *České město*, p. 215.

<sup>7</sup> Bedřich Mendl (ed), *Knihy počtů města Brna z let 1343–1365* [The Brno books of accounts from the years 1343–1365], (Brno: Československý státní ústav historický, 1935), Introduction, p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> Mendl, *Knihy počtů*, Introduction, p. 58.

<sup>9</sup> Mendl, *Knihy počtů*, Introduction, pp. 55–56.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 164.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p. 55. In the registers the name of all the poorer house owners is abbreviated to it.

identified within the different town quarters thanks to an existing map of Brno's plots (fig. 1). In *quartale Letorum*, the poorer house owners lived in *platea Seratorum* and in *platea Monialium*. They appeared in the years 1346, 1347, 1348 and 1350.<sup>12</sup> In the next town quarter, *quartale Cursorum*, they were located in particular in the areas known as *forum Equorum* and *Ramhof*. They were found there in 1345, 1346, 1348 and 1350.<sup>13</sup> In the last town quarter, *quartale Mensense*, where there was also a Franciscan friary (*Fratres Minores*), the poorer were found in *platea Bohemorum*. They were mentioned in the registers from the years 1345, 1346, 1347, 1348 and 1350.<sup>14</sup>

The collective name of the poorer house owners disappears from the registers after 1350. Nevertheless, the gap between the year 1350 and the next examined register from 1365 can be bridged. This is because the 1365 register is exceptionally detailed about the property of the taxpayers due to its being in combination with *berní kniha* (taxation book), in which estimations of property can be found.<sup>15</sup> Take, for instance, *mobilia* (movable property). This was recorded even if it amounted to small amounts, while those taxpayers on whom the register was silent in this regard did not even have any small property.<sup>16</sup> Also, the 1365 register includes the plot (*area*) evaluations of the house owners. Even though it is not easy to assess the discrepancies in the quality of the houses located on similarly evaluated plots, the value of the plots can still be considered an important indicator of the relative poverty of households.

This is because there were considerable discrepancies in the plot evaluations and it did matter whether a particular house was close to the market or whether it was located along the town walls where the evaluation of the plots was generally lower.<sup>17</sup>

The houses of the poorer house owners in 1365 are considered to be those whose plot and craft only were taxed without having any other property listed in the register and/or those about whom the only known piece of information is that their plot was evaluated. In the case of those paying *de opere* (a craft tax), it is known that this amounted to eight *grossi*

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. pp. 54, 66, 95, 97, 174.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. pp. 23, 56-57, 114-115, 176.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. pp. 24, 58, 69, 123, 177.

<sup>15</sup> Jaroslav Dřimal, 'Sociální složení a majetek obyvatel Brna v letech 1365 až 1509' [A social composition and the property of the Brno citizens in the years 1365 to 1509], *Brno v minulosti a dnes*, 6 (1964): 191.

<sup>16</sup> Mendl, *Knihy počtů*, Introduction, p. 142.

<sup>17</sup> Mendl, *Knihy počtů*, Introduction, p. 128.

in 1365.<sup>18</sup> The remaining sum resulting from the plot evaluation can then be calculated since one *marca* of immovable property was taxed at two *grossi* in 1365.<sup>19</sup> Few households belonging to this group could be found in *platea Seratorum* where the residents' plots were evaluated at two *marcae* at the most.<sup>20</sup> In *forum Equorum* both of the previously defined groups of the poorer house owners lived. Here it can be observed that the lowest evaluation of some of their houses did not exceed half a *marca*.<sup>21</sup> The poorer taxpayers were further found in *platea Bohemorum* in the last town quarter where their plots were evaluated at half a *marca*.<sup>22</sup> This was the lowest plot evaluation found in the 1365 register.

Attempting an analysis of another group of the poorer in Brno - the poorer tenants - is, however, complicated. These were the tenants who paid *de opere* only and had no other property mentioned in the records. While they may be included among the poorer, it is impossible to study their presence for a longer period of time. More details on them can be obtained from the minute registers from the year 1348 and particularly from 1365, but a lack of details about the sums they paid from within this period does not allow one to examine whether these people paid the same tax.

Regardless of these limitations behind studying the poorer tenants, a brief survey of a topographical distribution of them, particularly around the Franciscan friary, can still be done thanks to the exceptionally well-preserved 1365 register. Despite finding that the poorer tenants were situated around the Brno Franciscans, they lived in the houses of quite affluent citizens. A clear indication of their wealth in 1365 is *hereditates* (the total sum of their property).<sup>23</sup> Around the Franciscan friary a few of these tenants were found living in the houses close to *portula civitatis* and from there up to *porta Menesensis* and *platea Menesensis*.<sup>24</sup> Thus, two poorer tenants in the first of these locations, both of whom paid a craft tax in part only, were living in the house whose

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 145.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 124.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 305.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. pp. 330-331.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p. 350.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 140.

<sup>24</sup> All these locations for the year 1365 are based on Mendl's observations about the topography of Brno in 1365. See Mendl, *Knihy počtů*, Introduction, pp. 117-119.

owner's property was assessed at eight and a half *marcae*.<sup>25</sup> Heading toward *porta Menesensis*, there was the house where one tenant paid the craft tax in full, another paid nothing of it, and the last paid part of it, while the owner's total property was forty-eight *marcae*.<sup>26</sup> In *platea Menesensis* there were several tenants living in the houses of quite wealthy citizens, with their wealth ranging from ten to forty-six and a half *marcae*.<sup>27</sup>

The poorer Brno taxpayers examined comprised the two groups. One of them was the stratum of the poorer house owners. Though being also located in *platea Bohemorum*, and thus not far from the Brno Franciscans, it is evident that this was not the area where their concentration was the greatest, with poorer house owners being found in other town quarters as well. The second group of the poorer taxpayers identified in Brno were the tenants paying only a craft tax. They could not be studied in greater detail over a longer period owing to a lack of detailed registers between the years 1348 and 1365. Irrespective of these limitations, it was shown, based on the minute register from 1365, that they were found living in the houses of wealthier citizens. Therefore a correlation between a topographical situating of the Franciscan friary and the houses of the poorer does not seem to be particularly strong in Brno.

When it comes to the examination of Jihlava, it is worth noting that this town's population was affected considerably by the Hussite Revolution. Its population supposedly dropped sharply in the course of the conflict, plummeting to around 2500 people after the Hussite Wars, which was in a stark contrast to the estimated 4600 in 1425.<sup>28</sup> The examination of the Jihlava taxation records is based on the oldest ones from between the years 1425 and 1442.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, their study cannot be as detailed as in Brno because the taxation records known as *knihy lozuňk* are completely missing for those years; these were the records listing the property of the taxpayers, so it would have been possible to know about what was taxed.<sup>30</sup> The Brno register from 1365

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<sup>25</sup> Mendl, *Knihy počtů*, 346.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* p. 347.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* p. 348.

<sup>28</sup> Hoffmann, *České město*, p. 216.

<sup>29</sup> František Hoffmann (ed), *Rejstříky městské sbírky jihlavské z let 1425–1442* [The registers of Jihlava's town collection from the years 1425–1442], vol. 1: Předmluva. Úvody. Text., (Prague–Jihlava: Archiv Akademie věd České republiky, 2004), p. xiii.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* p. xxxiv.

combines such information. On the other hand, there is virtually no gap in the continuity of the Jihlava taxation records from 1425 up to 1431. Thus, the financial standing of the poorer taxpayers can be studied from year to year.

In this study of Jihlava's poorer strata, attention will be given to an examination of *lozuňka*, understood as the tax collection.<sup>31</sup> The town's collection in Jihlava usually took place twice a year, in spring and autumn, while the rate of each *lozuňka* changed throughout the studied period, so it could be doubled, raised by a half, or kept at the same level.<sup>32</sup> In the registers, the basic metric unit used was *groš*, of which sixty (in Czech *kopa*), seven *denarii* or fourteen *halenses* each made up a single *groš*.<sup>33</sup> The term *dedit* preceded every sum, but in the critical edition cited it is limited to unclear cases only.<sup>34</sup> The metric units in which the given sums are listed are always indicated at the beginning of each register.

As in Brno, Jihlava's poorer strata in this study also comprise the poorer house owners and the tenants.<sup>35</sup> Hoffmann defines the Jihlava urban poor as those paying the maximum tax of two *grossi* in one town's collection.<sup>36</sup> Paying this maximum amount in the case of the former was associated with a low standard of housing, while the latter paid this from either their crafts or a very small amount of movable property.<sup>37</sup> Their financial standing sometimes found corresponding expressions, of which the word *pauper* is an example.<sup>38</sup> Like in Brno, both groups of the poorer can be located thanks to a detailed town map of the fifteenth century Jihlava (fig. 2).<sup>39</sup> From the taxation records it can be observed that one of the highest concentrations of the poorer house owners was in *platea Monialium*, not far from *klášter sv. Kříže* (the Jihlava Dominicans).

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<sup>31</sup> Hoffmann, *Rejstříky*, p. xxxii.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* p. xxxii.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p. xlv.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> Both can be discerned in the records because the expression for the latter known already from the Brno taxation records as *ibidem* is used, but is shortened here to its first two characters.

<sup>36</sup> František Hoffmann, *Jihlava v husitské revoluci* [Jihlava in the Hussite Revolution] (Havlíčkův Brod: Krajské nakladatelství Havlíčkův Brod, 1961) p. 91.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* p. 98.

<sup>38</sup> Hoffmann, *Rejstříky*, p. xli. Some other expressions used in connection with the poorer taxpayers are mentioned in Hoffmann, *Rejstříky*, p. 148.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4.

The previously mentioned maximum tax of two *grossi* was paid from 1425 up to 1431 by almost half of the residing taxpayers in this street.<sup>40</sup> Some of the poorer taxpayers were also found in, for instance, *platea Textorum* in the third town quarter. During the years 1425 and 1430/1 poorer house owners there lived in houses twenty-one, twenty-seven and thirty.<sup>41</sup> My listing of the poorer house owners could continue elsewhere, but this would only mean counting a few houses of the poorer scattered here and there in different parts of the town. This includes the area around the Franciscan friary, which was close to *brána Matky boží* (the gate of the Virgin Mary). Unlike the poorer Brno house owners, the collective name of this stratum such as *pauperes* or *alii residentes* is missing in the Jihlava records, so it seems that the greatest concentration of the poorer house owners in one place during the period was in *platea Monialium*.

Though there remains the possibility of doing a continual study on the poorer tenants in Jihlava, at this point of the research their presence around the Jihlava Franciscans seems to have been very scanty. From 1425 to 1428 in the third town quarter there is, for example, one tenant paying two *grossi* in house eighty-four.<sup>42</sup> Finding some other poorer tenants in this area is possible, but they are often recorded for two years at the most. For instance, this was the case with one tenant from the house eighty-five in the third town quarter, and afterwards one tenant from the houses seven and nine in the fourth town quarter.<sup>43</sup> The problem here is that this period is too short to determine with a greater certainty whether they remained in the town while merely ceasing to be mentioned in the records.<sup>44</sup> An equally important observation for the poverty argument is that, like in Brno, there were quite affluent house owners living around the Jihlava Franciscans. They are continually listed in the records, some of whom remained mentioned for the entire examined period. The amount they paid was well beyond the limit of the urban poor defined by Hoffmann. Among them were houses sixty-

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid. pp. 19, 71–72, 118–119, 163–164, 204–205, 244–245, 284–285, 328, 369, 412–413, 456–457, 499–500, 538.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. pp. 28, 80–81, 127–128, 172–173, 212–213, 252–253, 293, 336–337, 378, 421, 464, 507, 546.

<sup>42</sup> Hoffmann, *Rejstříky*, pp. 32, 84, 131, 176, 216, 256, 297, 340.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. pp. 32–33, 84–85, 131–132, 176.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. p. xli.



nine, seventy-one, eighty-six in the third town quarter.<sup>45</sup> In the fourth town quarter these were houses one, four, six and eight.<sup>46</sup>

For Jihlava the study of the poorer taxpayers was less detailed compared to Brno. However, this was compensated by the unrestrained continuity of most of the records. The poorer house owners could most frequently be found in *platea Monialium*, and not around the site of the Franciscans. Also, the poorer tenants found around the Jihlava Franciscans were few in number. Very much like around the Brno Franciscans, the study of the Jihlava poorer tenants revealed that it was also the area where the poorer lived close to the richer people. Thus, the spatial identification of the poorer around the Jihlava Franciscans does not seem to be very strong here either.

Despite arguments for the motivation to situate Franciscan friaries in close proximity to the poor, the findings from both Brno and Jihlava conflict with this viewpoint. With regard to Gilomen's research on social topography carried out on late medieval Swiss towns, the analysis of these two case studies of Brno and Jihlava proved to be quite in agreement with his findings. Even though the poorer groups could be found close to the Franciscan friaries in both towns, a clear spatial identification of the Brno and Jihlava Franciscans with the poorer was undermined by the trend of the poorer and the richer living side by side each other.

The research on the social topography of Brno and Jihlava was done within the context of considerable limitations due to the exemption of other groups of the poorer strata from the registers of the town's collection. Considering the limitations that these registers pose to the study of the urban poor in contrast to the findings which they reveal about the wealthier people living close to the friaries, further research could yield important results when examining the latter social stratum rather than the former. Not only can analysis be much fuller due to the richer townspeople's better financial standing in the taxation records, but their presence around the mendicant friaries demonstrated in this study may lead to research the extent to which they were important in relation to the situating of the Brno and Jihlava Franciscans.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid. pp. 31-32, 83-84, 131, 175-176, 215-216, 255-256, 296-297, 339-340, 381-382, 424-425, 466-467, 509-510, 548-549, 589, 631-632.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. pp. 33, 85, 132, 176-177, 217, 256-257, 297-298, 340-341, 382-383, 425, 468, 510-511, 550, 590, 632.



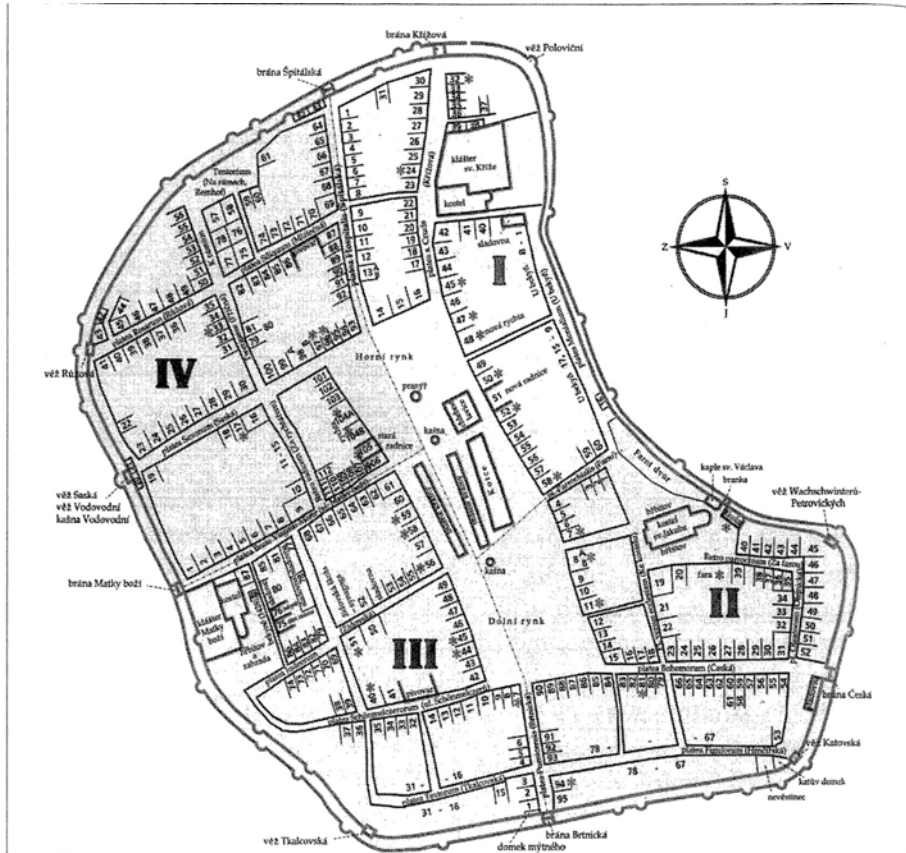


Fig. 2: Jihlava's plots in the first half of the fifteenth century. Reproduced by permission from František Hoffmann, *Středověké město v Čechách a na Moravě* [A medieval town in Bohemia and Moravia] (Prague: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2010), 322.

# Signes extérieurs de pauvreté ? La vie matérielle des Ordres Mendiants en Europe centrale à travers les sources iconographiques et artistiques<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** The aim of this article is to make a first assessment of a postdoctoral research conducted within the French National Agency for Research in the MARGEC program (acronym of "Marginality, Economy and Christianity. The Material Running of the Mendicant Friaries in Central Europe (c.1220-c.1550)". The purpose of this research is to question the link between Mendicant Orders and the circulation of goods for salvation in medieval Central Europe through the prism of iconographic and artistic sources. This paper will focus on the voluntary poverty exposed by the friars and how this choice can be combined with the expectations of the surrounding society, specifically their *patroni*.

**Key words:** Mendicant Orders, poverty, patronage, architecture, liturgical equipment, books

**Rezumat:** Semnele exterioare ale sărăciei? Viața materială a ordinelor mendicante în Europa Central-Răsăriteană. O analiză a surselor iconografice și artistice. Scopul acestui articol este acela de a evalua într-o manieră preliminară cercetarea postdoctorală desfășurată în cadrul proiectului MARGEC - Marginalitate. Economie și Creștinism. Viața materială a conventurilor mendicante din Centrul Europei (1220-1550), finanțat de Agenția Națională pentru Cercetare (ANR). Cercetarea întreprinsă și-a propus să urmărească posibilele legături existente între ordinele mendicante și circulația bunurilor, legături analizate prin intermediul surselor vizuale. Acest articol, deci, investighează sărăcia exprimată de către frații mendicanți și felul în

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<sup>1</sup> Cet article est issu d'une recherche post-doctorale d'un an dans le cadre du programme ANR MARGEC « Marginalité, économie et christianisme. La vie matérielle des couvents mendiants en Europe centrale (v. 1220 - v. 1550) » coordonné par M.-M. de Cevins - C.E.R.H.I.O. - U.M.R. 6258, Université de Haute-Bretagne-Rennes 2. D'autres articles suivront sur des éléments plus spécifiques comme les annotations de manuscrits.

care exprimarea acestei opțiuni se intersectează cu așteptările devoționale ale comunității în care ei activează, îndeosebi ale patronilor/protectorilor așezărilor mendicante.

**Cuvinte cheie:** ordine mendicante, sărăcie, patronaj, arhitectură, echipament liturgic, cărți

Les recherches sur la vie matérielle des ordres religieux à la période médiévale peuvent prendre bien des directions et tenir compte de bien des sources. Le programme ANR MARGEC, acronyme de Marginalité, économie et christianisme: la vie matérielle des couvents mendiants en Europe centrale (v. 1220 – v. 1550) prend ainsi en compte une réelle variété de sources pour traiter du sujet. Les quelques propos préliminaires et conclusions livrés ici découlent d'un contrat post-doctoral d'un an dans le cadre de ce programme, destiné à renseigner le cadre économique mendiant par les livres et les objets artistiques, qui participent du quotidien et de l'exposition des mendiants. Le but de cet article est donc de présenter les diverses méthodes et objets d'investigation renseignant la vie matérielle des ordres mendiants en Europe Centrale à travers le prisme des sources iconographiques et des objets artistiques. Ces objets, bien souvent issus de dons, renseignent un large pan des échanges symboliques et économiques induits par la notion de Salut et constituent un des media de ces échanges, de ce qui est laissé post-mortem. Ils permettent, à travers la question des décors rattachés notamment, et, dans une moindre mesure à travers les rares représentations des frères, d'envisager la question de la pauvreté exposée, qui entre bien souvent en contradiction avec la volonté d'exposition et de prestige des *patroni*. Ils renseignent également certains aspects de la vie quotidienne des frères, la pauvreté vécue, à travers notamment, les livres et le cadre d'expression de la liturgie.

Une telle enquête nécessite une bonne connaissance des cadres du discours, notamment pour les sources iconographiques, afin de se prémunir contre toute illusion documentaire. Joanna Cannon a posé les bases d'une étude de l'économie des frères mendiants par le prisme de l'art en Italie centrale,<sup>2</sup> au même titre que les travaux de Louise Bourdua

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<sup>2</sup> Joanna Cannon, *Dominican Patronage of the Arts in Central Italy: The Provincia Romana, c. 1220–c. 1320*, PhD diss., University of London (Courtauld Institute of Art) 1980; Joanna Cannon, 'Sources for study of the role of art and architecture within the economy of the mendicant convents of central Italy. A preliminary survey', in

sur les Franciscains dans la même zone.<sup>3</sup> La question des livres a, quant à elle, été abordée de manière très pertinente par Neslihan Senocak.<sup>4</sup> La question en Europe centrale reste à traiter, malgré quelques articles qui se sont intéressés notamment à l'architecture des mendiants dans cette zone, qui fût largement exposée aux destructions.<sup>5</sup>

Qu'est-ce que ces objets et œuvres nous disent de l'identité et du discours économiques portés par les mendiants et leurs familiers ? Qu'est-ce qu'ils nous disent de la place des mendiants dans l'économie du sacré, mais aussi du discours porté à l'extérieur ? Il s'agit également de cerner une part des pratiques en confrontant le discours matériel porté par ces objets au discours textuel et normatif produit par les mendiants, nommés et définis légèrement *a posteriori* par leurs pratiques économiques.

Le premier prérequis de l'enquête est l'élaboration d'un inventaire aussi exhaustif que possible des productions issues des cadres mendiants, qu'ils s'agissent de sculpture monumentale<sup>6</sup> ou mobilière, de

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*L'economia dei conventi dei fratri minori e predicatori fino alla meta del Trecento. Atti del XXXI convegno internazionale. Assisi, 9-11 ottobre 2003*, (Spolète: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2004), pp. 215-269 ; Joanna Cannon, 'Panem petant in signum paupertatis: l'image de la quête des aumônes chez les frères d'Italie centrale', in Nicole Bériou - Jacques Chiffolleau (eds), *Économie et religion. L'expérience des ordres mendiants (XIII<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)* (Lyon : Presses Universitaires, 2009), pp. 501-533 ; Joanna Cannon, *Religious Poverty, Visual Riches. Art in the Dominican Churches of Central Italy in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London: Yale University Press, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> Louise Bourdua, *The Franciscans and Art Patronage in Late Medieval Italy* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Neslihan Senocak, 'Book Acquisition in the Medieval Franciscan Order' *Journal of Religious History*, 27 (2003): 14-28 ; Neslihan Senocak, 'Circulation of Books in the Medieval Franciscan Order: Attitude, Methods and Critics', *Journal of Religious History*, 28 (2004): 146-161 ; Neslihan Senocak, *The Poor and the Perfect: the Rise of Learning in the Franciscan Order 1209-1310* (Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Adam Hindin, 'Gothic Goes East. Mendicant Architecture in Bohemia and Moravia, 1226-1278', in Heidemarie Specht - Ralph Andraschek-Holzer (eds), *Bettelorden in Mitteleuropa: Geschichte, Kunst, Spiritualität* (Sankt Pölten: Diözesanarchiv Sankt Pölten, 2008), pp. 370-405. Mentionnons pour les Franciscains observants le développement de Marie-Madeleine de Cevins autour des aspects matériels des relations entre *patroni* et frères dans son ouvrage *Les Franciscains observants hongrois. De l'expansion à la débâcle (vers 1450-vers 1540)* (Rome: Istituto storico dei Capucini, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Andrea Harris (ed), *Koldulórendi építészet a középkori Magyarországon. Tanulmányok* [L'architecture des Ordres Mendiants en Hongrie médiévale. Études] (Budapest:

peintures murales,<sup>7</sup> de panneaux de bois,<sup>8</sup> d'éléments d'équipement liturgique ou encore de livres.<sup>9</sup> En raison de l'histoire mouvementée de la zone, notamment du raid mongol de 1241–1242 puis de l'occupation turque, la part des pertes est importante. En effet à l'arrivée des turcs, les frères emmenèrent, dans leur fuite, une majorité d'imprimés et les *codices* furent plus exposés aux destructions et sont donc moins nombreux aujourd'hui.<sup>10</sup> Cet état de fait pourrait également expliquer le faible nombre de manuscrits liturgiques qui nous sont parvenus. Un autre

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Országos Múemlékvédelmi Hivatal, 1994); Mihaela Sanda Salontai, *Mănăstiri dominicane din Transilvania* [Monastères dominicains de Transylvanie] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Nereamia Napocae, 2002). Géza Entz, *Erdély építészet a 11–13 században* [L'architecture en Transylvanie du XI<sup>e</sup> au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle] et *Erdély építészet a 14–16 században* [L'architecture en Transylvanie du XIV<sup>e</sup> au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle] (Cluj-Napoca: Az Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület kiadása, 1994 et 1996).

<sup>7</sup> Radocsay Dénes, *Falképek a középkori Magyarországon* [Fresques médiévales en Hongrie] (Budapest: Corvina Kiadó, 1977); Milan Togner - Wladimír Plekanec, *Medieval wall-paintings in Spiš* (Bratislava: Arte libris, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> József Lángi - Mihály Ferenc, *Erdélyi falképek és festett faberendezések* [Peintures murales et aménagements de bois peint en Transylvanie] (3 vols, Budapest: Állami Múemlékhelyreállítási és Restaurálási Központ, 2002, 2004, 2006); Maria Crăciun, 'Mendicant Piety and the Saxon Community of Transilvania, c. 1450–1550', in Maria Crăciun - Elaine Fulton (eds), *Communities of Devotion. Religious Orders and Society in East Central Europe*, (London: Ashgate, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> Csaba Csapodi - Klára Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Bibliotheca Hungarica. Kódexek és nyomtatott könyvek Magyarországon 1526 előtt* [Bibliotheca Hungarica. Codices et livres imprimés en Hongrie jusqu'en 1526] (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtár, 1988–1995); Miroslav Boháček - František Čáda, *Beschreibung der mittelalterlichen Handschriften der Wissenschaftlichen Staatsbibliothek von Olmütz* (Köln - Wien - Weimar: Böhlau, 1994); James Boyce, *Carmelite Liturgy and Spiritual Identity. The Choir Books of Kraków* (Turnhout Brepols, 2008). De nombreuses bases de données en ligne viennent s'ajouter à ces ouvrages comme la Digitální knihovna historických fondů: Vědecké knihovny v Olomouci (Bibliothèque digitale du fond historique de la bibliothèque de recherches d'Olomouc) <http://dig.vkol.cz/> ou encore la base Manuscriptorium <http://www.manuscriptorium.com/> et la base Kramerius <http://kramerius.mzk.cz> pour la République tchèque. Pour la Slovaquie, le catalogue, avec de nombreuses numérisations des incunables de la bibliothèque universitaire de Bratislava <http://retrobib.ulib.sk/Incunabula/>. Pour la Hongrie, notons la base de données de la Bibliothèque Nationale <http://www.arcanum.hu/oszk/> ou la bibliothèque digitale <http://kepkonyvtar.hu/>

<sup>10</sup> Edit Madas, 'Les ordres mendiants en Hongrie et la littérature médiévale en langue vernaculaire (XIII<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)', in Nicole Bériou - Martin Morard - Donatella Nebbiai (eds), *Entre stabilité et itinérance. Livres et culture des ordres mendiants* (Turnhout : Brepols, 2014), p. 374.

problème se pose pour l'actuelle République tchèque, c'est le retour des manuscrits dans leurs établissements d'origine qui implique des difficultés dans la consultation. En Pologne, des manuscrits ont été détruits sous l'occupation allemande durant la deuxième guerre mondiale, notamment à Varsovie. Enfin, ces manuscrits ne nous sont pas toujours parvenus entiers et les annotations permettant d'identifier leur provenance ne sont pas toujours présentes ou tardives. Le bilan est le même pour l'équipement liturgique, le plus souvent documenté lorsqu'il est mis en sûreté, et pour l'architecture qui a largement souffert du raid mongol, de la Réforme et de l'invasion turque.

### *IN SIGNUM PAUPERTATIS - ENQUÊTE ICONOGRAPHIQUE*

La représentation de l'action pose en filigrane la question du statut de l'action. La représentation découle d'un choix, d'une nécessité. Joanna Cannon a démontré l'intérêt d'une enquête iconographique sur ce qui constitue une des bases de la vie matérielle mendiant: la quête. L'absence de scène de quête pour des supports qui, en définitive, laissent peu de place à la quotidienneté en dehors des pratiques liturgiques pourrait alors être plus significative. Rares sont les représentations des activités principales des mendiants comme le prêche, la confession ou la quête. Ils revendiquent moins leur mission dans le siècle que leur rôle dans la quête de Salut et leur filiation spirituelle. Cet état de fait est dû, en partie, à la situation de faible conservation des œuvres dans la zone étudiée. Néanmoins, Joanna Cannon, pour une zone plus épargnée, n'a trouvé que peu d'occurrences de scènes de quête.

En filigrane, il est également nécessaire de se poser la question du porteur du discours iconographique. Ainsi, nous ne saurions nous limiter à la représentation qui est faite d'un frère mendiant dans une illustration du conte du frère de Chaucer.<sup>11</sup> Il s'agit d'une forme de discours externe à l'ordre et satirique. Les images du *Jena Codex*, manuscrit hussite, sont celles qui représentent le plus les frères mendiants, mais dans une violente attaque de ceux-ci, allant même jusqu'à les représenter détruisant l'église, tuant des enfants ou dans des

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<sup>11</sup> Voir par exemple le frère à cheval du fol. 76<sup>v</sup> du manuscrit d'Ellesmere, San Marino (Californie), Huntington Library, MS EL 26 C 9.  
<http://hdl.huntington.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15150coll7/id/2838>



scènes scabreuses.<sup>12</sup> Certaines scènes jouent aussi sur la question de la pauvreté, représentant des mendiants dotés d'un embonpoint certain. Ainsi, les sources iconographiques issues des ordres mendiants ont été privilégiées, non sans réaliser quelques sondages sur des œuvres issues d'autres milieux.

La seule représentation de pratique économique mendicante est celle de la quête par des frères mendiants connue est placée dans le contexte de l'affirmation d'une filiation avec les Pères de l'Église.<sup>13</sup> Dans les règles, la quête demeure un acte exceptionnel qui ne doit être opéré qu'en cas d'extrême nécessité et elle pose par la suite régulièrement problème.<sup>14</sup> Elle est un acte symbolique *in signum paupertatis*, une exposition de leur état. La temporalité de cette pratique semble avoir oscillé entre quotidienneté et annualité, ainsi que son application dans les faits et sa pérennité qui semblent difficiles à cerner. En effet, le succès des ordres a peut-être entraîné une raréfaction de cette pratique controversée. Elle ne concernait pas non plus tous les frères chez les Dominicains puisque la tâche était confiée aux convers. Le rapport entre l'action symbolique et le discours iconographique est déjà sondé depuis longtemps par les chercheurs dans le domaine de la liturgie. Il n'est pas difficile de voir qu'en dehors d'une mise en abîme de l'action symbolique dans des manuscrits de type bréviaire ou dans le cadre de la « promotion » de l'efficacité de la prière pour les morts, l'image de l'action symbolique du prêtre officiant *stricto sensu* est relativement peu développée. L'essentiel du discours iconographique sur une action symbolique aussi couramment et unanimement pratiquée se fait par l'allusion et le rattachement au cadre mémoriel, qu'il soit christique ou hagiographique.

L'image du manuscrit de Bechyně et la majorité des images étudiées par Joanna Cannon se situent dans un tel mode de discours

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<sup>12</sup> Prague, Bibliothèque Nationale, IV.B.24 ; Petr Hlaváček, 'The Servants of Antichrist: the Denouncement of Franciscans on the Utraquist (Hussite) Pictures in Jena Codex (Bohemia, Around 1490-1510)', *IKON. Journal of Iconographic Studies*, 3 (Franciscan Iconography) (2010): 239-245. Le manuscrit est numérisé et consultable à cette adresse : <http://www.manuscriptorium.com/apps/index.php?envLang=en>.

<sup>13</sup> Il s'agit du manuscrit XVII. A. 2 de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Prague, une *Životy svatých otců, kteří obývali na poušti (Vitae patrum)* sur parchemin, en tchèque ancien, commandé par Ladislav de Sternbeck vers 1516 pour le monastère franciscain de Bechyně. <http://www.manuscriptorium.com/apps/index.php?envLang=en>

<sup>14</sup> Cannon, 'Panem petant in signum paupertatis', pp. 501-533.

mettant en avant la notion de parenté spirituelle. Le choix est néanmoins fait de représenter l'action symbolique dans le temps présent, tout en liant cette action présente aux actions passées référentes. Il est une dernière dimension à prendre en compte c'est celle de l'action symbolique qui devient attribut pour l'ordre. Suivant les zones géographiques et probablement suivant la perception qui est faite de l'action symbolique de la quête, celle-ci sera plus ou moins facilement assimilée comme attribut pour désigner les mendiants. Or, ces attributs se limitent bien souvent à l'habit, comme dans la majorité des cas pour les ordres religieux. Les cas de représentations de prêches sont moins rares, mais il s'agit là d'une action moins controversée, moins symbolique et beaucoup plus installée dans les habitudes chrétiennes. La représentation du prêcher est, en fonction de son cadre d'émergence, une forme de reconnaissance ou de promotion de l'activité pastorale et urbaine des ordres mendiants. À Bechyně, c'est donc la filiation qui est valorisée par le biais de saint Jérôme, qui, à travers son récit de la *Vie d'Hilarion*, notamment le chapitre XV, traite du fondement de la vie mendicante, à savoir la précarité, mais aussi de ses effets qui seront repris par les règles.<sup>15</sup>

L'épisode relaté lors du voyage en bateau du saint en Sicile est particulièrement probant : [...] *le fils du pilote, étant agité par un démon, commença à crier : « Hilarion, serviteur de Dieu, pourquoi faut-il que par toi nous ne soyons pas en sûreté même sur la mer ? Donne-moi au moins le temps d'aller à terre, de peur qu'étant chassés dès d'ici, je ne sois précipité dans les abîmes. » Le saint lui répondit : « Si mon Dieu te permet de demeurer, demeure ; mais si c'est lui qui te chasse, pourquoi en jettes-tu la haine sur moi, qui ne suis qu'un pécheur et un pauvre mendiant ? »... Lorsqu'ils furent arrivés au promontoire de Pachyne en Sicile, il offrit au pilote ce livre des Évangiles pour le salaire du passage de Zanane et de lui ; mais le pilote ne voulut pas le recevoir, et, en étant pressé, il jura qu'il ne le recevrait point, étant d'autant plus porté à cela qu'il vit qu'excepté ce livre et leurs habits, ils n'avaient chose quelconque. »*

La revendication assez élaborée de cette filiation et la représentation de quête font pencher, dans le cas de ce manuscrit, pour une participation des Franciscains, destinataires du livre, dans son élaboration, si ce n'est dans sa réalisation. L'extrême richesse de son élaboration suppose que le commanditaire, Ladislav de Sternbeck a

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<sup>15</sup> Sur cette filiation chez les Dominicains, voir Alain Boureau, 'Vitae fratrum, Vitae patrum. L'Ordre dominicain et le modèle des Pères du désert au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle,' *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Moyen-Age, Temps modernes*, T. 99/1 (1987): 79-100.

néanmoins eu une bonne part dans les décisions liées à l'élaboration des manuscrits. Toutefois, cette exposition de la mendicité ne serait-elle pas davantage à mettre en lien avec le fondateur qui expose ainsi l'authenticité de « sa » communauté mendicante ? C'est cette part à accorder au *patronus* ou au bienfaiteur dans l'exposition de la pauvreté mendicante qui va maintenant être développée.

#### **CURIOSITATES ET SUPERFLUITATES NOTABILES - UNE POSITION DIFFICILEMENT TENABLE ?**

Il est un élément du *Liber constitutionum* des prêcheurs qui intéresse cette étude au premier chef et qui va à l'encontre du discours majoritairement porté par les ordres religieux, il s'agit de la condamnation des *curiositates et superfluitates notabiles in sculpturis, picturis, et pavimentis, et aliis similibus qui paupertatem nostram deformat*.<sup>16</sup> Les mendiants sont tributaires des dons associés à l'économie du sacré, profondément liée à l'efficacité de leur pastorale, car c'est avant tout en raison de l'efficacité réputée de leurs prières que les mendiants attirent des fidèles, des bienfaiteurs et des sépultures. Cette règle aurait-elle été victime du succès des mendiants auprès des élites ? C'est une première observation. Il faut également avoir en tête l'arrière-plan culturel lié à l'équipement liturgique et à la *memoria*.

En effet, en dehors des cisterciens, qui ont parfois eu du mal à être en adéquation avec leur discours, peu de mouvances ont opté pour la simplicité. L'une des raisons peut être que la magnificence de la célébration liturgique est ancrée dans la culture chrétienne depuis les crises iconoclastes. Or, dans le corpus de livres étudiés, les manuscrits liturgiques sont les seuls qui portent de l'or, y compris lorsqu'ils sont produits par les frères eux-mêmes comme les Ermites de saint Augustin de Budapest ou les Carmes de Cracovie, dont nous savons qu'ils ont été envoyés par les Carmes de Prague, dans un circuit interne à l'ordre. Franciscains et Dominicains semblent avoir plutôt utilisé la polychromie en filigrane, mais les manuscrits liturgiques restent, chez eux aussi, les plus décorés. Cependant, le support est majoritairement le papier, moins coûteux, pour les livres de formats, somme toute, assez restreints. Les frères auraient pu opter pour moins de simplicité dans les décors. Or, il est rare de voir plus de deux à trois couleurs utilisées, elles sont souvent de moindre qualité. Une part de polychromie est souvent indispensable,

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid. n. 82 p. 99.

notamment dans les livres de chant. Cet état de fait peut également s'expliquer par la formation à l'enluminure et à la peinture reçue par les copistes. En effet, un copiste n'est pas nécessairement un peintre.<sup>17</sup>

Pour l'échelle monumentale, il est un domaine dans lequel les frères mendiants ont vite vu l'intérêt d'un décor soigné: celui du développement d'une hagiographie propre à l'ordre. Pour le cadre de saint Pierre martyr à Milan par exemple, il est bien question dans le chapitre général d'une tombe qui excite la dévotion des fidèles, tout en rappelant qu'elle se doit de rester simple.<sup>18</sup> Les Franciscains, dont la règle originelle est très restrictive en matière de décor, ont vite fait preuve d'un certain pragmatisme en réintégrant l'image dans l'édifice, reprenant, pour ce faire, les arguments, développés dès les crises iconoclastes du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle, entre autres par Grégoire le Grand, de l'efficacité pastorale de l'image et de la componction qu'elle provoque.<sup>19</sup> Ainsi, vers 1390, les Franciscains de Levoča, installés depuis 1308, ont choisi de faire figurer dans la nef de leur église un cycle avec les sept œuvres de Miséricordes. Celui-ci commence avec une image du Christ souffrant et bénissant ces œuvres, montrant un calice près de ses pieds. Viennent les œuvres dans l'ordre suivant: accueillir le voyageur, nourrir l'affamé, habiller les nécessiteux, visiter les prisonniers, soigner les malades et abreuver l'assoiffé, dans une même scène, et ensevelir les morts. Il est clôt par une représentation de la Trinité (ill. 1). Ces scènes exposent une évidente exemplarité, possèdent une efficacité par leur évocation du quotidien et assimilent les pauvres au Christ. Il se peut que ces peintures aient également été destinées à attirer des dons aux mendiants. Il est d'ailleurs intéressant de noter que les mêmes scènes, avec des cartouches en allemand et accompagnées des sept péchés capitaux, ont été peintes dans les mêmes années dans la paroissiale Saint-Jacques de Levoča. L'allusion au Christ y est plus directe puisqu'il est le bénéficiaire des œuvres de miséricordes. Ce doublon peut s'expliquer par le rayonnement de la spiritualité franciscaine dans le

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<sup>17</sup> Le cas des livres d'étude est à part. Une même recherche de simplicité peut y être observée, mais elle est également à mettre en lien avec la praticité de ce type d'ouvrage, amené à circuler et à sortir du couvent, notamment pour les besoins de la pastorale ou encore dans le cadre d'échanges et de copies entre couvents ou entre couvent et laïcs. Les formats sont ainsi restreints, l'écriture serrée, les gloses marginales nombreuses.

<sup>18</sup> Cannon, 'Sources for study', p. 225.

<sup>19</sup> Bourdua, *The Franciscans*, pp. 1-2.

bourg alors en plein essor ou par la concurrence avec le clergé séculier. Comme pour les Dominicains, cette réalité se double de la nécessité des images pour la promotion des saints de l'ordre. Les premières peintures franciscaines sont d'ailleurs à mettre en lien avec l'image du fondateur. Les peintures de Keszthely montrent également que la peinture est un outil de diffusion de l'hagiophilie mendicante et d'exposition d'une filiation christique. Cette réalité de valorisation des grandes figures et, par la même de l'ordre, est d'ailleurs confirmée pour l'Europe centrale et une période plus tardive avec les peintures d'Olomouc qui représentent le prédicateur et inquisiteur observant Jean de Capestran, en position centrale, durant le siège de Belgrade tandis que János Hunyadi, voïvode de Transylvanie est représenté en marge (ill.2).<sup>20</sup> Notons par ailleurs, concernant le rôle joué par les protecteurs, que c'est Nicolas d'Újlak (ou Iločki), roi de Bosnie entre autres, qui fait de choix d'une chapelle funéraire somptueuse pour Jean de Capestran et contre la volonté du défunt à Ilok.<sup>21</sup>

Dans l'ensemble, les peintures murales apposées dans les couvents mendiants de la zone témoignent d'une belle qualité d'exécution. Trop belle peut-être à Olomouc où la peinture de Jean de Capestran est restée inachevée. Il s'agit du seul cas conservé, mais ces peintures inachevées sont souvent peu documentées et n'ont pas forcément été conservées au moment des dégagements. À Olomouc, les peintures de Jean de Capestran sont accompagnées d'autres peintures terminées (ill. 3). Elles témoignent de la richesse des décors mendiants et il faut noter la présence de saint François, également visible à Keszthely, avec d'autres saints franciscains. Le chœur de Keszthely montre bien toute la place accordée à la polychromie dans les sanctuaires mendiants d'Europe centrale (ill. 4). Toujours dans le chœur, les peintures décoratives situées sur les voussures de l'accès nord au chœur du couvent dominicain de Wrocław utilisent de l'or (ill.5).<sup>22</sup> Le cloître n'est pas en reste dans ces campagnes de décor, c'est très net à Levoča (ill. 6) et à Brno, où le commanditaire est représenté en bas du Couronnement

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<sup>20</sup> Martin Elbel, 'Kult sv. Jana Kapistrána v Českých zemích' [Le culte de saint Jean de Capestran dans les pays tchèques], *Acta Universitatis Palckiana Olomucensis, Historia Artium*, 2 (1998): 81-99.

<sup>21</sup> de Cevins, *Les Franciscains observants hongrois*, p. 141.

<sup>22</sup> Il faut noter, pour ce même édifice, la qualité d'exécution des peintures, en très mauvais état, dans une chapelle du transept nord et celle de la cuve baptismale sculptée exposée dans le chœur.

d'épines (ill. 7) et où un frère est représenté agenouillé, compatissant aux souffrances du Christ dans la scène du Portement de Croix (ill. 8). La qualité de la sculpture monumentale mérite également d'être soulignée dans la salle capitulaire du couvent franciscain de Sopron (ill. 9), tout comme la qualité de sa peinture extérieure, où la figure mariale accueille les personnes entrant dans l'église à travers le thème de la Vierge au manteau (ill. 10), comme à Levoča à travers celui de la Vierge à l'Enfant (ill. 11). Dans l'ensemble les églises rencontrées renferment beaucoup de polychromie, tant dans et sur l'espace de l'église que dans celui du cloître. À Levoča (dans le cloître, ill. 6) ou Szombathely (ill. 12), les franciscains semblent avoir mis un soin tout particulier dans l'aménagement des piscines liturgiques murales. Ainsi, sur le lieu de célébration de la liturgie, dans le chœur et dans l'église, les peintures murales témoignent donc d'une certaine richesse dans le décor, tout comme les dispositifs de type armoires ou piscines liturgiques qui adoptent bien souvent une sculpture nervurée et ouvragée.

L'équipement liturgique textile, les dispositifs mobiliers type panneaux peints ou sculptures et les éléments d'orfèvrerie sont à mettre à part en raison de leur provenance, souvent liée à un don extérieur au couvent et au statut de propriété qui reste souvent flou, comme nous allons le voir. Elles sont donc parfois avant tout le reflet des moyens et du parti-pris matériel et ornemental du donateur et non celui des frères, parfois dans le cadre de fondations pieuses.<sup>23</sup> Il en va de même pour la vaisselle liturgique pour laquelle les donateurs semblent garder un droit de regard comme en témoigne le conflit qui opposa les frères observants de Györgyi à la famille Bodó, à la suite de la vente par les frères des objets précieux donnés par la famille pour la restauration d'un couvent. Le pape ordonna alors en 1517 la restitution de la vaisselle liturgique aux Bodó. La vaisselle avait en réalité été déplacée et les frères comptaient la rendre à la famille, ce qui sera finalement fait avant 1542.<sup>24</sup> Les cas de mise sous protection de la vaisselle liturgique chez les *patroni* sont très nombreux vers le milieu du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle avec l'arrivée des Turcs. À Nyírbátor, les stalles commandées par le *patronus* de l'église, Étienne de Bátor, au maître florentin Marone et exécutées entre 1508 et 1511

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<sup>23</sup> Kateřina Horníčková, *In Heaven and on Earth: Church Treasures in Late Medieval Bohemia*, Thèse de doctorat de la Central European University de Budapest sous la direction de Gerhard Jaritz, 2009.

<sup>24</sup> de Cevins, *Les Franciscains observants hongrois*, pp. 355 et 583.

témoignent bien du poids des *patroni* dans la commande artistique et montre bien la position de la simplicité, parfois difficilement tenable, face à la volonté d'exposition et de prestige des fondateurs, y compris pour les Observants.<sup>25</sup> Au couvent dominicain d'Opava, le don d'une monstrance en argent en lieu et place d'une monstrance en bois par Victor, duc de Münsterberg et d'Opava est un autre exemple de cette réalité. En 1482, le duc se désole de voir le *Corpus Christi* exposé dans une monstrance en bois et décide d'en fournir une en argent au couvent, la charte qui témoigne de ce don devra être placée près de l'objet.<sup>26</sup> Le rôle joué par les laïcs dans les trésors et leur instrumentalisation politique est également bien visible dans la procession annuelle des reliques initiée par la famille Rosenberg en 1358 à Český Krumlov, avec, pour référence, la procession royale de Prague. Le couvent franciscain était chargé de collecter les objets venus de plusieurs fondations des Rosenberg, participant ainsi à ce que Kateřina Horníčková appelle une « célébration publique de la *memoria* familiale ». <sup>27</sup> Les manuscrits de Bechyně, dont il a été question plus haut et commandés par le *patronus* du couvent franciscain, Ladislav de Sternbeck, et leur très riche ornement constituent un témoignage supplémentaire de ceux qui peut s'avérer être une véritable tension entre idéal de pauvreté et volonté du fondateur.

Il est un autre indice à examiner dans le décor monumental: la place de l'héraldique dans ces ensembles qui peut permettre d'évaluer la place du *patronus* et des bienfaiteurs dans l'élaboration de l'environnement bâti et peint des frères. L'apposition des armes dans un espace n'est pas anodine. Les armes de János Hunyadi sont omniprésentes au couvent franciscain de Teiuș dont il est le patron.<sup>28</sup> C'est l'héraldique qui a valu à l'église de Sopron son surnom d'église de la chèvre. Ainsi, dans la perspective d'une étude des objets des couvents mendiants, il faut toujours avoir en tête qu'ils sont parfois plus représentatifs des choix des donateurs et patrons, largement identifiés par l'héraldique, que de ceux des frères.<sup>29</sup> Cette position de simplicité a

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p. 227.

<sup>26</sup> Horníčková, *In Heaven and on Earth*, p. 202.

<sup>27</sup> Horníčková, *In Heaven and on Earth*, pp. 127-132.

<sup>28</sup> Voir la notice de Radu Lupescu en ligne : [http://www.heraldica.sapientia.ro/index.php?option=com\\_adsmanager&view=result&catid=1&Itemid=2&lang=en](http://www.heraldica.sapientia.ro/index.php?option=com_adsmanager&view=result&catid=1&Itemid=2&lang=en)

<sup>29</sup> Radu Lupescu, 'A tövisi ferences kolostor középkori történetének és építéstörténetének néhány kérdése' [Quelques aspects de l'histoire et de l'architecture du couvent

été plus tenable pour les livres liés à l'étude qui était le plus souvent des productions internes à l'ordre.<sup>30</sup>

Pour conclure, d'une part, les ordres mendiants en Europe centrale ne semblent pas avoir eu davantage recours au discours iconographique sur leur pratique quotidienne de la pauvreté que leurs homologues d'Occident. La part des œuvres perdues incite à la prudence et la quête n'est pas le seul positionnement économique mendiant, il convient de ne pas oublier les aumônes et le travail des frères. Ces derniers auront peut-être trouvé superflu ou paradoxal le « luxe » de la représentation. Dans le manuscrit de Bechyně, il convient de considérer également ce signe de mendicité comme une exposition de l'authenticité des pratiques de la communauté franciscaine par les frères eux-mêmes ou par leur patron... La question du discours iconographique s'avère donc éminemment complexe car, en fonction du porteur de ce discours, parfois difficile à déterminer, il prend un tout autre sens.

D'autre part, la position d'exposition de la pauvreté par la simplicité du décor a été difficilement tenable par les ordres mendiants d'Europe centrale, tant d'un point de vue monumental que mobilier. Il existe une certaine tension entre le désir du *patronus* et celui des frères qui semblent toutefois s'accommoder de la situation avec beaucoup de « pragmatisme », pour reprendre le terme utilisé par Marie-Madeleine de Cevins.<sup>31</sup> Les espaces mendiants ne sont plus seulement ceux de l'exposition de la pauvreté et de la simplicité, ils sont également ceux de l'exposition d'un contrat entre deux parties. Ces lieux témoignent de la rencontre entre la « réforme » et des usages déjà bien implantés. Par ailleurs, pour la simplicité du décor, il n'a probablement pas été facile pour les frères de nager, en quelque sorte, à contre-courant et de faire table rase de toute une culture qui les entoure et qui est le fruit d'une littérature sur les ornements liturgiques quasi millénaire. Néanmoins, les études sur la commande artistique chez les Mendiants montrent qu'en Italie centrale, beaucoup de commande prestigieuses sont issues des ordres. Les frères d'Europe centrale ont davantage eu à frayer avec les *patroni* laïcs que ceux d'Europe occidentale et les initiatives « somptuaires »

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franciscain de Teiuș durant la période médiévale], *Református Szemle*, 96/6 (2003): 842.

<sup>30</sup> Quelques ateliers sont mentionnés, notamment à Tîrgu Mureș en 1522. Les annotations et colophons des livres conservés témoignent de beaucoup d'autres ateliers, plus ou moins importants dans les couvents.

<sup>31</sup> de Cevins, *Les Franciscains observants hongrois*, pp. 195–230.



sont davantage à mettre au crédit des bienfaiteurs. Un équilibre a probablement été trouvé à travers la maîtrise des thèmes traités où, à côté des motifs héraldiques, nous retrouvons une véritable promotion de la *memoria* des ordres. Enfin, il semble qu'au plus près de leurs fondements spirituels, dans leurs livres d'études, dont ils maîtrisent les contenus plus facilement, les mendiants aient retrouvé la simplicité qui est à la base de leur mode de vie.

### **Illustrations :**

Illustration 1 - Levoča, Œuvres de miséricorde

Illustration 2 - Olomouc, Jean de Capestran

Illustration 3 - Olomouc, Peintures achevées

Illustration 4 - Keszthely, Peintures du chœur

Illustration 5 - Wrocław, Dorures sur les éléments sculptés de l'accès nord du chœur

Illustration 6 - Levoča, Cloître, piscine liturgique

Illustration 7 - Brno, Cloître, Couronnement d'épines

Illustration 8 - Brno, Cloître, Portement de croix

Illustration 9 - Sopron, clef de voûte de la salle capitulaire

Illustration 10 - Sopron, Vierge au manteau à l'entrée sud de l'église

Illustration 11 - Levoča, Vierge à l'Enfant à l'entrée sud de l'église

Illustration 12 - Szombathely, Piscine liturgique du chœur, figure de sainte Élisabeth de Hongrie



Illustration 1



Illustration 2





Illustration 3



Illustration 4



Illustration 5



Illustration 6





Illustration 7



Illustration 8



Illustration 9





Illustration 10



Illustration 11





Illustration 12

# Craftsmanship in a Medieval Franciscan Friary. A Medieval Bronze Workshop Excavated at the Tîrgu Mureş (Marosvásárhely) Franciscan Friary

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**Abstract:** This study aims to assess the economic role played by the Mendicants and their adaptability to the urban and economic context of Central and Eastern Europe. The main focus will be on the Franciscan friary from Tîrgu Mureş. It is thanks to several archaeological excavations that a rich material concerning the economic activities the friary was engaged in has been unearthed. They undoubtedly prove the existence of several workshops that functioned within and in close connection with the convent. Moreover, the detailed analysis of the economic life of Tîrgu Mureş friary helped reveal the impact the Franciscans made on the development of this market-town in the late Middle Ages.

**Key words:** Franciscan friary, workshops, archaeological material, market town, urban economy

**Rezumat:** Meşteşugăritul într-un convent franciscan medieval. Un atelier de bronz descoperit în Conventul Franciscan de la Tîrgu Mureş. Acest studiu îşi propune să evalueze rolul economic jucat de Fraţii Mendicanţi, precum şi adaptabilitatea lor la contextul urban şi economic al Europei Central-Răsăritene. Studiul de caz folosit în această analiză îl reprezintă conventul franciscan din Tîrgu Mureş. Datorită mai multor campanii arheologice a fost scos la lumină un bogat material referitor la activităţile economice în care acest convent a fost angajat, demonstrînd fără echivoc funcţionarea mai multor ateliere în cadrul conventului. Analiza detaliată a vieţii economice a conventului franciscan din Tîrgu Mureş a evidenţiat impactul pe care l-au avut Franciscanii asupra dezvoltării acestui tîrg în Evul Mediu tîrziu.

**Cuvinte cheie:** convent franciscan, ateliere, material arheologic, tîrg, economie urbană

The excavation of the Tîrgu Mureş Franciscan friary, situated in the eastern province of the former Hungarian kingdom, Transylvania, started in 1999.<sup>1</sup> The systematic research of the former friary buildings revealed a number of well-preserved archaeological complexes with rich archaeological material. These provided information about the construction phases of the former friary but also about the material culture connected to their activity as well as about the importance of the friary. The former friary buildings were mainly destroyed in the seventeenth century and they were reused as construction material for the new town wall. From the former friary only the church, the tower, the sacristy and partially the chapel were preserved as they were used by the protestant community as well.

The research resulted in a number of important information about the life and economic role of the friary. This is especially important as there is only scarce information regarding the economic role and adaptation of the Mendicant friaries to the east-central European urban and economic context.

When the Mendicants appeared in Transylvania, in the second half of the thirteenth century, the urban network was just in formation compared to the situation in Western Europe. Transylvanian and the Hungarian urban development were strongly connected. In Hungary the first urban settlements appeared around royal centers (Székesfehérvár, Esztergom), around the castle of the *comes* (leader of a county) or around ecclesiastic centers such as bishoprics. Similarly, the first urban settlements in Transylvania were formed around the castle of the *comes* or important religious centers. In the early eleventh-twelfth centuries important settlements emerged in the Mureş River valley, near the main trade route, in some of the former Roman towns, and where salt was transported from the royal mines to Szeged. In this regard the royal castle of Doboka was the only exception. The castle of Doboka was situated near the Someş river valley, in a remote hilly area and the settlement never had a proper economic background, it only had an administrative role. Doboka lost its importance by the early thirteenth century. On the other hand, Cluj (Kolozsvár, Klausenburg - built on the site of the former Roman town of Napoca), Turda (Torda, Thorenburg -

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<sup>1</sup> The systematic archaeological excavation at the site of the former Franciscan friary (presently a Calvinist church) started in 1999 under the supervision of Professor Adrian Andrei Rusu, from the Institute of Archaeology and Art History, Cluj.

built near the former Roman *castrum* of Potaissa), Orăștie (Szászváros, Broos) and the seat of the Transylvanian bishopric at Alba Iulia (Gyulafehérvár, Stuhlweisenburg - built on the former Roman *castrum* of Apulum) engaged in a significant development from the mid twelfth century. All these towns had Mendicant friaries from the thirteenth - early fourteenth centuries.

Besides the Roman background and the main trade routes the German colonization significantly expanded the Transylvanian urban landscape mostly in southern Transylvania. By the fourteenth century all of the important towns with royal privileges were of German or partly German background, like Sibiu (Hermannstadt, Nagyszeben), Brașov (Kronstadt, Brassó) or the mixed Hungarian - German Cluj. Their population was not more than fifteen thousand inhabitants. Among the mid size towns the domination of the German population was not so accentuated. Sighișoara (Schässburg, Segesvár), Mediaș (Mediasch, Medgyes), Bistrița (Bistritz, Beszterce), Sebeș (Mühlbach, Szászsebes) had German population, Orăștie, had a mixed German - Hungarian, while Turda, Alba Iulia, and Aiud (Nagyenyed, Strassbourg) were mainly Hungarian towns.

Among the market places, the situation is much more balanced, and besides the German and Hungarian presence these localities were inhabited by a Romanian population as well. The most important German markets were Rupea (Reps, Kőhalom), Agnita (Agnetheln, Szentágota), Râșnov (Rosenau, Rozsnyó), Cislădie (Heltau, Nagydisznód), the most important Hungarian markets were at Deva castle and its market bellow, Teiuș (Tövis - this market-town had a Romanian population as well), Dej (Dézs), Zalău (Zilah) and the Székely market towns. In the Székely region every seat had a market-town as its administrative center but out of the seven seats and three *filiis* only three had important market-towns in the Middle Ages, as follows: Țirgu Mureș (called *Novum Forum Siculorum* in the Middle Ages, Marosvásárhely, Neumarkt am Mieresch), Odorheiu Secuiesc (Székelyudvarhely) and Țirgu Secuiesc (Kézdivásárhely). The market towns were economically weaker, they had few privileges and they played an essential role in the urban network as secondary centers.

A last group of urban settlements is represented by the mining towns. The beginning of the modern mining, on a medieval scale, is

connected to the reign of Géza II.<sup>2</sup> In the mid twelfth century Rodna (Radna) was mentioned for the first time, located in the eastern Carpathians. Rodna was an important mining town until the fifteenth century. A larger number of mining towns were founded in the western Carpathians, Roşia Montană (Verespatak), Baia de Criş (Kőrösbánya), Abrud (Abrudbánya), etc., where mainly gold and silver were extracted. These mines functioned until the twentieth century and some of them are still in use. Nevertheless, they were situated in remote mountain areas so they could not develop into real urban centers. The only exception is the town of Baia Mare (Nagybánya, Frauenbach) situated to the north from Cluj at the feet of the Gutin Mountains on the main road between Cluj and Kassa (Košice). The vicinity of an important trade route and the gold and silver mining created an excellent environment for the urbanization, moreover a royal mint functioned in the town until the eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Baia Mare was the administrative center of the gold and silver mining activity in Maramureş (Máramaros) region. Two smaller but important mining towns Cavnic (Kapnikbánya) and Baia Sprie (Felsőbánya)<sup>4</sup> and several smaller mining settlements belonged administratively to Baia Mare.

Although medieval Transylvania had a colorful urban network its economic power and development was less spectacular than that of the towns of Western Europe.

Only a few important towns had two or more Mendicant friaries. The Dominicans were much more active in the second half of the thirteenth century and managed to establish houses in most of the important urban or administrative centers. By the mid fourteenth century the Transylvanian Dominican network was completed, while the Franciscan network was just in formation. Even though the Franciscans appeared in the second half of the thirteenth century in Transylvania, their real expansion started just after they had obtained the support of the Hungarian king in the 1260's. In Transylvania, their friary network was in continuous development until the early sixteenth

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<sup>2</sup> György Székely, Antal Bartha, *Magyarország Története. Előzmények és Magyar Őstörténet 1242-ig* [The History of Hungary, Pre and Ancient Hungarian History until 1242] (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1984), pp. 1064, 1094, 1385.

<sup>3</sup> Samu Borovszky, 'Szatmár Vármegye' [Satu-Mare County] in *Magyarország Vármegyéi és Városai* [The Counties and Towns of Hungary] (Budapest: 1896), pp. 220-225.

<sup>4</sup> Baia Sprie (Felsőbánya) obtained its free mining town rights in 1374.

century. The early royal support of the Dominicans gave them an important advantage. It would be important to see the effects of the Mendicant presence on the development of the market towns (in a larger context on urbanization).

Regarding the economic power of the region, the Mendicants were forced from the very beginning to seek for new possibilities of income as the urban population and the donations were not always enough for the up keeping of their friaries. In this perspective, they looked for promising supporters among the nobility and in the emerging market towns. The economic situation influenced their site selection as well. In the early period, meaning the thirteenth century, friaries were founded only in German settlements. By the end of the thirteenth century the urban network was mainly formed, therefore the possible sites were quickly occupied by the two orders. Building friaries in market towns and rural settlements raised a number of questions connected to the income of the friaries.

The friaries founded in rural context were either situated on a main trade route or they had a very powerful private support. The disadvantage of the rural background was the instability of the income, the death of an important patron could change radically the financial support of a friary or the financial support of the followers, like in the case of Suseni (Marosfelfalu), or Albești (Fehéregyháza).<sup>5</sup> This is the reason why only few friaries survived in rural areas. (see the case of Șumuleu Ciuc, Csíksomlyó).<sup>6</sup>

After analyzing and comparing several Transylvanian friaries, one can say that almost each case is particular. Besides, the particular local conditions determined the trends that influenced the site selection and foundation procedures (trade routes, German colonization, urbanization). Even with favorable conditions, some friaries developed and became important centers, while some remained on a certain level. Each case is different and has a different story behind it. Here, I would like to analyze one particular friary from Transylvania.

The case of the Tîrgu Mureș friary (image 1) seems to be particular within the Franciscan network. The friary was located in a

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<sup>5</sup> At these friaries the lack of determination or the founder or the changes of the owner lead to the abandonment of the friary.

<sup>6</sup> The Csíksomlyó Franciscan friary became an important religious and educational center by the sixteenth century.

mid-size market town situated at a safe distance from the large urban settlements. The closest royal town Sighișoara was at fifty kilometers and the largest town Cluj was situated at one hundred kilometers distance. In the early phase, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the friary started its activity in a former manor house, that the order probably received from the king or from the Transylvanian Voivode (the king's local leader). The first construction phase can be dated after 1303,<sup>7</sup> when the first, still unidentified church and two wooden buildings, a warehouse and a manor house (later the friary building) were built (see below).

The second phase can be dated to the end of the fourteenth century. In this period the second church (today a Calvinist church), the sacristy and the northern wing was built. The third phase is connected to the observant Franciscan activity in the 1440's, when the 55 meter high tower was built. The last important construction period was in the 1480's when Transylvanian Voivode Stephen Báthory fortified the friary because of the approaching Turkish danger. Therefore, the Țirgu Mureș Franciscan friary had four major construction phases by the mid sixteenth century.<sup>8</sup> In the mid sixteenth century the whole town converted to Calvinism and the friary's buildings lost their original function. A smaller part of the buildings were used by the protestant school but the other buildings, except the church and the tower, were demolished in order to obtain construction material for the town walls. The foundation and evolution of a friary had several stages and the final result depended a lot on the financial support of the place, on the activity and importance of a friary, on the leaders of a friary, on the strategically important site selection and on the political support. In the case of the Țirgu Mureș friary one can follow the whole evolution process from the early wooden phase of a smaller foundation until the

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<sup>7</sup> István Botár, András Grynaeusz, Boglárka Tóth and Denis Walgraffe, 'Dendrokronológiai vizsgálatok a marosvásárhelyi vártemplomban', *Marisia* XXXIII (2013): 291-317.

<sup>8</sup> Zoltán Soós, 'A marosvásárhelyi ferences templom és kolostor. A ferences rend szerepe Marosvásárhely fejlődésében' [The Franciscan friary of Țirgu Mureș and the role of the friary in the urbanization of Țirgu Mureș] in *Arhitectura Religioasă Medievală din Transilvania* [Medieval Religious Architecture from Transylvania] (Satu Mare: Editura Muzeului Sătmărean, 2002) and 'The Franciscan friary of Țirgu Mureș and the Franciscan Presence in Medieval Transylvania', *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU*, 9 (2003): 249-75.

construction and fortification of a large religious, pilgrimage and economical center of regional importance.

The site of the former Franciscan friary was almost completely destroyed by later demolition but within the buildings we managed to identify few undisturbed areas. First, I would like to present the different archeological complexes in a chronological order.

The two fourteenth century buildings, in which the friary started its activity, were outside the area of the fifteenth century stone-built friary. The fourteenth century buildings were made of wood and there were no later constructions above them, therefore we could identify their structure and so the excavated archaeological material comes from a well-determined chronological period. This is important not only for the history of the friary but it reveals the process of the foundation of a friary in the late Middle Ages.

The first identified wooden building was the L1 (image 2). In 2005 we researched the northwestern corner of the fifteenth century friary and instead of the later friary structures we identified the foundation of the northern wall and a small plaza paved with stone. The northern wall was longer than the friary's courtyard (see the reconstruction of the friary above),<sup>9</sup> probably the Franciscans planned the construction of a western wing as well but for unknown reasons this was only partly materialized. Nevertheless, below the plaza marked with gray, we identified the traces of an earlier wooden building that perished in a fire. The wooden building's floor was dug in the yellow clay, the eastern side was 1 meter deepened into the soil while its western side was on the edge of the hill. The pit of the former building was filled up with the garbage resulted after the fire and it was never rebuilt. Therefore, all the material kept in the house remained below the ruins. This helped to establish an exact



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<sup>9</sup> The reconstruction of the Franciscan friary was made by Gergely Buzás, based on the results of the archaeological excavations and on the existing analogies.



chronology and to recover precious archaeological material. Inside the building we unearthed a large quantity of different types of seeds, pottery,<sup>10</sup> leather fragments and even carbonized fragments of wooden tableware such as bowls and cups. Based on the large amount of seeds (mainly grain)<sup>11</sup> and pottery material we presume that the burned wooden building served as a warehouse.

We have identified some of the architectural elements of the building and from one of the partly carbonized roof beams we managed to retrieve a sample for dendro-chronological analysis. The results of the analysis were more than satisfactory; we could establish that the oak tree was cut around the year 1303<sup>12</sup>. This means that the latest by 1305-6 the building was already standing. During the research of the eastern side of the building in the destruction layer we found a coin from the time of Charles Robert. With the help of the coin we could set the functioning interval of the warehouse between the years 1307 and the latest around 1350. The precise chronology of the building provided solid evidence in the dating of the bronze material as well. From the L1 warehouse we have two important bronze finds, the remains of a bronze bowl and a *stilus* (image 3).

The second complex named L3 was identified to the northeast from the Franciscan friary (image 4). It was excavated in 2009-2010 and it turned out to be the remnant of a cellar of the larger fourteen century friary building. This building was demolished during the mid-fifteenth century and its construction can be dated to the first half of the fourteenth century. The size of L3 was around 96 square meters; its southern wall was 8 meter long and its western wall was 12 meter long. L3 had a specific construction technique. On the bottom of the 2.5 meter deep cellar a 0.6 meter wide and 0.5 meter high stone wall was built using plaster composed from clay mixed with sand. The wooden wall was placed on the stone foundation. Inside the foundation four large

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<sup>10</sup> Zalán Györfi, 'Contribuții privind vesela ceramică medievală de la Tîrgu-Mureș-Cetate, sec. XIV-XV' [New data regarding the medieval pottery from the castle of Tîrgu Mureș, 14th-15th centuries] in G. Rădulescu - C. Gaiu (eds.), *Vasaria Medievalia* (Cluj-Napoca-Bistrița: 2008), pp. 224-246.

<sup>11</sup> Beatrice Ciută, 'Archeobotanical Results of Samples Recovered from the Archeological Site Tîrgu Mureș Fortress in 2006', *Marisia. Arheologie*, XXIX (2009).  
Idem. 'Archaeobotanical Analyses Carried on Macro-Remains from Tîrgu Mureș - Franciscan Friary', *Marisia. Arheologie*, XXX. (2010).

<sup>12</sup> Botár, Grynaeusz, Tóth, Walgraffe, *Dendrokronológiai*, pp, 291-317.

wood columns were placed at every three meters. These columns supported probably the upper structure. The L3 building was demolished, its material was reused at another construction and its cellar was filled up with the garbage of the friary. Based on the coin finds the last period when the L3 functioned could have been at the end of the fourteenth century dated by Louis the Great coins found on the cellar's floor. The place of the former cellar was filled up in approximately fifty years; the latest coins were from the mid fifteenth century. The filling of the cellar contained an enormous quantity of pottery, since the place served as a garbage pit after it was abandoned. We have found a large quantity of stove tiles, and animal bones, the garbage of a bone tool workshop that produced mainly rosaries, glass fragments, iron fragments and bronze material.

The bronze material found in L3 contains a number of special objects and tools such as a second fourteenth century *stilus*, snuffers, book cover ornament, thimble, needle, knife handle, clothing accessories etc. The large variety of bronze objects supplies a lot of information about the rich material culture of an important medieval friary. In case of other archaeological sites such a large variety is not characteristic. The most important bronze find from L3 is a so-called pointed oval (*vezica*) shaped fourteenth century seal. This unique find belonged to the guardian of the Győr (western Hungary) Franciscan friary (image 5). We can connect some of the finds to the activity of the friary or to another group of objects found here. For instance the large number of thimbles (ten) might be connected to the presence of shoemaker, tailor craftsmen or a bone workshop. The thimbles (image 6) were used during the sewing process. The presence of another *stilus* is also connected to the friary, where the friars copied codices and documents. The *stilus* was used for writing on wax boards. The book cover ornaments are again connected to the friary's life. Usually, larger friaries had a library, a compactor and a *scriptorium*, meaning a place, where the friars copied the manuscripts. The newly copied books received a cover and necessary bronze ornaments to protect them. The other objects were connected to everyday life and probably one can find them in the case of other medieval sites as well. The knife handles are very widespread but the candle trimmer fragment (image 7) from the early fifteenth century is again a rare piece.

The third important archaeological complex with a considerable number of finds was the cellar of the fifteenth century friary building. The late gothic construction was demolished in the early seventeenth

century but the filling contained several late medieval objects. The late gothic cellar had around 105 square meters, a little larger than the fourteenth century cellar. The filling of the cellar consisted mainly in demolition material from the friary's buildings therefore, the archaeological material was not so numerous. Nevertheless, it contained a number of unique and high quality finds, mainly renaissance stove tiles, but in the area of the former heating system we found a larger concentration of book covers. The bronze ornaments were found in ash and burned soil below the filling of the cellar composed of demolition material. Based on the powerful burnt traces on the floor of the cellar we could establish that the northern wing of the friary once burned down and it was reconstructed later. This circumstance let us believe that the *scriptorium* of the friary was among the heated parts of the buildings and it was destroyed in a fire together with the books.

In the demolition layers of the cellar there were only a few bronze objects, we found one more book cover ornament (image 8) and a few bronze fragments. The other bronze objects were identified accidentally or they were single finds thus, they could not be connected to a specific activity or friary building. Altogether we have found a very important bronze material among them several rare objects and some of them, such as the seal, are unique until now in medieval Hungary.<sup>13</sup> Based on the number of the finds and on the fact that we have identified several refuse materials it became evident that besides or connected to the friary a bronze workshop functioned. Written evidence mentions individual craftsmen within Mendicant friaries in Transylvania. The number of the finds at the Tîrgu Mureş friary raised further questions not only about the existence of individual craftsmen, but also about the existence of a workshop. It was clear that the workshop was not functioning within the friary's walls, so if it existed, it should have been somewhere outside the cloister. The breakthrough in the research was brought by the renovation of the Tîrgu Mureş castle from European funds. During the restoration we had the opportunity to research larger areas of the castle and of course the vicinity of the former friary. After the demolition of a military warehouse from the 1950's finally it was possible to research an area close to the northwestern corner of the former friary.

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<sup>13</sup> Two other seals were found in excavations in the Hungarian kingdom, one fourteenth century seal in Visegrád and one thirteenth century seal in the Pilis Cistercian monastery.

## **The Bronze Workshop**

In the previous years, we have discovered three wooden buildings north of the friary from different historical periods. The L1 and the L3 buildings were taken over by the friars in the early fourteenth century and initially these were a warehouse and a manor house. The L2 was a rather small wooden building used for storage and it was built in the fifteenth century beside the new large fifteenth century friary. Finally, in 2012 after the demolition of a warehouse built in the 1950's we identified the ruins of a brick and stone made house, the L7. First, we identified the eastern part of the building (image 9). Near the foundation a Ferdinand I. silver coin was found from 1557. The brick part of the building was erected after the mid sixteenth century that means it was built after the friary was closed. The western part of the L7, including the former street façade was excavated in 2013 (image 9). Although we have not identified further coins, architectural elements and the identified archaeological material indicated that the first part of the building was erected in the second half of the fifteenth century. Near the northern wall of the house we found stoves from the late fifteenth century, indicating that the upper part of the building had an elegant room furnished with a late gothic stove. The stove tile had a green glaze and it was closely related to the stoves identified within the friary's ruins (image 10). After the identification of the western façade we have found the traces of a late medieval road covered with round shaped river stones. The façade of the L7 was aligned with the western front of the church. The road came from the square from below the church and climbed to the western portal of the church. From the church it continued to the north. It is very likely that this was the Cosma (Kozma) street mentioned in an early seventeenth-century document, when the western town wall was built.

The stone and brick building were situated at 8 meters north from the northern wing of the friary. As described above, the L7 had two construction phases. In the first phase, a 6 meters long and 4.2 meters wide structure was built. The foundation and the cellar of the building were made of stone. The cellar had an entrance from the front, directly from the street. Presumably it had a protection roof above the stairs. It seems that from the medieval street level there were nine stairs, originally made of oak. On the northern wall of the cellar we have identified the traces of a niche used for lighting (candle or oil lamp.) While we were researching the cellar floor in the sixteenth century

extension of the building we identified the traces of a fifteenth century bronze furnace. Initially, the medieval furnace was situated 4 meters to the east from the building and it was destroyed, when the workshop was extended in the second half of the sixteenth century. We could identify only the bottom of the furnace, which was initially dug into the clay (image 11).

As the town dwellers converted to Protestantism by the mid-sixteenth century, the friars were expelled from the town by 1556. The bronze workshop continued its activity and moreover, the building was enlarged to the east. A 9.7 meters long and 4.2 meters wide extension was added, which had another side entrance from the south to the cellar. The house had a small room at the end of the cellar with unknown destination. At the middle of the cellar we have identified a small storage room dug into the floor of the cellar. The storage place was walled with brick and it was vaulted, therefore it kept a constant temperature. It had a small entrance near the southern wall. The storage place is 1,2m deep and it is 1,3 x 1,1m large (image 12).

The new furnace was built to 5 meters north of the house. The remnants of the sixteenth-seventeenth century furnace were identified in 2013. Within the furnace filling we found several pottery fragments as well as fragments of burned sandy clay that was used for moldings. Some of the molding fragments indicated that at least in the seventeenth century, the workshop produced bells as well since, one molding fragment comes from the rim of a larger bell (image 13).

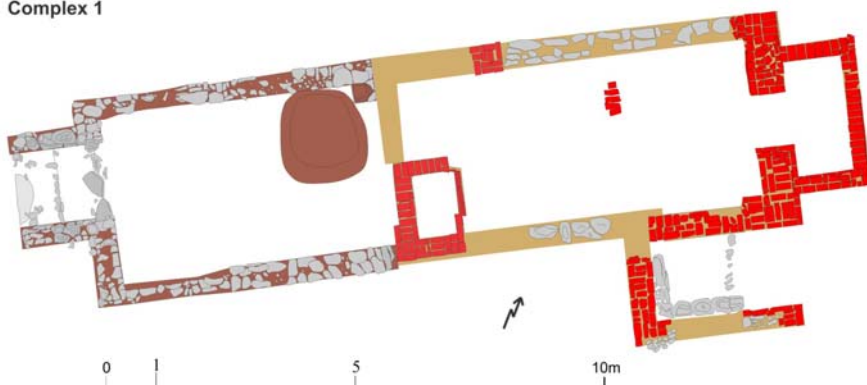
The L7 building had a full length of 15.7 meters after the mid sixteenth century extension. The building was in use until the early nineteenth century and it was demolished during a modernization work of the military unit inside the former city walls. The cellar was filled up with demolition debris that contained eighteenth and nineteenth century artifacts.

The construction found in the vicinity of the friary is a rare example of a medieval industrial monument. It is the only identified late medieval industrial building in Transylvania and its uniqueness is conferred by the fact that from the very beginning it was designed as a workshop. The fifteenth century construction phase follows the pattern of the late medieval urban houses with a cellar, a ground floor and probably one more level on the first floor. The entrance to the cellar on the front of the house is typical for these urban structures, while the access to the ground floor was on the southern side of the building after climbing a few stairs. In this regard it is a rare urban structure in the

Székely area<sup>14</sup> and for now it is the only medieval industrial monument unearthed in Transylvania.

Sector F - 2012

Complex 1



### The importance of the workshop

The brazier industry in the Middle Ages represented a high-tech occupation. One can find these kinds of workshops in important urban or royal centers. In Transylvanian Saxon towns several mentions exist about these workshops<sup>15</sup> and in some cases these were specialized in certain products (bells, canons, tools, etc.). In the case of Tîrgu Mureş we have identified a bronze workshop that functioned connected to a Franciscan friary in a market town. This is a unique pattern within Transylvania and there are only a few similar examples in medieval Hungary. From previous research, it became obvious that the Mendicant orders adapted their site selection and income policy to the different economic conditions encountered in central Europe.<sup>16</sup> The less developed urban structures and the mainly agrarian character of the central European kingdoms forced the Mendicants from the very beginnings to

<sup>14</sup> The Székely region was a privileged territory in eastern and south-eastern Transylvania inhabited by a population who in exchange of military services was free of tax payment and several other obligations towards the king or noblemen.

<sup>15</sup> Elek Benkő, *Erdély középkori harangjai és bronz keresztelőmedencéi* [Medieval Bells and Baptismal Fountains of Transylvania] (Budapest: Teleki László Foundation, 2002).

<sup>16</sup> Erik Fügedi, *Kolduló barátok, polgárok, nemesek. Tanulmányok a magyar középkorról* [Mendicants, Burghers and Nobles. Studies concerning the Hungarian Middle Ages] (Budapest: 1981).

seek different income possibilities compared to the western part of the continent. Therefore, one can find several friaries supported by the royal court or the nobility and we know several examples, where the Mendicants were involved in agriculture, owned farms and tried to integrate in the economic life of local urban centers. This integration had different levels depending on the development of the host town. Within the royal towns of Transylvania the Mendicants had a few trained brothers in a certain craftsmanship and their activity meant extra income for the friary. In less developed market towns or in certain market towns that were far enough from the industrially developed royal towns, one could find not only individual craftsmen, but in certain cases entire workshops. These workshops not only brought extra income for the friary, but they were also very well integrated in the economic life of a certain region.

This was the also the case of *Tîrgu Mureş*, as it has already been mentioned, a mid-size market town situated far enough from the large royal towns with a developed, specialized industry, such as Cluj and the mid-sized Saxon town, *Sighişoara*. The distance from these urban centers was big enough to allow the foundation and the functioning of a specialized workshop connected to the friary. *Tîrgu Mureş* had three large annual fairs and it was the economic center of quite a large area. This geographic position and the distance from the royal towns created a gap in the supply of the important local market with specialized products such as bronze or bone items. This gap in the supply of the local market with certain products was observed by the local Franciscan community and they established new industrial enterprise in order to fulfill these needs. The *Tîrgu Mureş* friary developed several economic activities, becoming by the late fifteenth century one of the most important economic enterprises within the market town besides their spiritual role.

### **The Bronze material**

The bronze material discovered during the archaeological excavations at the Franciscan friary is composed of objects made of copper, plumb or tin alloy. The artifacts identified during the excavations may be grouped in three major categories.

The first category comprises the objects, which belonged to a specific activity of a friary like items belonging to book binding, seals, etc. The second group is formed by clothing accessories, while the third group contains different household tools. There is also a group of

unidentified objects. Within the three categories one can separate items that were produced in specialized local or other Transylvanian town workshops while the rest of the objects were probably imported. In this matter it is of great help the research of Elek Benkő on Transylvanian bronze workshops.<sup>17</sup> These workshops, besides smaller items, were specialized in producing bells, baptismal fonts and most probably from the late fifteenth century they produced weaponry consisting mainly of canons.

In order to classify the different bronze objects identified in the Tirgu Mureş friary and in order to establish a chronology it was of great help to use the analogies presented in the above mentioned book. It contains all the preserved medieval bells in Transylvania and also an excellent collection of the small decorative medallions from different chronological periods preserved on medieval bells. One can distinguish two major groups among the medallions; the first one represents the symbol of different pilgrimage places reused for a longer period within a bell founder workshop, while the second group is composed of book cover ornaments and of cloth or belt accessories. The medallions representing clothing accessories and book cover ornaments have a very wide variety both chronologically and typologically. In the medieval workshops they reused a number of bronze ornaments and in case of each bell or baptismal font we have a different set of decoration motifs. Several ornaments were used throughout generations and a certain set of symbols became the trademark of a workshop, therefore the production year of a bell can be misleading in the chronological determination of the decoration elements. Moreover, the set of symbols used on the bells can be misleading as well because they do not necessarily reflect the material produced in Transylvanian workshops. We have few written evidence regarding the mobility of the Transylvanian guild members. For example, in Sibiu the son of two different masters studied in Vienna and it is described, that when they returned they brought a number of special bronze items, belt and cloth ornaments, to use as bell or baptismal font ornament in their own workshop.<sup>18</sup>

The chronological horizon of the bronze objects identified at the excavation of the Franciscan friary was established based on the stratigraphy of the layers, on the analogies and based on the database of Transylvanian bells and baptistery fountains. Certain elegant ornaments such as book covers or belt buckles were reused for bell decoration even

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<sup>17</sup> Benkő, *Erdély középkori harangjai...*

<sup>18</sup> Benkő, *Erdély középkori harangjai*, p. 180.



after half a century.<sup>19</sup> A large part of the decorations were probably borrowed from the local goldsmith's workshops of the town and these decorative elements are usually chronologically closer to the production date of the bells. Nevertheless, these types of objects were only produced in larger centers and in specialized workshops. The simple bronze items could have been produced in the workshops of smaller towns as well. In this regard I would mention clothing accessories or household tools. It is more difficult to establish their production date but in case of the Tîrgu Mureş friary stratigraphy was of great help. In the following I will present the different categories of bronze objects from the Franciscan friary.

### Special objects

The first group of bronze finds is connected to the presence and the specific activity of the friary. In the case of larger medieval friaries it is very likely to find objects that can be linked to the profile and activity of the institution. During the excavation of similar sites depending on the importance of the place, objects that indicated different types of activity were found. It is very likely to find book cover ornaments as friaries and monasteries were the most important places of literacy for centuries. These institutions usually had smaller libraries; larger centers such as Tîrgu Mureş had *scriptorium*s and the necessary tools for book binding.

During the excavation we found 10 objects belonging to book binding. Among these, the most significant are a square shaped ornament representing a snake surrounding a staff, a perforated ornament representing a chalice surrounded with acanthus leaves, a book corner ornament and the rest was composed of buttons bronze made stripes and clamps. The cover ornaments have a different style, only the corner ornament and the ornament depicting a snake surrounding a staff could belong to the same book. The third casted ornament with a chalice in the middle belonged to a different cover. The ornaments we found are rather fragmentary so it would be very difficult to reconstruct a possible late medieval book cover.

The other special objects are rather rare, very specific and one of them is directly connected to the Franciscan order. During the excavations we have found two *stili* from the fourteenth century.<sup>20</sup> Both

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 174-176.

<sup>20</sup> The medieval *stilus* has a very wide typology, it was mainly used for writing on waxboards.

came from a closed context, one is dated to the first half of the fourteenth century, while the second is very likely from the fourteenth century, but it was identified in a garbage pit from the first half of the fifteenth century. The first *stilus* is elaborate, elegant, it has an octagonal shape and it narrows towards the pin part. It has a rounded end, small, but thick spatula shape with two half-moon carvings at the base. A small carved line is the mark between the spatula end and the octagonal body of the *stilus*. Its head is again separated by two small ring decorations from the body followed by a 0,5 cm pin. The *stilus* is approximately 6 cm long. It was found in an early fourteenth century layer dated with the help of dendro-chronological analysis of a beam (1303-1304)<sup>21</sup> and a Charles Robert coin (1342). The layer was identified in an approximately 100 square meter storage building (L1, see fig 2), which burned down sometimes in the mid fourteenth century. Based on the style and rarity of the *stilus* it is a unique find in the fourteenth century Hungarian kingdom. The second *stilus* was identified in building L3 in the filling of a former cellar. It is 15 cm long, its spatula is 3,5 cm long and 1,5 cm wide, the other side ends in a pin. Compared to the other *stilus* this is a simple piece without any decoration. Based on the filling of the cellar, the *stilus* was lost or thrown out sometimes in the early fifteenth century. The layer contained coins from King Louis the Great (1342-1382) and from King Sigismund of Luxemburg (1395-1437). Therefore, the second *stilus* is again a fourteenth century item and against the very small number of the preserved medieval *stili* we have to say that in a larger friary with scriptorium it is very likely that there were a larger number of *stili* made of bronze or bone in use, but until the present day very few medieval friaries were thoroughly excavated in central Europe. We believe that the *stilus* was used in everyday life in teaching activities or even in daily recordings of the friary. Important friaries worked like charter houses, they copied documents, they wrote letters and they were involved in trials.

We have identified two rings from the late medieval - early modern period. The first one is probably a private seal ring from the late fifteenth century having a small oval shaped top decorated with a symbol in the middle surrounded by small semicircles. The body of the ring has a simple decoration composed of lines carved on the surface. The ring was made from a single bronze piece. The second ring is from

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<sup>21</sup> Botár, Grynaeusz, Tóth, Walgraffe, *Dendrokronológiai*, pp. 291-317.

the mid sixteenth century and it has two parts, the top of the ring and the body. The body is a simple bronze ring without any decoration, the top is larger and its central part has a solar symbol decoration surrounded by semicircles placed along the edges.

A separate group of objects are the balance weights used probably in commerce. As the friary was actively involved in the local economy and maintained a bronze workshop, bone carving workshop and very probably a butchery it is very likely that the Franciscans were involved in the local commerce as well. This is proved by the balance weights identified during the excavations of the friary. Moreover on the cap of a balance weight set we have identified the coat of arm of the Saxon city of Braşov (image 13). Connected to the trade, in 2014 we have identified a very specific lead seal that was used in the textile trade. On the seal one can see the coat of arm of the German city of Ulm (image 14). This means that the friary deposited and probably bought for the local needs import textile, the seal was broken only after it arrived to the friary. The friary therefore deposited precious goods as well and they could sell both the raw material and readymade clothes as well. As we have data about friars specialized in craftsmanship, shoemakers and tailors, it is very likely that they could made clothes for the needs of the town dwellers. The bronze workshop produced the buckles and other accessories and ornaments for the clothes increasing the income sources and of course the quality of the services.

### **The Medieval Seals**

The most important bronze finds from the excavation are two seals from the fourteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The fourteenth century seal was identified in the filling of the L3 building's cellar in cassette C 30, □3/a at 1,40 m depth. It has a pointed oval (almond-like) shape representing Saint Elisabeth holding a fish in her right hand (image 5).<sup>22</sup> The figure of the saint has a large crown on her head that fills the upper part of the seal. The figure of the saint stands in contra post and she holds her mantle in the left hand. Usually, the main accessories of Saint

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<sup>22</sup> St. Elisabeth embraced the penitential way of life that would become the hallmark of the Franciscan Third Order. The Franciscan Tertiaries lived in convent-type houses under a rule – usually *Supra montem* with some added constitutions and did not have a common distinctive habit before the formation of the unified Third Order Regular.

Elisabeth on medieval representation are the loaf of bread in one hand and a plate or jar in the other hand, also holding a fish in her hand, offering her gown or clothes to the poor referring to the miracle of the mantle, representation with roses in her lap referring to the miracle of the roses.<sup>23</sup> Among these, the representation with the loaf of bread and the miracle of the mantle are probably the most often used accessories, while the representation with a fish is less used in medieval iconography.<sup>24</sup>

The central field is surrounded by two pearl-like stripes that contain the inscription around the figure of the saint. The inscription made possible the exact identification of the origin of the seal. The first letter is an S followed by a dot and it is the abbreviation of Sigillum. After S(igillum) one can read the word GARDIANI that directly connects the seal to the mendicant orders because only they had guardians as leaders of a friary. On the other half of the seal the first letter is an abbreviated E that is the first letter of the guardians name followed by the inscription IAURINUM which offers the exact place of the friary in the town of Győr in western Hungary.

The detailed analysis of the seal revealed a number of elements. Among these, the most important are the letter types used on the seal, which based on analogies are characteristic for the mid-fourteenth century. These show similarities with the letters used on the seal of the chapter of Csázma and Zagreb.<sup>25</sup> Another important detail in the chronological identification is related to the background ornament formed by rhomb shaped net with a dot in the middle. Exactly the same motif one can see on the Zagreb seal but it was the late Anjou period in the Hungarian kingdom, when this type of decoration was widely used. On more elaborate seals instead of the dot-like decoration one can see different ornaments such as the lily.<sup>26</sup> Based on the existing medieval Hungarian ecclesiastic church seal collection presented in the book of Imre Takács, it is clear that most of the preserved seals were made earlier in the thirteenth, first half of the fourteenth centuries and that the

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<sup>23</sup> Ottó Gecser, *Aspects of the Cult of St. Elisabeth of Hungary with a Special Emphasis on Preaching, 1231-1500c.* Phd thesis, Appendix 3, Central European University Budapest, 2007.

<sup>24</sup> See the catalogue compiled by Ottó Gecser.

<sup>25</sup> Imre Takács, *A Magyarországi Káptalanok és Konventek Középkori Pecsétjei* [The Medieval Seals of the Hungarian Convents and Chapter Houses] (Budapest: MTA, 1992), pp. 42, 99.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

material from the second half of the fourteen century does not offer very good analogies. It is very likely, that for further and more exact results one should research the Austrian or German ecclesiastic seals from the same period. Taking into account the vicinity of Győr to the Austrian border and its large German population it seems logical that most probably the seal was made by a foreign goldsmith workshop like Vienna.

A last and important element that helps the chronological identification of the Győr seal is the representation of the figure of Saint Elisabeth. The mantle of the saint is arranged in wimples, it covers her left shoulder, where she seems to have a larger cloth buckle. The wimples are more accentuated on her shoulder, her hip seems to be a little wider and her mantle is elegantly stretched at her knees. The way of arranging the mantle and the almost S like contra post of the saint's figure, based on the analogies<sup>27</sup> indicates that the seal was probably made in the second half of the fourteenth century.

Gathering the three essential chronological elements the possible production date of the seal was very likely the second half of the fourteenth century. The filling of the cellar can be dated to the mid-fifteenth century based on the large number of coins. This means that after a few decades of use the seal was lost or intentionally thrown in the garbage after the death of the guardian of the Győr Franciscan friary. We know from documents that guardians of friaries were sent to analyze the activity of the friaries in different districts and with the occasion of the local assemblies. The presence of the seal of the Győr guardian shows that he was here in an official mission and it also means that important delegations were sent from remote friaries in order to obtain an objective description of an important friary or of a region. This is one of the possible explanations on how the seal of the guardian of the Győr friary was brought to Tîrgu Mureş.

A smaller seal was dated to the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, found in the filling of the stone cellar built in the early fifteenth century. It was found in C23 at the depth of 1, 5 m in square 1/d. The seal has an octagonal shape with four longer and four

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<sup>27</sup> Regarding the iconographical representation, for the clothing the most relevant analogies are from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, see the statues of the Buda castle or the Madonna statues from Toporc (Slovakia) and Cîsnădioara (Kisdisznód, Romania) in the collection of Hungarian National Museum. Ernő Marosi (ed.), *Magyarországi Művészet 1300-1470 körül* [Hungarian Art Around 1300-1470] (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1987), pp. 362, 388, 390.

shorter sides. Its handle is narrowed until its end, formed by a larger buckle and it probably hanged on its owner's neck. On the seal one can see a moving lion raising its front right leg placed in a heraldic shield. The lion shows its tongue and it has a raised tail. Above the shield there is a small separated field with two initials G D (image 15). These two letters probably refer to the first letters of the owner's name. The whole representation and the letters are surrounded by a decoration composed of a pearl row. Based on the shape, size and characteristics of the seal, it belonged very likely to a nobleman. On the basis of its shape and the letter types, the seal can be dated to the mid-sixteenth century and it was lost or thrown out during the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. Unfortunately, the coat of arms and the initials are still unknown. Therefore, we could not identify the seal's owner.

### **Clothing Accessories**

The second group of objects are the clothing accessories. We have several local or regional products such as belt ornaments, buttons, pendants and buckles. Among these we have a few belt ornaments produced probably in a specialized workshop and one trefoil shaped cloth buckle (image 16). The belt ornament is pin pointed at one of its edges and it was positioned at the end of the belt. It is lavishly decorated with leaves. The belt buttons have an octagonal shape with a convex middle part and with four claws on the back side. The cloth buckle is rather rare, we only have around five similar pieces found in Transylvanian excavations. The buckle had a decoration made with incision and it followed the pattern of the late gothic buckles produced in north of Europe. The incision tries to follow the shape of letters and leaves.

An interesting decoration element is a bronze pendant, its upper part is triangle-shaped, it ends in a hook, its lower part is square-shaped and it has a small plate attached with three nails. It seems that the pendant, together with other pendants was attached to a leather belt and then hanged on someone's cloth as decoration. The rest of the bronze pieces are simple buttons and belt buckles.

### **Household accessories**

The third group is composed of bronze objects used in households or in everyday life. Most of the objects from this category were identified in the building L3, that is the cellar of the early fourteenth century friary

building, used as garbage pit after the demolition from the early fifteenth century. Among the most interesting objects was the lower part of a candle trimmer composed of two spatula shaped sides and the large number of thimbles was noticeable. We found ten thimbles and five out of them were identified in L3. The thimbles could be connected to the activity of tailors and shoemakers. Within the excavation we identified about fifteen bronze needles that were connected to the above mentioned jobs. Another special object is a tweezers identified in the area of the western wing of the friary, where the medieval kitchen functioned (image 17).

A separate group of the household tools are the fragments from cutlery and tableware. Among these one can find knives, forks and bronze made knife or spoon handles. We found different types of handles and few accessories such as a bronze petal from the end of a handle. The more complex pieces were produced in specialized workshops just as the casted bronze handle (image 18) or we have a number of imported knife handles from Steyr or Nürnberg workshops in large number. These handles have a special cover from bronze plate combined with animal bone. The bronze plate was often decorated with vegetal ornaments. The elegant handles have a widened crown like ending (image 19). Another interesting bronze piece identified during the excavation is a bronze fishing hook. The hook is 5,7 cm long and it has no beard at its end.

## Conclusion

The bronze finds from the Tîrgu Mureş Franciscan friary are very important and relevant to understand the regional connections of a friary and the middle-sized market town. A number of bronze items found at the friary's excavation are mainly connected to the wealth and possibilities offered by a mid-size market town in central Europe, but there are also objects directly connected to different activities of a large Franciscan friary. With the comparison of the objects found at the friary and the material identified through the research of the medieval bells and baptismal fonts produced in the workshops of the larger Transylvanian Saxon towns one can see the differences in its content and decoration. Benkő's work revealed that most of the ornamental material used at the bell foundries was a specific collection partly brought from

abroad<sup>28</sup> and partly gathered from the local goldsmith workshops that cooperated with the foundries. While the ornamental material of the bell foundries was mainly composed of elegant clothing accessories (belt buckles, discs, pressed plates or clothing ornaments) and book cover ornaments, the bronze material of the friary contained a large number of objects connected to everyday life activities such as bone carving workshop, horse accessories, fishing, tableware (knife and spoon handles), local commerce (weight balance) and only a smaller part of the friary's material was composed of ornamental clothing and book binding accessories. We found similarities between the ornamental discs used in the foundries and between the diadem discs found in the friaries cemetery, in grave M52 (image 20),<sup>29</sup> but these similarities are again very general. The symbols on the diadem like the Anjou lily and the running deer are widely used in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The symbols on the discs are not closely related to the ornaments used in the Transylvanian foundries and they were probably produced in the central part of the Hungarian kingdom. Their close analogies are to be found in the Cuman cemeteries of the great Hungarian plane<sup>30</sup> and in today's Slovakia in the medieval cemetery of Nyitrazobor.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the ornamental elements from the friary were more likely produced in the region; while the bell foundries gathered specific material from abroad as well. Therefore, we have only few similar items in the two materials. In the foundries some ornaments were used for generations and each generation added new ornaments and medallions to the collection therefore it is possible to identify the origin of the bells based on the ornaments and letter types used in a workshop. It became clear that the foundries were closely connected to the goldsmiths, carpenters, engravers and sculptors from where they obtained a part of the ornaments or they remade the used ornaments.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Benkő, *Erdély középkori harangjai*, p. 182.

<sup>29</sup> Soós, 'Burials in the Tîrgu Mureş Franciscan Friary - A Fourteenth Century Burial With Diadem', *Marisia XXX* (2010).

<sup>30</sup> Gábor Hatházy, *A Kunok Régészeti Emlékei a Dunántúlon* [The archaeological traces of Cumans in Transdanubia], Hungarian National Museum, 2004.

<sup>31</sup> Alexander T. Ruttikay, 'A Szlovákiai templom körüli temetők régészeti kutatásáról' [About the research of the Slovakian church cemeteries] in *Opuscula Hungarica VI. A középkori templom körüli temetők kutatása* (Budapest: MNM, 2005), pp. 31-57.

<sup>32</sup> Benkő, *Erdély középkori harangjai*, pp. 183-184.



An important aspect of the bronze material recovered from the excavations is the large variety of fragments and raw material such as bronze wires and plates. We have one direct source regarding the *scriptorium* of the friary from 1522, but based on the archaeological evidence the book copy workshop could have functioned at least from the second half of the fourteenth century. Based on the finds, except the high quality book cover ornaments, a number of binding elements such as bronze stripes, hooks, buckles were produced in a workshop that functioned connected to the friary. Besides the debris material we have a number of spoiled objects and more important we found several dross fragments and raw bronze. All these finds and the identification of the building with the medieval furnace indicate that a workshop functioned at the Tîrgu Mureş friary, where they produced different types of bronze objects such as needles, book cover accessories and possibly simple cloth accessories. The existence of the workshop is proved by the large number of debris and spoiled objects found in the garbage of the friary. Most of the fragments were found in the demolished L3 buildings cellar, in the burned warehouse L1 and in the filling of the fifteenth century cellar. Moreover, the presence of bronze dross proves that the workshop produced bronze castings as well. On the location of the sixteenth-seventeenth century furnace we have found fragments of bell moldings. It is not excluded that workshop produced bells in the medieval times as well. Besides the bone carving workshop, the bronze workshop is the second type of manufacture that we could prove with the help of archaeology.

Regarding the workshops, we found important data about the activity of the Transylvanian bronze foundries. Besides producing bells in case of need they produced a number of special objects such as weight balance and probably bronze bowls and three legged pots (*grappe*), canons, etc. We have at the friary a number of specific objects such as candle trimmer, bronze pot leg, fragments of bronze bowls, two *stili*, several thimbles and we believe that all these products, except maybe the elegant *stilus*, were produced in the Saxon towns of Transylvania in Sibiu, Braşov or possibly in the local friary workshop.

The difference between the ornamental objects found in the friary and used in the bronze foundries can be explained by the nature of the friary's material that came from many different sources through the wide range of donations and pilgrimage, so it is almost impossible to establish the direct source. There are two exceptions, the seal of the Győr

Franciscan friary's guardian, which was probably produced in one of the workshops of the western side of the Hungarian kingdom (Pozsony, Buda) or in the nearby Vienna and the top of a balance weight with the heraldic symbol of Braşov (image 13).

The bronze material of the friary identified during the archaeological excavations offers important data regarding the richness of medieval Transylvanian material culture and about the intensity of the commercial relations. A number of objects such as the knife handles (Styria, Nürnberg), diadem discs (central Hungary), seal (western Hungary) arrived here either through commerce or through the specific Franciscan activity. In this matter the material is unique because it is composed of objects with lay as well as religious background and it reflects how the presence of an important ecclesiastic establishment influenced the material culture, and also the connections of the town dwellers with the outside world.

The Tîrgu Mureş Franciscan friary is the first from Transylvania where the existence of workshops was proved, which functioned in the vicinity and were connected to the friary. Most probably these fulfilled the needs of the population of the market town and were maybe even sold on the market and to the pilgrims. Therefore, the workshops offered an important income for the friary and one might expect further discoveries to prove the existence of similar workshops at the sites of other large friaries as well. This kind of economic activity was very profitable if we think about the large and stabile number of customers, the needs of the friary, the inhabitants of the region and the pilgrims.

Last, but not least, it is very important to realize the impact and influence of a large friary on the development of a market town, not just on spiritual and architectural level, but also from economic and industrial point of view. In this regard the importance of the friary was even higher. The bronze workshop functioned after the religious reform as well, until the eighteenth century. Therefore one can witness the direct influence of a friary on the local industry, even when the town became protestant. The former workers and specialists of the workshop remained in the town, they founded families and they also transferred the knowledge connected to a high-tech industry for the next generations. In this regard, with the help of the Franciscan friary, a new type of industry appeared in the market town and contributed to the economic development of the town for centuries. These archaeological discoveries shed a new light on the importance of these large medieval

Mendicant enterprises, which proved to be much more complex units than we believed before. These results prove the assumptions made by Erik Fügedi in the 1970's about the role and importance of Mendicant friaries in the urbanization process in the late medieval Hungarian kingdom.



*Fig.1.* The ground plan of the friary with the first church (later chapter house) and the wooden buildings.



Fig. 2. The fortified Franciscan friary in the late fifteenth century.



*Image 1.*



*Image 2.*





*Image 3.*



*Image 4.*



*Image 5.*



*Image 6.*



*Image 7.*



*Image 8.*





*Image 9.*



*Image 10.*



*Image 11.*



*Image 12.*



Image 13.



Image 14.



Image 15.





Image 16.



Image 17.



Image 18.



*Image 19.*



*Image 20.*

# What Else Do We Have but a Body? Reflections on an Apparent Paradox

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**Abstract:** I began this paper emphasizing several aspects of bodily manipulation in a spiritual context – as traced by scholars over the last decades – and claiming that the particular case of Saint Catherine of Siena provides us with an enormous potential to analyse the body-focused spirituality. Thus, I have followed the various bibliographical clues, which – assembled – retrace a conflicting representation of the flesh, both doomed and source of redemption. Integrating this topic within the broader context of the Saint's theological vision and of her devotional practices and linking it to the religious milieu she belonged to, I attempted to shed light on what appears to be a paradox, according to contemporary standards. Yet during the Late Middle Ages, the flesh was conceived in terms of an inherent ambivalence and body and spirit were thought to be an inseparable unit. As for Saint Catherine, the flesh has no meaning in itself, but only insofar as it is a means which serves the mystical yearning to achieve oneness with God and an expression to describe this state of grace.

**Key words:** embodied spirituality, redemptive suffering, bodily metaphors, body and spirit as interwoven principles, immersion into the divine.

**Rezumat:** Dar ce altceva mai avem în afară de trup? Reflecții pe marginea unui paradox aparent. Articolul începe prin a evidenția câteva aspecte referitoare la manipularea trupului în context spiritual – așa cum au fost ele trasate de cercetători în ultimele decenii –, susținând totodată că, în ceea ce privește paradigma spiritualității orientate asupra trupului, cazul Sfintei Ecaterina de Siena oferă un uriaș potențial de analiză. Astfel, am urmărit diversele indicații bibliografice care – coroborate – dezvăluie o reprezentare contradictorie a trupului: concomitent osândit și sursă a salvării. Integrând acest motiv în contextul mai larg al gândirii teologice și al practicilor devoționale ale sfintei, precum și al ambianței religioase din care aceasta făcea parte, am încercat să aduc lumină asupra a ceea ce pare a fi un paradox, judecând după standardele gândirii contemporane. Cu toate acestea,

în Evul Mediu, trupul comporta o ambivalență inerentă, iar principiile corporal și spiritual erau concepute ca o unitate inseparabilă. Din perspectiva Sfintei Ecaterina, trupul nu are înțeles prin el însuși, ci doar în măsura în care servește drept mijloc prin care poate fi atins idealul mistic de contopire cu divinitatea și reprezintă o expresie capabilă să descrie acest ideal.

**Cuvinte cheie:** „spiritualitate întrupată”, suferință răscumpărătoare, metafore corporale, îngemănarea principiilor spiritual și corporal, idealul îndumnezeirii

„E poi che l'ha schiacciato, el gusto il gusta, assaporando il frutto della fadiga e'l diletto del cibo dell'anime, gustandolo nel fuoco della carità mia e del prossimo suo. E così giunge questo cibo nello stomaco, che per desiderio e fame dell'anime s'era disposto a volere ricevere, ciò è lo stomaco del cuore, col cordiale amore, diletto e dilezione di carità col prossimo suo; diletandosene e rugumando per sì fatto modo, che perde la tenerezza della vita corporale per potere mangiare questo cibo, preso in su la mensa della croce, della dottrina di Cristo crocifisso.”

Saint Catherine of Siena, *Il dialogo della Divina Provvidenza*<sup>1</sup>

From a contemporary perspective, since we are used to precise categories and classifications, the quote above is surprising as it transgresses the boundaries between body and soul. Moreover, it seems to indicate a strong focus on the corporeal. Therefore, this paper will discuss what some contemporary Western scholars call „embodied spirituality”<sup>2</sup> in reference to Saint Catherine of Siena. It is worth mentioning that this specific feature of medieval Christian spirituality has been addressed in historical, theological, and even psychological research.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S. Caterina da Siena, *Il Dialogo*, ed. Giuliana Cavallini (Siena: Cantagalli, 1995) LXXVI, pp. 65-66.

<sup>2</sup> The notion employs a perspective that regards the body as an equal nominee for transcendence. Ann Trousdale, 'Embodied Spirituality', *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 18/ 1 (2013): 18-29, especially 23-24. I also encountered the notion of „embodied piety”: Melissa Raine, 'Fals flesh: Food and the Embodied Piety of Margery Kempe', *New Medieval Literatures*, 7 (2005): 101-126. Jessica Barr 'Reading Wounds: Embodied Mysticism in a Fourteenth Century Codex', *Magistra*, 19/1 [2013]: 27 uses concepts like „embodied mysticism”, „embodied female spirituality”, „somatic spirituality”. Ola Tjørhom employs the phrase „embodied faith” in his homonymous work, *Embodied Faith: Reflections on a Materialist Spirituality* (Cambridge: Eerdmans Publishing, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> As bibliographical indications, see: Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1991); Thomas Cattoi - June McDaniel (eds.), *Perceiving the Divine*

In his study, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, the French medievalist André Vauchez argues that, towards the Late Middle Ages, the model of female sanctity is both mystical and ascetic. Thus, holy women have a spiritualized life, but they also circumscribe their religious experience to an outsourced devotion, based on the conviction that the option for an authentic religious life has to be expressed through manipulation of the body – understood as restraint and control.<sup>4</sup>

Using a different, psychologising approach, the American historian Rudolph M. Bell stresses even more the centrality of body in the devotional world of medieval women. He points out that the prototype of female devotion, set in the Mendicant milieu and represented by Clare of Assisi, values fast and mortification of the flesh as defining elements of sanctity, imitated by women who wanted to please God. Bell's theory is a radical one, and no less controversial. He claims that „a historically significant group of women exhibited an anorexic behaviour pattern in response to the patriarchal social structures in which they were trapped”, with the difference that their eating behaviour had a strong religious significance.<sup>5</sup> Bell's concept was successful among psychiatrists and psychologists, as all these researchers see anorexia as a means of seeking control and make a link between it and the ideal of perfection of the epoch.<sup>6</sup>

Caroline Walker Bynum also considers that late medieval culture has an „extreme interest in physicality”, which is particularly seen in women's devotion, based on fasting, eucharistic devotion and food multiplication.<sup>7</sup> For the American historian and feminist, all this are

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*through the Human Body: Mystical Spirituality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Sarah Coakley (ed.), *Religion and the Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Emily A. Holmes, *Flesh Made Word: Medieval Women Mystics, Writing and the Incarnation* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013); Paolo A. Orlandi, *I fenomeni fisici del misticismo* (Milano: Piero Gribaudi Editore, 1996); Nancy Bradley Warren, *The Embodied Word: Female Spiritualities, Contested Orthodoxies, and English Religious Cultures, 1350-1700* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 354, 384-390.

<sup>5</sup> Rudolph M. Bell, *Holy Anorexia* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. xi, 86.

<sup>6</sup> For examples, see below the psychological approach to Saint Catherine's asceticism.

<sup>7</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast. The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley – Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), p. 274.



basically food practices.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, those are also part of a devotional purpose: imitating Christ; hence pain and self-sacrifice become means by which medieval women feel that they can mystically take part in the salvation of mankind.<sup>9</sup> The author rejects the reading of fasting as anorexia for many reasons: it is voluntarily assumed and its motivation is theological, namely the comprehension of suffering as the path to salvation. She also rejects the body-soul dichotomy or the idea of internalized misogyny as explanations for women's self-inflicted punishment.<sup>10</sup> Bynum's interpretations are extremely influential, being quoted and assimilated in the works on female spirituality published ever since.

Thus, research in the last decades has been captured by the bodily dimension of spiritual life, the flesh being depicted either as blamed or subjected to a rigorous control, or as a realm to be embraced and explored. In this paper, I will investigate several clues regarding the spirituality of Saint Catherine of Siena (1347-1380),<sup>11</sup> as traced in her writings and complemented by her disciples' accounts.<sup>12</sup> I will refer to asceticism, devotion to the humanity of Christ, bodily metaphors and the situation of the flesh in Catherinian theology,<sup>13</sup> in order to discern

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 202-206, 237-238. A strong insistence on the context, followed by a cautious use of concepts can also be found in the research made by Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *Fasting Girls: The History of Anorexia Nervosa as a Modern Disease* (Cambridge-London: Harvard University Press), 1988.

<sup>11</sup> Italian mystic, member of the Third Order of Saint Dominic, canonized in 1461, and declared Doctor of the Church in 1970.

<sup>12</sup> For Catherine's writings, see: *Il Dialogo...; Lettere di Caterina da Siena*, ed. P. Misciattelli (Firenze: Marzocco, 1939); S. Caterina da Siena, *Le Orazioni*, ed. Giuliana Cavallini (Roma: Edizioni Cateriniane, 1978). For the sources on her life, see: Tommaso Nacci Caffarini, *Vita di S. Caterina da Siena scritta da un divoto della medesima con il supplement alla vulgate legenda di detta santa*, ed. Ambrogio Ansano Tantucci (Siena: Stamperia di Luiggi e Benedetto Bindi, 1765); Blessed Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Saint Catherine of Siena* (Dublin: James Duffy and Co., s.a.); *Il Processo Castellano. Santa Caterina da Siena nelle testimonianze al Processo di canonizzazione di Venezia*, eds. Tito S. Centi, Angelo Belloni (Firenze: Edizioni Nerbini, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> I have previously adressed this topic, in an attempt to retrace the various hypostases of the body, as they were understood by Saint Catherine, and her disciples: from vitiated flesh to God as flesh, from tortured body to totally spiritualized body and to holy relic. This was the topic of the presentation „Carne miserabilă sau icoană vie? Trupul în viziunea sfintei Ecaterina de Siena și a

the extent and the limits of a bodily-oriented religious understanding. As it concerns Catherine's particular case, it has become a preferential example, very often quoted inside the psychological/ psychiatric approach, which advocates for the interpretation of medieval women's radical fast as anorexia.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, there is a theological interpretation of Saint Catherine spirituality, which also takes into account the strong emphasis she placed on the corporality. For example, Maria degli Angeli Gambirasio, O.P. stresses that the Saint's path to perfection – as it is settled in her *Dialogue* – is literally an uplift of the soul from Christ's feet to His head.<sup>15</sup> Compared to the psychologising approach, but also to the historiographical attention directed towards other saints' body-related spiritual practices,<sup>16</sup> the place of body within

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*Caterinati*" [*Miserable Flesh or Living Icon? The Body Seen by Saint Catherine of Siena and the Caterinati*] I delivered at the National Scientific Session „Fragmente din trecut. Tinerii cercetători și istoria" [Fragments from the Past. Young Researchers and History], Cluj-Napoca, March 27-29, 2015.

<sup>14</sup> For a bibliographical investigation, *Bibliografia analitica di S. Caterina da Siena 2001-2010* (Roma: Centro Internazionale di Studi Cateriniani, 2013) is a most valuable tool. Many recent studies are dedicated to her works, to her political and ecclesiastical activity, to her doctrine, but also to her spirituality. A significant number of works are dominated by a psychological approach: Fernando Espi Forcen, 'Anorexia Mirabilis: the Practice of Fasting by Saint Catherine of Siena in the Late Middle Ages', *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 170/4 (2013): 370-371; Pascal Guingand, *Anorexie et inédie: une même passion du rien?* (Ramonville – Saint-Agne – Strasbourg: Ères-Arcanes, 2004); Mario Reda – Giuseppe Sacco, 'Anorexia and the Holiness of Saint Catherine of Sienna', *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, 8/1 (2001): 37-47; Finn Skårderud, 'Helliganoreksi Sultogselvskadesom religiøsepraksiser. Caterina av Siena (1347-80)', *Tidsskrift for Norsk Psykologforening*, 45/4 (2008): 408-420; Ines Testoni, *Il dio cannibale: anoressia e culture del corpo in Occidente* (Torino: Utet Libreria, 2001); Walter Vandereycken – Ron van Deth, *From Fasting Saints to Anorexic Girls: The History of Self-Starvation* (London: Athleone Press, 1994).

<sup>15</sup> Maria degli Angeli Gambirasio, „La via della Verità come irradiazione apostolica", Manuscript, Centro Internazionale di Studi Cateriniani, Rome, 1975. See also, Giuliana Cavallini, 'La verità nell'ascesi cateriniana', Manuscript, Centro Internazionale di Studi Cateriniani, Roma, 1974. The author emphasizes that Saint Catherine literally understands asceticism as an ascent to the divine, which starts with the effort to overcome sensuality.

<sup>16</sup> See some of the works mentioned in footnotes 2 and 3. Jessica Barr is focusing her study on Beatrice of Nazareth, Melissa Raine refers to Margery Kempe and Ann Trousdale provides the example of Julian of Norwich. In the book edited by Cattoi and McDaniel, studies on Christian saints refer to Christina the Astonishing and Mechthild of Magdeburg, whilst Emily Holmes analyses Hadewijch of Brabant,

Catherinian spiritual life is evidently less discussed. One contribution worth mentioning is that of Kristine Fleckenstein, who explores Catherine's body images, in which – alongside her bodily austerities – the foundation of her power was rooted. According to the author, the Saint believes in the reciprocity of soul and, by turn, world, God and the body of Christ, accomplished through charity, intense prayer and a spiritual-physical union with the Savior. This regime of identification reflects a „positive bodiliness”.<sup>17</sup>

This investigation is circumscribed to the history of spirituality and employs a strong interdisciplinary approach. It is beyond the purpose of this paper to elaborate reflections on gender or distinguish a specific female spirituality, although this is a common topic among researches dealing with this issue. For example, Caroline Walker Bynum considers that relating feminity to corporeality is a transcultural feature, crossing the entire history of civilization. At the same time, women are more likely to somatize emotions and spiritual experience.<sup>18</sup>

This paper therefore intends to bring a broad contextualization of Saint Catherine's body-centered devotion and her religious reflections, impregnated with metaphors of flesh – both internal, in reference to the Saint's thinking, and external, linked to the spiritual

Angela of Foligno and Marguerite Porette. Nancy Bradley Warren discusses not only the case of Catherine of Siena, but also that of other medieval mystics, such as Julian of Norwich, Birgitta of Sweden and Margery Kempe.

<sup>17</sup> Kristine Fleckenstein, 'Incarnate Word: Verbal Image, Body Image, and the Rhetorical Authority of Saint Catherine of Siena', *Enculturation: A Journal of Rhetoric, Writing, and Culture*, 6/2 (2009): 1-20. See also Dominique de Courcelle, 'La chair transpercée d'un Dieu: au delà des angoisses de la raison, quelques représentations de peinture et d'écriture: Catherine de Sienne, Andrea Mantegna, Jean de la Croix, Le Greco', in *Les enjeux philosophiques de la mystique: actes du colloque*, 6 - 8 avril 2006, Collège international de philosophie (Grenoble: J. Millon, 2007), pp. 50-70. The author proposed a philosophical approach to the representation of an incarnated God, who had a sensitive body. Tom Grimwood, 'The Body as a Lived Metaphor: Interpreting Catherine of Siena as an Ethical Agent', *Feminist Theology*, 13/1 (2004): 62-76, stresses that the Saint, despite being a woman, was autonomous and had a real authority, using her body as a manipulative tool. Alessandra Bartolomei Romagnoli, 'Il linguaggio del corpo in santa Caterina da Siena' in Lino Leonardi - Pietro Trifone (eds.), *Dire l'inefabile. Caterina da Siena e il linguaggio della mistica* (Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2006), pp. 205-229, highlights the fact that the body is a multifaceted symbol in Catherine's writings.

<sup>18</sup> Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, pp. 172-173.

context she belongs to –, in an attempt to avoid what we consider to be the methodological trap of over-extending the limits of embodied piety. In the case of Saint Catherine, a sense of balance between the outsourced religious experience and a genuine spiritual insight is required. Furthermore, this study offers an alternative to the agonistic vision which is traditionally considered in regard with the body-soul relationship, showing that the apparent rivalry of the two principles is subject to the hierarchy established between the divine and the mundane. At this stage of the research, I can only assess such a ratio with respect to a particular case, but further research may verify it in other medieval writers' thinking.

### **Punishing the sinful flesh**

„What else do we have but a body?“ (*O abbiamo noi altro che un corpo?*): this is the rhetorical question Saint Catherine asks in regard with her profound wish to dedicate herself to God. She realizes that the main available instrument she has is her own body; this is her only belonging, so that offering it to God signifies devoting herself entirely.<sup>19</sup> She gives her body as a sacrifice; entrusting it to God, Catherine professes her disponibility to suffer. As André Vauchez argued, female mystics in the Late Middle Ages glorify the passion of Christ and the mortification of the flesh allows them to experience on their own the redeeming suffering.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, as a saint builds his/her own sanctity, their efforts are displayed upon the body.<sup>21</sup>

The female body was mostly associated with sexuality and women were thought to be more likely to yield to the temptation of flesh. Therefore, the religious literature of the time recommends chastity

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<sup>19</sup> According to Thomas Caffarini, the Saint has said: „Signore, ho un solo corpo; te lo offro e te lo rendo. Ecco io ti offro la mia carne, ecco ti offro il mio sangue, che esso si asparso e distrutto e disperso; che le mie ossa siano stritolate fino al midollo...” Thomas Caffarini's testimony, *Il Processo Castellano*, p. 102. Elsewhere, Catherine defines the Christian's duty as follows: „a dare la vita per Cristo, o abbiamo noi altro che un corpo? Perché non dar la vita mille volte, se bisogna, in onore di Dio e in salute delle creature?” Letter CCXVIII, *Lettere*, pp. 685-686.

<sup>20</sup> Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 384.

<sup>21</sup> Sofia Boesch Gajano, „Sfințenia” [Sainthood], in Jacques Le Goff – Jean-Claude Schmitt (eds.), *Dicționar tematic al Evului Mediu occidental* [Thematic Dictionary of Western Middle Ages], (Iași: Polirom, 2002), pp. 734-744, especially 734.

and abstinence, as means of control for women.<sup>22</sup> Under these circumstances, the main possibility of expression women used to have was manipulating the body.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, in the religious environment of the fourteenth century, particularly in Dominican female convents, the drive towards mortification was a common feature; moreover it seems it was guided by God and it was a quest for joining God's will.<sup>24</sup>

Consequently, the Saint exercises a „holy hatred” against herself and strives to detach from the world, entrusted to the belief that love of God and the attachment to the worldly – even to her own temporary existence – are incompatible.<sup>25</sup> For the same purpose, she practices humility, obedience and charity.<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, she implements an extensive ascetical program which implies fasting,<sup>27</sup> sleep and rest deprivation, using a couple of planks instead of a proper bed, vow of silence, voluntary mutilation – through flagellation, use of an iron chain which stung the flesh, causing severe pain –, together with continuous and fervent prayers and vigils.<sup>28</sup> Catherine interprets in a radical manner the Pauline Neoplatonic

<sup>22</sup> Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, „Masculin/feminin” [Male/Female], in Le Goff – Schmitt, *Dictionar tematic*, pp. 440-449, especially 445.

<sup>23</sup> Bynum, *Holy Feast*, pp. 2 sqq. See also Gajano, „Sfințenia”, p. 740.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Ochsenbein, ‘Mistica della sofferenza nei conventi femminili domenicani del secolo XIV secondo l’esempio di Elsbethdi Oye’, in Peter Dinzelbacher – Dieter R. Bauer (eds.), *Movimento religioso e mistica femminile nel Medioevo* (Roma: Edizioni Paoline, 1993), pp. 399, 413.

<sup>25</sup> *Lettere*: XCV, p. 300; CXLIX, p. 458: „...con desiderio di vedervi l’affeto e il desiderio vostro spogliato e sciolto dalle perverse delizie e dilette disordinati del mondo, le qua il sono cagione e materiache parte e divide l’anima de Dio.” The concept of „holy hatred” is mentioned by Raymond of Capua: „Catherine, faithful to the inspirations of God, excited a holy hatred against herself.” *The Life*, pp. 51-52; and also in Thomas Caffarini’s deposition: „Dalle quale rivelazioni essa fu condotta a un ammirabile amore di Dio ed insieme a un grande odio verso se stessa. Odio che essa chiamava santo, in quanto per opera di tale odio l’anima diviene immune di ogni peccato e anche perché in forza di tale odiosi fa vendetta delle tentazioni della sensualità e di qualsiasi peccato commesso.” *Il Processo Castellano*, p. 116. Both testimonies note that the Saint’s attitude was God inspired.

<sup>26</sup> *Il Dialogo* IV, p. 4; LXIII, p. 53; CLIV, p. 166; *Lettere* L, p. 157.

<sup>27</sup> *The Life*, pp. 5-7, 24, 265. See also *Vita di S. Caterina*, pp. 3-4; *Supplemento*, p. 215, 220-221.

<sup>28</sup> *The Life*, pp. 25-26, 38. *Vita di S. Caterina*, pp. 4-5. The testimony of Augustin of Pisa *Il Processo Castellano*, p. 311.

dialectics, according to which the rule of the body is contrary to the rule of God (Romans, 7:23) and man serves the law of God with his mind and the law of sin with his body. Hence the Saint pictures a vicious body, enemy and prison of mankind.<sup>29</sup> The paradigm for this attitude of hatred against sin and compensation of sin through scourging the body was offered by Christ himself on the cross.<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand, Saint Thomas emphasizes the fact that body is also God's creation and it has an ontologically positive essence (S.T. I, q 65, art.1). In agreement with the Thomistic thought, the Saint did not design an entirely negative representation of the flesh; on the contrary, she values it, being created by God.<sup>31</sup> Besides, during the High and Late Middle Ages, Christian theology started to promote a more positive attitude towards the body, since it had been strongly denigrated and denied by the various heretical movements. At this time, the Church upholds the doctrine of transubstantiation or the devotion to the Host as *Corpus Christi*. By the Late Middle Ages, the sense of body as a place where God may reside – as old as the cult of saints – had become notably influential.<sup>32</sup> But Saint Catherine suggests that humankind was created to be far more than bodily existence; in order to discover their beauty and dignity and access their divine potential,<sup>33</sup> humans have to acknowledge God within, since the creature is futility and God is absolute and perfect.<sup>34</sup>

Moreover, for Catherine, God is also body. The antidote of mortal, filthy flesh is none other than Christ's tormented body and the

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<sup>29</sup> *Il Dialogo* CXLV, p. 154: „stando nella carcere del corpo...”; CLXVII, p. 185-186: „desidera l'anima mia d'escire della carcere del corpo tenebroso...” See also *Lettere*: CLXXXIX, pp. 581-582: „l'uomo, mentre che vive nella carcere corruttibile del corpo suo (il quale è una legge perversa, che sempre lo invita e inchina a peccato)...”; CCXCIV, p. 927: „L'ultimo nemico nostro, cioè la miserabile carne coll'appetito sensitivo...”.

<sup>30</sup> *Le Orazioni* I, p. 1; *Lettere*, CCXCIX, pp. 943-944.

<sup>31</sup> *Il Dialogo* I, p. 1; XV, pp. 16 sqq; *Lettere* XXI, p. 58; *Le Orazioni* I, pp. 1 sqq.

<sup>32</sup> Bynum, *Holy Feast*, pp. 252-255.

<sup>33</sup> *Il Dialogo* IV, p. 3; CLXVII, p. 186. See also Cavallini, 'La verità nell'ascesi cateriniana'.

<sup>34</sup> In this regard, the Saint often refers to her own nothingness, evoking, at the same time, the scriptural quotation „I Am who I Am” (Exodus 3:14) in order to underline the divine completion. *Le Orazioni* XIII, p. 18: „perché tu sei quello che sei ma io sono quella che non sono.” Elsewhere: „Io sono co lui che so', e voi non sete per voi medesimi, se non quanto se te fatti da me...” *Il Dialogo* XVIII, p. 18.

memory of his sacrifice.<sup>35</sup> This representation, however paradoxical it might seem, it is the typical bivalent image medieval people had on the flesh. The body was blamed, due to the original sin and it was also the reminder of salvation.<sup>36</sup> In an orthodox, non-dualistic view, the body is necessary for salvation, as it is dangerous: is a medium for the soul and a locus of learning, but it is also fond of the material world, so it may compromise the quest for salvation.<sup>37</sup>

### **Embodied devotion to the humanity of Christ**

Emerging in the thirteenth century, devotion to the humanity of Christ and the endeavour to resemble Him in his sufferings will be subsumed – in the following century – to the mystical ideal, particularly in female religious experience. According to this, authentic Christian life is demonstrated under several circumstances, like exhausting fasting, continuous abstinence or severe punishment of the body.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the main understanding of female spirituality, as it was shaped and disseminated by theologians and preachers, was centered on the Eucharist and the related topic of the humanity of Christ, which was then perceived in its corporeal dimension.<sup>39</sup> Surely not least, Dominican spirituality is Christ-centered, with a particular focus on the Passions.<sup>40</sup> Consequently, Catherine's Christocentrism implies embracing the redemptive suffering – *imitatio crucis* – and also Eucharistic devotion, both of them testifying to the Saint's externalized piety.

Catherine sees in pain a path towards God, since the salvation of humankind was mediated by the Cross. Through suffering an

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<sup>35</sup> Romagnoli, 'Il linguaggio del corpo', p. 220. See within *Lettere* CCLVI, p. 789: „con la carne sua flagellate sconfisse il nemico della carne nostra”; CCLVII, p. 802, which resumes the idea.

<sup>36</sup> Jacques Le Goff – Nicolas Truong, *Il corpo nel Medioevo* (Roma – Bari, Laterza Editori, 2007), p. 20.

<sup>37</sup> Kristin L. Burr, 'Body in Literature and Religion', in Margaret Schaus (ed.), *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe. An Encyclopedia* (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), pp. 79-82, especially 81.

<sup>38</sup> Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 388, 408.

<sup>39</sup> Bynum, *Holy Feast*, pp. 80, 114.

<sup>40</sup> See William A. Hinnenbusch, *Dominican Spirituality. Principles and Practice* (Washington, D.C.: 1965), accessed on 15 May, 2015 on the website of The Holy Rosary Dominican Province. ([http://www.holyrosaryprovince.org/2011/media/essencial/dominican\\_spirituality.pdf](http://www.holyrosaryprovince.org/2011/media/essencial/dominican_spirituality.pdf)), pp. 14 *sqq.*

intersection between the divine and the human is accomplished.<sup>41</sup> Loving God cannot be separated from bearing pain for His sake and for the service of one's fellows; in other words, pain seems a quantifier of an unutterable feeling.<sup>42</sup> The Saint points out that the most valuable struggle is the inward fatigue, and also the will to suffer.<sup>43</sup> In other words, undergoing pain transcends the physical dimension of existence, as suffering is always sublimated into an ethical value.<sup>44</sup> Just as the flesh implies an ambivalent understanding, suffering is, at the same time, the inevitable fate of the fallen creature and a possibility to retrieve the relation between God and his creature.<sup>45</sup> Answering to her wish, Christ gives Catherine the capacity of experiencing his Passions, by sending her a terrible chest pain, the worst pain ever felt by the Saint.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, suffering is a blessing and a consolation.<sup>47</sup> Despite her tremendous torments, Catherine was always calm and serene, as a consequence of the „gift of impassibility” she received.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *Il Dialogo* IV, V. God tells the Saint that, as a consequence of the inherent imperfection of human condition, man cannot be acquainted with God but through suffering. LXXXIII, p. 72. Elsewhere: „My great consolation is to suffer, because I am aware that by suffering I shall obtain a more perfect view of God.” *The Life*, pp. 141-142. In his turn, Bartholomew Dominici shows that Catherine considers herself united to Christ in suffering. *Il Processo Castellano*, p. 273.

<sup>42</sup> „Molto e piacevole a me il desiderio di volere portare ogni pena e fadiga in fino alla morte in salute dell’anime. Quanto l’uomo più sostiene, più dimostra che m’ami: amando mi più cognosce della mia verità e quanto più cognosce più sente pena e dolore intollerabile dell’offesa mia.” *Il Dialogo* V, p. 5. „E chi molto ama molto si duole, unde a cui cresce amore cresce dolore.” CXLV, p. 154.

<sup>43</sup> *Lettere* CCXXV, p. 710, *Il Dialogo* III, p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> Jean-Claude Schmitt, ‘Trup și suflet’ [Body and Soul], in Le Goff – Schmitt, *Dicționar tematic*, pp. 772-782, especially 777.

<sup>45</sup> Philip A. Mellor, ‘Self and Suffering: Deconstruction and Reflexive Definition in Buddhism and Christianity’, *Religious Studies*, 27/ 1 (1991): 49-93, especially 55.

<sup>46</sup> *The Life*, p. 298. See also Bartholomew Dominici’s testimonial, *Il Processo Castellano*, p. 273.

<sup>47</sup> See within *Il Processo Castellano* the deposition of Thomas Caffarini, p. 149: „non soltanto desiderava le sofferenze, ma quando l’affliggevano sembrava godere di esse”; Bartholomew Dominici’s testimonial, p. 273: „Infatti essa sentiva le sofferenze comme dolcisoni del suo Sposo e, quando aumentavano, diceva che erano ancora piu dolci.”; Francis Malavolti’s deposition, p. 338: „Sofferenze che ella chiamava singolari doni di Dio.” See also, *The Life*, p. 108 and *Il Dialogo* CXXXVII, p. 142.

<sup>48</sup> „... il dono della impassibilità”, notion belonging to Thomas Caffarini, *Il Processo Castellano*, p. 136. This particularity is mentioned all over the narratives on her life: *Supplemento...*, p. 117; *The Life...*, passim; *Il Processo Castellano*: deposition of



On the other hand, as the Crucified Savior illustrated, suffering is serving, the greatest charitable act of all.<sup>49</sup> Just as Christ takes the chastisement for the sins of mankind upon his body,<sup>50</sup> Catherine prays that God might expiate her fellow's sins through her sufferings.<sup>51</sup> After mystically united with Christ, the Saint will benefit from this grace.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, physical pain is far from being a goal in itself; it is rather a way to empathize with God's humanity and also an understanding of his divine love, which led him to endure the most dreadful pain and death.<sup>53</sup>

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Bartholomew Dominici, p. 273, deposition of Francis Malavolti, p. 338; and also Barduccio's letter, *Appendix to The Life*, p. 361.

<sup>49</sup> Bynum, *Holy Feast*, pp. 171, 179. *Il Dialogo* IV, p. 5. From the Saint's perspective, pain is on the same par with the love of neighbour and love of God. V, p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> *Le Orazioni* I, p. 1: „... hai punite le nostre iniquità e la disobediencia di Adam sopra el corpo tuo...” See further prayer XIX, p. 23.

<sup>51</sup> *Il Dialogo* II, p. 2; *Le Orazioni*: XIV, p. 19; XXVI, p. 30; *Lettere CCCXXXI*, p. 1065. Elsewhere: „Lord, [...] inflict the chastisement that this people merit on my body.” *The Life*, p. 252; „Signore, affliggi il corpo mio, conndanandolo a sopportare quante pene, ed infermitàsi possono mai provare in questa vita mortale, perchè sono pronta a sacrificare alla Giustizia tua il corpo mio, sogettandolo all'oppressione di tutti i malori per condegna soddisfazione delle colpe da questo miserabile Religioso comesse...” *Supplemeto*, p. 133. See also *Il Processo Castellano*: Thomas Caffarini's deposition, pp. 138-139; and additional details to the testimony of Bartholomew Dominici, p. 299.

<sup>52</sup> Christ tells Catherine: „... but thou shalt expose thyself to every species of fatigue in order to save their souls. Follow therefor courageously the inspiration which will enlighten thee; for I shall draw, by thy aid, numerous souls from the gulf of hell, and I will conduct them, with the help of my grace, to the kingdom of heaven.” *The Life*, pp. 96-97. *Supplemento*, p. 223: „... per placare l'ira Divina, provocata per tanti ribellioni, ed iniquità offersi voluntieri di sacrificio in propiziazioni il corpo mio, sotto posto perciò dal giusto Giudice a continui gravissimi dolori [...] onde accettato avendo il clementissimo mio Sposo, questo spontaneo mio sacrificio in cambio de' casti ghidovuti a gente ambiziosa, superba e feduttrice, non vi è nel corpo mio parte alcuna, che non sia quasi da saette acuta traffita.” Caffarini further shows that, through her pain, the Saint managed to get remission for her fellows' sins. *Ibid.*, pp. 189-190. Peter of Giovanni Ventura asserts in his deposition that the Saint took upon herself his sins. *Il Processo Castellano*, p. 354. She also suffered atoning pain on account of her father's sins. *The Life*, pp. 147-148.

<sup>53</sup> Ellen Ross, 'She Wept and Cried Right Loud for Sorrow and for Pain. Suffering, the Spiritual Journey, and Women's Experience in Late Medieval Mysticism' in Ulrike Wiethaus, (ed.), *Maps of Flesh and Light: The Religious Experience of Medieval Women Mystics* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1993), pp. 45-59, especially 50.

On the other hand, the Holy Communion, which is central to Catherine's religious experience, appears to give her the chance to be eventually united to Christ.<sup>54</sup> In fact, both from a theological and a devotional point of view, medieval Christianity acknowledges the real presence of the Son in the Eucharist.<sup>55</sup> Often, when receiving the host, Catherine feels like taking blood, raw meat, or even Christ himself in her mouth. Moreover, the Saint sometimes assists in the transformation of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity into one or is being given the host by one of them or by an angel.<sup>56</sup>

Not least, the Eucharist nourishes the Saint, to the point where the Sacrament remains her only food. As a consequence of literally tasting Christ's blood during an ecstatic rapture – as a reward of her overcoming the disgust caused by the wound of a woman she took care of – Catherine becomes completely spiritualized. This heavenly food is, as Christ says to the Saint, „a liquor above nature”, still expressed as a feeding material, but one that nurtures the soul and the body alike.<sup>57</sup> Her bodily functions were completely modified and she even becomes able to live without any corporeal food.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> María del Mar Graña Cid, 'Mística feminina e semellanza das mulleres con Cristo. A propósito de santa Catarina de Siena', *Revista galega de pensamento cristián*, 16 (2009): 73-84, especially 76.

<sup>55</sup> Mary Suydam, 'Christian Spirituality', in Schaus (ed.), *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, pp. 779-782, especially 780. The doctrine of the Real Presence was affirmed at the Fourth Lateran Council, in 1215.

<sup>56</sup> Deposition of Thomas Caffarini, *Il Processo Castellano*, p. 131.

<sup>57</sup> *The Life*, pp. 86-87, 93, 94. As Raymond notes, Christ approached Catherine with the following words: „Never hast thou been dearer or more pleasing to me – yesterday in particular thou didst ravish my heart. Not only didst thou despise sensual pleasures, disdain the opinions of men, and surmount the temptations of Satan, but thou didst overcome nature, by joyfully drinking for my sake a loathsome, horrible beverage. Well, since thou hast accomplished an action so superior to nature, I will bestow on thee a liquor above nature. [...] Drink, daughter that luscious beverage which flows from my side, it will inebriate thy soul with sweetness and will also plunge in a sea of delight thy body, which thou didst despise for love of me.” Consequently, Catherine applies her mouth to the wound: „she drank long and with as much avidity as abundance; in fine, when our blessed Lord gave her notice, she detached herself from the sacred source, satiated, but still eager...” *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.

<sup>58</sup> According to Raymond of Capua, Christ told Catherine: „I will difuse in thy soul such an abundance of grace, that thy body itself will experience its effects and will live no longer except in an extraordinary manner...” *The Life*, pp. 95-96, 98-102.

In other train of thoughts, Cathrine mystical experience is described by the witnesses of her life in terms of a physical or a temporal fusion, through themes such as the mystical marriage, changing hearts with Christ or the stigmatization. Therefore, we find that the proximity to the divine transcends the ideal and spiritual dimension, as it is exhibited through concrete, corporeal signs. On the other hand, as a consequence of receiving the holy grace, the Saint is considered to be in a permanent state of mental communion with the divine.<sup>59</sup> Despite presenting her connection to Christ as a corporeal bond, the Saint's disciples are aware that the core of her religious life is above the temporal, bodily dimensions. As a consequence, we can ascertain a sort of juggling between the two fields, as if it was no boundary between them. This is especially confirmed when it comes to the Saint's concept of food and nourishment.

The holy blood of Christ, shed on the cross is the ultimate nourishment and the substantial, physical source of salvation. In Catherine's writings,<sup>60</sup> the divine blood or flesh are angelic, sweet, glorious, immortal nourishment, they are the food of life (*cibo angelico/ dolce/ glorioso/ cibo di vita* etc.), taken at the housing of the Cross (*alla mensa della santa croce*). In other words, the sacrificial act turns into a feeding process.<sup>61</sup> Besides, as an instance for Catherine's representation of body and soul as an amalgamation, the Saint asserts that the human being can be nourished by sufferings and fatigue, by the penance, by the words of God, charity, humility or prayer, as well as by the „quest for honouring God and for the salvation of souls” (*cercare l'onore di Dio e la salute dell'anime*). The Saint truly admitted the possibility of replacing bodily with spiritual food, since in her *Dialogue*, she refers to feeding in terms of a vital need of the imperfect.<sup>62</sup> Regarding Catherine's particular

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<sup>59</sup> *The Life*, p. 109. See also the letter of Giovanni di Domenico, *Schiarimenti* to Alfonso Capececelatro, *Storia di S. Caterina da Siena e del papato del suo tempo* (Roma - Tournay: Tipografia liturgica di S. Giovanni, 1886), p. 565: „...secondo il corpo, fu da Siena e lassollo a Roma; e secondo l'anima, fu e sempre sarà del Cielo...”; *Il Processo Castellano*: „la sua santa mente era inseparabilmente immersa in Dio e a Dio attualmente unita”, Stefano Maconi's deposition, p. 236; „è del tutto evidente che lo Spirito Santo era con lei e rimasse con lei per sempre”, Mino di Giovanni's testimony, p. 359.

<sup>60</sup> Specifically in the *Dialogue*, but also in the *Letters*, passim.

<sup>61</sup> Bynum, *Holy Feast*, p. 175.

<sup>62</sup> „perché pure dell'erba non vive il corpo della creatura, parlando comunemente e in generale di chi non è perfetto...” *Il Dialogo...* CXLIX, p. 159. Furthermore, Catherine

case, her disciples pointed out that her subsistence derived from the abundance of grace.<sup>63</sup>

### Metaphors of the body, expression of the soul

The body language is central as a means of expression in Saint Catherine's writings.<sup>64</sup> The words „body”/ „flesh” are frequent occurrences in the *Dialogue*, in which the body is depicted as corrupt (*corpo suo corrotto, massa corrotta d'Adam*), tenebrous (*tenebre del corpo*) mortal (*mortale*), mortified (*mortificare il corpo*), tortured (*macerando la carne/ il corpo*), punished (*gastigare il corpo loro*), killed (*uccidere il corpo suo*), injured (*cicatrici nel corpo suo*), being hit (*percotendo il corpo*), burning (*dessi il corpo mio ad ardere*), sweating, bleeding (*il corpo sudava, escire del corpo suo sudore di sangue*).

But just as numerous are the references to the resurrected beatified body (*la beatitudine del corpo dopo la resurrezione*), to the mystical body of the Church (*corpo mistico della santa Chiesa e l'universale corpo della Cristiana religione*) or to the glorified body of Christ (*il corpo glorificato ne*

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had already known that grace: „davo e do una disposizione a quell corpo umano, in tanto che meglio starà con quella poca de l'erba, o alcuna volta senza cibo, che inanzi non faceva col pane e co' l'altre cose che si danno e sono ordinate per la vita de l'uomo. E tu sai che egli è così, ché l'ài provato in temedesima.” Ibid. There is also mentioned that it is the forthcoming of good Christians to benefit from a transfer of grace upon the body: „...l'anima darà beatitudine al corpo: darà dell'abbondanza sua, rivestita nel'ultimo dì del giudicio del vestimento della propria carne la quale lasò. Come l'anima è fatta immortale, fermata e stabilita in me, così il corpo in quella unione diventa immortale: perduta la gravezza è fatto sottile e leggiero.” Ibid.XLI, p. 34.

<sup>63</sup> *The Life*, pp. 101-102; *Il Processo Castellano*, passim (depositions of Bartholomew Dominici, Francis Malavolti, Peter of Giovanni Ventura and many others).

<sup>64</sup> An analysis of Saint Catherine's body-related language was one of the main issues I have addressed in my Bachelor Thesis, *Hrănirea mistică între pathologic și devoțional. Studiu de caz: Sfânta Ecaterina de Siena. Post și subzistență spirituală* [Mystical Feeding between Pathologic and Devotional. Case Study: Saint Catherine of Siena. Fasting and Spiritual Subsistence], Bachelor Thesis, Manuscript, Department of Medieval History, Early Modern History and Art History, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, 2015, pp. 66, 79-84. I have concluded that, on the one hand, mystical experience is described as body-centered in Western medieval Christianity, since it regards the individual as a whole and body-related images like hunger or marriage are simple, natural ways of expressing an intimate connection with God. On the other hand, I have also observed that, in the specific case of Saint Catherine, bodily notions like feeding/hunger or illness were mainly used figuratively.

*l'umanità glorificata de l'unigenito mio Figliuolo*): embodied Word (*corpo del Verbo del dolce mio Figliuolo*) and sacrificial lamb (*la morte della colpa nostra tolse la vita corporale allo immaculate Agnello*). This duality perfectly corresponds to the ambivalent representation of the body in medieval Christianity, which we have discussed before. But a particular metaphor reveals another common aspect of medieval thought, namely imagining the Church and the society as a body. While advocating for the importance of charity, there is an eloquent depiction of the ideal society as a perfectly functioning body.<sup>65</sup>

However, Catherine's body-related metaphors and allegories are much more than that. The adjective „sweet” is frequently referred to, being related to the holy, to those people or qualities she highly appreciates (*dolce e amoroso Verbo, Maria dolce, dolce Verità, dolce bontà di Dio, cognoscimento dolce, dolce pazienza, dolcezza della mia carità, and so on*). In fact, there are plenty of metaphors the Saint often used: for example, the metaphor of dressing (*vestire di pene/ della carità/ della verità/ della dolce volontà di Dio*), of bathing in Christ's blood (*bagnatevi nel sangue di Cristo crocifisso*), of residing within the knowledge of God (*stando nel cognoscimento di Dio*), of espousal (*questo dolce sposo, Cristo*), of inebriation (*inebriarse del sangue di Cristo crocifisso/di questo prezioso sangue, il quale sangue inebria l'anima*), of giving birth (*partorisceivizi/ le virtù, la superbia nasceed è nutricata da l'amore proprio sensitivo*), of the eye of intellect/ eye of mercy when referring to God (*levandol'occhio dell'intelletto nella dolce Verità, prendo l'occhio dell'intelletto; vollendo l'occhio della sua misericordia/ l'occhio della pietà*), of the bridge that links the human to the divine (*questo ponte, unigenito mio Figliuolo/ è levato in alto, e non è separato perciò dalla terra*). All these expressions bear witness of the tendency to express religion-related concepts and emotions through concrete, temporal or bodily actions.

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<sup>65</sup> „Le membra del corpo vostro vi fanno vergogna, perché usano carità insieme, e non voi; unde, quando il capo à male, la mano il soviene; e se 'l dito, che è così piccolo membro, à male, il capo non sireca a schifo perché sia maggiore e sia più nobile che tutta l'altra parte del corpo, anco el soviene co' l'udire, col vedere, col parlare e con ciò ch'egli à; e così tutte l'altre membra. Non fa così l'uomo superbo che vedendo il povaro, membro suo, e infermo e in necessità non il soviene, non tanto con ciò che egli à ma con una minima parola...” *Il Dialogo CXLVIII*, p. 158. In medieval culture, Christ was the head of the Church, whose limbs were the believers; similarly, spiritual leaders were the heads of their people, and men were head to women, represented as body. Burr, „Body in Literature and Religion”, p. 79.

In addition, the disciples currently call the Saint „sweet Mother” (*dolce Mamma, dolcissima Mamma*), so that Catherine is vested with the temporal hypostasys of maternity, besides being portrayed in a maternal stance towards the infant Jesus, as she holds Him in her arms.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, they use a broader range of metaphorical language – namely bodily metaphors.<sup>67</sup>

Such linguistic structures derive from the conception that claims the complementarity between the various human faculties. Thereby the soul’s corrupt attitudes are rather linked to the physiologic and the elevating potential of the body to the spiritual.<sup>68</sup> Back then the human being was perceived as an inseparable unit. In this respect, scholars have pointed out how the Middle Ages has witnessed an „overlapping of physical and mental states”.<sup>69</sup> Consequently, the mystical experience describes the encounter with the divine as takes place in intellectual, affective and, not least, sensorial plan.<sup>70</sup>

Just like any other human experience, the religious practices are also mediated by the physical dimension of existence and expressed through it. In Christianity, perceiving the divine message cannot be merely an inner fact in as much as the divinity itself is conceived as embodied Word which resides at the very heart of creation as God the

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<sup>66</sup> *Supplemento...*, p. 170.

<sup>67</sup> For example, Thomas Caffarini refers to „the viscera of charity” (*viscere della carità*), the fact that the Saint was „inebriated by the Spirit” (*inebriata dallo Spirito*) and that she was fed by „the perfect food of the perfect knowledge and the perfect charity of God” (*cibo perfetto del perfetto cognoscimento e della perfetta carità di Dio*). *Il Processo Castellano*, pp. 98, 101; *Lettere dei discepoli, in Lettere I*, p. 1286. In its turn, an unnamed man, who sends a letter to Raniero Pagliaresi talks about „the eye of understanding” (*occhio de lo intendimento*), being „dressed in darkness” (*vestito di scurità*), „hunger and appetite for the good” (*fame et appetito de cosa buona*). Batholomew Domenici also uses expressions like: „our sweet Saviour that inebriates us with His precious” (*nostro dolce Salvatore che c’inebria di questo prezioso sangue*) or „the soul who is in love and comforted by Christ’s blood” (*l’anima adunque innamorata e confortata nel sangue di Cristo*). *Ibid.*, letter VIII, p. 1297; letter XX, p. 1321.

<sup>69</sup> Danielle Jacquart – Claude Thomasset, *Sexualité et savoir médical au MoyenÂge* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), pp. 83-84, quoted in E. Ann Matter, ‘Theories of the Passions and the Ecstasies of Late Medieval Religious Women’, in Lisa Perfetti (ed.), *A Representation of Women’s Emotions in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), pp. 23-42, especially 26. The author recalls the same observation in the works of Dyan Elliott. *Ibid.* See also Schmitt, „Trup și suflet”, pp. 779-780. For the particular case of Saint Catherine’s *Dialogue*, see Kristine Fleckenstein, „Incarnate Word”, *passim*.

<sup>70</sup> Bynum, *Holy Feast*, p. 151. See also Romagnoli, „Il linguaggio del corpo”, p. 219.

Son.<sup>71</sup> From the complementary manner of understanding the relationship between body and soul originates the conviction that the qualities of the soul are displayed on the body.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, the Christian is called to turn his body into a mirror of Christ's virtues, as proved during his bodily existence, so that the whole body is involved in the spiritual growth.<sup>73</sup> Under these circumstances, medieval Christian authors favor bodily metaphors.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, objectifying the spiritual in physical terms is a commonly used, highly coherent communication proceeding.

The mystical experience is lived as a voluptuousness, being equated with tasting ineffable delights, impossible to translate in the common language.<sup>75</sup> Mystics intend to present their meeting with the divine in a form understandable for the profane audience, so that they appeal to sensorial imagery.<sup>76</sup>

In fact, through her *Dialogue*, Catherine discloses a new dimension of corporality, one that corresponds to the order of the spirit. For her, the word is more than the basic unit of speech; she believes in the objectifying effect of the word, as her permanent reference is the embodied Word.<sup>77</sup>

### **The theological perspective: the place of the flesh in the quest for Godlikeness**

The ultimate aim of mystical spirituality is the perfect immersion into God's will, preceded by self-surrender. Saint Catherine currently expresses her exhortation to comply with Christ the Crucified. This aspiration has a strong vocation of the concreteness, both from the Saint's perspective – eager to take upon her body the punishment for her

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<sup>71</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, apud. Philip A. Mellor, „Self and Suffering”, p. 54.

<sup>72</sup> Schmitt, „Trup și suflet”, pp. 776-777.

<sup>73</sup> Thomas Cattoi, 'Conclusion. The Virtues of Sensuality', in Cattoi – McDaniel (eds.), *Perceiving the Divine through the Human Body*, pp. 223-236, especially 224.

<sup>74</sup> Schmitt, „Trup și suflet”, p. 780.

<sup>75</sup> Cristina Mazzoni, 'Italian Women Mystics: a Bibliographical Essay', *Annali d'Italianistica: Women Mystic Writers*, 13 (1995): 401-435, especially 405. See also Rick McDonald, 'The Perils of Language in the Mysticism of Late Medieval England', *Mystics Quarterly*, vol 34/ 3-4 (2008): 45-70, especially 45. On the other hand, Grace Jantzen reconsiders this concept: when evoked by mystics, the ineffable refers not to their subjective experience, but to God's nature. *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 304.

<sup>76</sup> McDonald, „The Perils of Language”, p. 63.

<sup>77</sup> Romagnoli, „Il linguaggio del corpo”, pp. 209-210, 211-212.

fellows' sins –, and from her disciples' point of view – who present the familiarity between Catherine and her divine Spouse as a nearness validated in temporal and physical terms, through themes like marriage and change of hearts.

Yet, in Catherinian theology, earthly and bodily existence is miserable and alienated from God.<sup>78</sup> With the aim of achieving the union between the human soul and his Creator, one must abandon his own selfish will;<sup>79</sup> from this perspective, particularly reluctant is the sensitive will (*volontá sensitiva*), which is understood as fondness to the evanescent reality and to carnal pleasure, giving rise to the vices. In this regard, Catherine shares the Thomistic perspective, according to which the sin occurs due to the exaggerated, inordinate appetite – *inordinatu appetitu* – for worldly goods, which resides in the measureless self attachment (S.T. I, q 77, art.4). True to this doctrine, Catherine currently uses the locution *disordinato* as a reference to what is contrary to God's will and to the calling of mankind, which is becoming Godlike.

As for the scholastic philosopher, Catherine considers the sin as a primarily mental deed, without denying its effective, factual reality.<sup>80</sup> In a similar way, the availability or – in other words – the desire (*desiderio*) is a crucial component of the fact, which defines it, since its sense emerges in the field of conscience. From a quantitative perspective, this concept is probably as frequently used as the notions of body and flesh, or even more. This is the prerequisite of perfection since it has an infinite potential; and God, who is infinite, cannot be reached through finite actions.<sup>81</sup>

Thus, perfection is a state of mind, of knowledge and will alike.<sup>82</sup> Therefore, mortification of the flesh must be accompanied by the

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<sup>78</sup> *Il Dialogo* CLXVII, p. 186; *Le Orazioni* XVI, p. 20. See also *The Life*, p. 9; *Supplemento*, pp. 114-125.

<sup>79</sup> *Il Dialogo* IV, p. 5; CXXVI, p. 121. See also *The Life*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>80</sup> *Il Dialogo* VI, p. 6.

<sup>81</sup> „Ma è vero questo: che col desiderio dell'anima si soddisfa, cioè con la vera contrizione e dispiacimento del peccato. La vera contrizione soddisfa alla colpa e alla pena, non per pena finite che sostenga, ma per lo desiderio infinito; perché Dio, che è infinito, infinito amore e infinito dolore vuole.” *Il Dialogo* III, p. 3.

<sup>82</sup> „ Questo medesimo amore ti costringa ad illuminare l'occhio dell'intelletto mio dell'umedella fede acciò che io conosca la verità tua manifestata a me. Dami che la memoria sia capace a ritenere i benefici tuoi, e la volontà arda nel fuoco della tua carità; il quale fuoco facci germinare e gittare al corpo mio sangue, e con esso sangue dato per amore del sangue, e con la chiave dell'obediencia io diserri la porta del cielo.” *Il Dialogo* CLXVII, p. 185.



annihilation of the perverted will (*macerando il corpo suo e uccidendo la volontà*).<sup>83</sup> As Thomas Caffarini stresses, self-love is equally reprehensible, be it sensitive or spiritual;<sup>84</sup> self-love and divine love being totally opposites.<sup>85</sup> In other words, Saint Catherine also envisages an illicit spiritual bond. In fact, in the Saint's writings, the vice – like any other category of human affairs – is both corporeal and spiritual; the two adjectives are often mentioned conjunctively, as they are, for example, in the phrase „dirt of body and mind” (*immondizia di corpo e di mente/ corporale o mentale*). Furthermore, we can notice that, for Catherine – faithful to the Thomistic representation of the soul, of an Aristotelian origin – the human soul is primarily an intellectual principle. Moreover, any action has a mental foundation, initiated within the inner cell (*cella del cognoscimento di sé*).

As a result of all the above considerations, Catherine of Siena – like her disciples and, in general, her contemporaries – does not consider a fundamental distinction between body and soul; the real discrimination she perceives and describes is between the divine and the worldly. The first is the field of perfection, of true goodness, love and bliss. On the other hand, the man who disregards God's will is the slave of his body, lives in a profane, selfish, sinful, contemptible horizon, under the power of the devil.<sup>86</sup> Any means to reach God is welcomed and ontologically

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, CLVIII, p. 171.

<sup>84</sup> „Da questo capriccioso amore spirituale deriva quell'attacco biasimevole a qualche santo, e virtuoso esercizio, fingiamo al digiuno: ma costoro pertinaci nel proprio sentimento non si fanno scrupolo alcuno nell'contradire all'ubbidienza, che non li vorrebbe così astinenti, perchè desidera di vederli più docili.” *Supplemento*, pp. 225-226.

<sup>85</sup> „Il quale cognoscimento spoglia l'anima del proprio amore, e vestela d'odio santo e d'un amore divino, cercando solo Cristo crocifisso, e non le creature, nè le cose create, nè se medesimo sensitivamente...”. *Lettere CXXVI*, pp. 401-402.

<sup>86</sup> „Or così pensa, carissima figliuola, che diviene a l'anima: o e' si con viene che ella serva e spera in me, o serva e spera nel mondo e in se medesima, però che tanto serve al mondo fuore di me di servizio sensuale, quanto serve o ama la propria sensualità [...] Mentre che esso spera in sé e nel mondo none spera in me, perchè l' mondo, cioè i desiderii mondani de l'uomo, sono a me in odio e in tanta abominazione mi furonoo che Io diei l'unigenito mio Figliuolo a l'obrobriosa morte della croce” *Il Dialogo CXXXVI*, p. 141. See within *Lettere*: XXVIII, p. 80, in which the world, the flesh and the devil are all presented as enemies of man; and also CLXXXII, p. 557; CCXVIII, p. 680. The medieval mind was used to the opposition between – on the one hand – fleshly, temporal, material, and – on the other hand – the spiritual. Schmitt, „Trup și suflet”, p. 781.

positive, irrespective of its significance on the secular scale of values. When it comes to the ideal of Godlikeness, suffering equates enjoyment.<sup>87</sup>

Consequently, the body and soul differentiation is only valid insofar as it takes the form of the confrontation between the temptation of worldliness and the ascent to the divine. The Saint acknowledges the potential of the soul to receive God's grace and the contrary drive of the fleshiness, so that the rational soul must rise against it.<sup>88</sup> Man was given both sensuality and reason, but God expects him to serve the soul and to practise virtue even by means of flesh.<sup>89</sup>

## Conclusion

The Christian perspective on the flesh is ambiguous: it is the foundation of original sin, as it is its counterweight. Similarly, suffering is inherent to the fallen human condition and also a path to redemption. Thus, Saint Catherine of Siena undertakes various austerities and deprivations in order to repress lust and treasures pain as a chance to experientially merge with Christ's humanity. On top of that, mortification of the flesh has to be complemented by the desire to annihilate the perverse will and to entirely surrender to God.

As regards Catherinian figurative representation of the body – namely bodily metaphors for yearning and finding the divine –, it is a paradox only from a contemporary standpoint. In a culture that regards

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<sup>87</sup> „Sai come sta il vero servo di Dio, che si nutrica alla mensa del santo desiderio? Sta beato e doloroso, come stave il Figliuolo di Dio in sul legno della santissima croce: perocchè la carne di Cristo era dolorosa e tormentata, e l'anima era beata per l'unione del desiderio nostro in Dio, ed essere vestiti della sua dolce volontà; e dolorosi per la compasione del prossimo, e per tollere a noi delizie e consolazioni sensuali, affiggendo la propria sensualità.” *Lettere* LXV, *ibidem*, p. 199. Coupling the two notions, apparently antithetic, also appears in: *Le Orazioni* XVI, p. 20; *Il Dialogo* LXXVIII, p. 68.

<sup>88</sup> The Saint states that only the rational soul can receive divine grace. *Le Orazioni* XVI, p. 21. This is due to the Christian belief according to which the rational soul never ceases to bear the seal of the divine, despite all the limitations imposed on the human nature by the original sin. Schmitt, „Trup și suflet”, p. 773. Catherine also underscores that „La sensualità e contraria allo spirito, e però in essa sensualità pruova l'anima l'amore che à in me, suo Creatore. Quando il pruova? Quando con odio e dispiacimentosì leva contra di lei.” *Il Dialogo* XCVIII, p. 89. See also *Le Orazioni...* XI, p. 11: „ribbelione della carne contra lo spirito”; *Lettere* LXXXIV, p. 265.

<sup>89</sup> „La sensualità è serva, e però è posta perché ella serva all'anima, ciò è che con lo strumento del corpo proviate ed esercitate le virtù.” *Il Dialogo* LI, p. 46.

human faculties as a continuum, religious experiences and emotions, piety and grace, were expressed through references to the body and through allegories. Therefore, medieval mentality does not perceive bodily and spiritual dimensions as self-dependent, but as interdependent. In the light of Catherine's intimacy with Christ – portrayed by her disciples as a virtually physical union –, this junction is accurately reflected by her purely spiritual subsistence.

In conclusion, it must be observed that Catherinian focus on the corporeal is not first-hand, as the body is nothing but a means of expression, both factually and figuratively. The true meaning of human experience, be it bodily or spiritual, externalized or internalized, is revealed to the extent that it is directed towards the divine.

# ***Those Last Days... Reflections upon an Apocalyptic Text from 18th Century Transylvania***

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**Abstract:** There is large evidence concerning a dynamic circulation of apocryphal literature in eighteenth-century Transylvania. These texts are characterised above all by a variety of types of writings and of themes. The End is recurrently approached in its immediate meaning of death as well as from an eschatological point of view. The latter is also the major theme of an unpublished text, part of a miscellany, copied most likely in north-western Transylvania in 1761 and entitled: *Istoriia pentru naşterea lui Antihrist şi pentru perirea lui şi pentru judeţul lui Hristos*. Therefore, this study intends an analysis of its content, integrated within the wider discussion about apocalyptic literature through an evaluation of the whole manuscript. Its investigation is justified by the fact that sources of this kind can unveil specific expectations to which all copyists' efforts are put forth, while *marginalia* might offer information about their reception as a cultural product. Nonetheless the image of Antichrist and the story of its future coming are topics insufficiently researched by Romanian scholars concerning Apocrypha. Which are the narrative sequences of this text? What other writings, canonical or not, are similar in their contents? What particular elements can be identified? Which are the other texts this manuscript miscellany consists of and how do they assemble to create a unitary discourse? All these are questions that lead to preliminary observations regarding this unpublished source and to which I will try to answer in the present paper.

**Key words:** Apocrypha, manuscript miscellany, Antichrist, Vision of Daniel, moralistic discourse

**Rezumat:** *Acele ultime zile... Reflecţii pe marginea unui text apocaliptic din Transilvania secolului al XVIII-lea.* În Transilvania secolului al XVIII-lea literatura apocrifă se bucură de o circulaţie dinamică, iar textele vehiculate se caracterizează prin varietate: una a scrierilor în sine, alta a temelor pe care ele glisează. Sfârşitul, atât în înţelesul său imediat, ca moarte, cât şi ca sfârşit al lumii, revine mereu.

Acesta devine o temă majoră a unui text inedit provenind dintr-un miscelaneu, copiat la 1761 – cel mai probabil în zona nord-vestică a Transilvaniei –, intitulat: *Istoriia pentru nașterea lui Antihrist și pentru perirea lui și pentru județul lui Hristos*. Drept urmare studiul de față propune o analiză asupra conținutului său, iar, prin raportare la manuscrisul din care face parte, o integrare în discuția mai largă asupra literaturii apocaliptice. Studiarea lui se justifică din perspectiva faptului că fiecare astfel de manuscris vorbește despre un orizont specific de așteptare pe care copiiștii urmăresc să-l satisfacă, în timp ce însemnările marginale pot oferi informații despre receptarea lui, așadar despre intenționalitatea unui produs cultural și despre impactul acestuia. De asemenea, imaginea lui Antihrist și povestea legată de venirea sa au fost destul de puțin aprofundate în cercetările românești asupra apocrifelor. Care sunt secvențele textului? Ce alte scrieri, canonice sau nu, cuprind pasaje similare? Ce elemente particulare pot fi identificate? Care sunt celelalte texte cuprinse în același miscelaneu și cum se articulează ele într-un discurs unitar? Sunt întrebări ce conduc spre observații preliminare asupra acestei surse inedite și care își găsesc răspunsuri în această lucrare.

**Cuvinte cheie:** apocrife, miscelaneu, Antihrist, Viziunea lui Daniel, discurs moralizator

‘Therefore repent because you do not know when the hour of death will come’.<sup>1</sup> This are the closing words of an Apocrypha copied during the second half of the 18th century in the north-western part of Transylvania. Even if it is a typical sequence it summarizes the content and the theme of an entire category of sources: the apocalyptic and eschatological Apocrypha. The last days, either of the World or of each and every person, are both themes of permanent reflection for mankind. History shows not only the amplitude of this phenomenon, but also its particularities. Consequently, the general and vague image can be surpassed and it can be understood that preoccupations for such aspects are not only an attribute of great thinkers but also of ordinary people, of those silent individuals whose voices are hardly accessible to the

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<sup>1</sup> Cluj-Napoca, ‘Lucian Blaga’ Central University Library (cited from now on as BCU Cluj), Ms. 4390, ff. 19v. - 20r.

historians. As their voices are barely perceptible, they can rather be inferred than clearly heard.

An answer about how these themes took shape in their minds is made accessible, among other things, by such texts diffused in rural areas and which, most likely through a public lecture of the priest, came to have an effect on the collective imagery and mentality.<sup>2</sup> The message disseminated through these channels has even greater chances to succeed within an ambiance characterised by religiosity, extensively influenced by folklore, and in which the clergy has authority and is revered. In addition, clergy's involvement makes also comprehensible the second strong idea of the short passage quoted at the beginning: the need of repentance. More than a theme, it represents the key for one of the main functions of apocalyptic and eschatological writings, the ethical function.

In 18th century Transylvania the apocryphal literature enjoys a dynamic dissemination and the spread texts are characterised by variety: in what concerns both the writings and the themes. *Istoriia pentru nașterea lui Antihrist și pentru perirea lui și pentru județul lui Hristos* [The History for the Birth of Antichrist and for His Death and for Christ's Judgment], an unknown text included in Manuscript 4390 from 'Lucian Blaga' Central University Library's collections, is just a sample from this category of sources. Since Apocrypha, as a genre, were not thoroughly studied in Romanian historiography, specific texts of this kind were even less approached. Interest in apocalyptic and eschatological themes exists and seems to be increasing, manifested mainly in the case of the most popular apocryphal writings. There is a tendency to open discussions concerning the content of these writings<sup>3</sup> and to

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<sup>2</sup> An interesting and well-argued discussion regarding the mechanisms of written culture and their complementarity with orality in early modern Central Europe, focusing on the case of Hungary, is offered by István György Tóth. The author questions the use and usefulness of books with religious content in a rural and illiterate or poorly literate world, but he also insists on the fact that despite this situation the written material did influence beliefs or religious ideas. István György Tóth, *Literacy and Written Culture in Early Modern Central Europe* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2000), pp. 47-95.

<sup>3</sup> Timotei Oprea expresses the intention to study this issue, in his book. However, the result is a very general discussion about the Jewish origins of apocalyptic themes and about their development through Christianity. Also the analysis of the manuscript discovered by him does not succeed to surpass a flat descriptivism. Timotei Oprea, *Rai și iad în cultura populară românească. File de apocalips (secolele XVIII-*

contextualise them through analogies with visual representations, as products of the same folk culture.<sup>4</sup> Still, the image of Antichrist and the stories about his coming are unexplored. The contributions of Cristian Bădiliță<sup>5</sup> are among the few researches undertaken on this topic. But his approach is related to the domain of biblical studies and of early Christianity and his interests focus on Christian texts in the form they were originally written, not on their spread or subsequent local copies. Contemporary imagery of The End of the World, current reinterpretations and revisitation of some writings which are not accepted by canons of the Church and the revival of apocalyptic beliefs in the past decades are all aspects that offer relevance to this paper.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, they are a proof that the diffusion and the perception of this specific type of sources and of these themes have psychological, social and cultural effects.

Consequently, the present study intends to offer an analysis of the aforementioned text's content and also to integrate it within the larger discussion on apocalyptic literature. Which are the sequences of the text? What other canonical or non-canonical writings contain similar passages? What particular elements can be identified? Which are the other texts of the same manuscript and how do they assemble to offer a

XIX) [Heaven and Hell in the Romanian Folk Culture. Files of Apocalypse (eighteenth to nineteenth-centuries)] (Buzău: Alpha MDN, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Cosmina Berindei, *Imaginarul eschatologic în iconografia românească, Morfologia eschatologiei în cultura populară românească* [Eschatological Imagery in Romanian Iconography. The Morphology of Eschatology in Romanian Folk Culture] (Cluj-Napoca, [s.n.], 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Cristian Bădiliță, *Manual de anticristologie. Studii, dosar biblic, traduceri și comentarii* [Handbook of Antichristology. Studies, Biblical Influences, Translations and Commentaries] (București: Vremea, 2001); *Metamorfozele Anticristului la Părinții Bisericii* [Metamorphoses of Antichrist as viewed by the Church Fathers] (Iași: Polirom, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> Often, the works on this subject, particularly those belonging to North American historiography, are motivated by contemporary developments which are also analysed. A recent synthesis that opens new directions for research deserves to be mentioned within this context: John J. Collins (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature* (Oxford, New York, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 2014). Other similar approaches are those of Malcom Bull (ed.), *Teoria Apocalipsei* [The Theory of Apocalypse] (București: Meridiane, 1999); Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End. Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) and Bernard McGinn, *Anti-Christ. Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with the Evil* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1994).

coherent message? These are some questions that lead to preliminary observations on this specific writing and to a better comprehension of a whole typology of sources.

As the title makes it clear, the text focuses on two major themes: the coming of Antichrist and the Last Judgment. They also represent the two main sequences that can be divided in shorter passages to better understand the way in which the story is articulated. It starts with a description of a kingdom which is devastated by all sorts of calamities during *those last days*, culminating with the birth of Antichrist. All these disasters seem to be the result or at least to follow the death of the king, who leaves behind a pregnant widow. Their daughter will rule for fifty-five years, but it will be a time of sterility during which only the barley will bear fruit.<sup>7</sup> It is an image that reminds of the *Parousia* signs, as it could be a symbol for drought and famine. Soil's infertility and the lack of fruitage perfectly reflect the character of people whose souls do not generate good deeds.<sup>8</sup> This is the context in which the Antichrist will be born, through his incarnation from the young queen. The sequence is worth discussing in detail, because it represents one of the main particularities of the texts and it leads to interrogations about possible filiations. Antichrist's conception is produced through the smell of some foam with flowers getting out the mouth of a songbird.<sup>9</sup> In the attempt to find possible analogies some elements seem to be distinctive and can be defined as clear symbols of a cultural code which is understandable for the audience it addresses. The allurements of that girl through a song and the deceptive beauty can easily be associated with typical features of Antichrist as they are described in the New Testament, especially in the Second Epistle of John. Cristian Bădiliță returns to the Greek text of the Bible and analyses in great detail the original term used to designate this

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<sup>7</sup> 'În zilele acei fete nu va fi altă roadă numai orzul va rodi', BCU Cluj, Ms. 4390, f. 12v.

<sup>8</sup> 'Iacomi și cu năraav (sic!) nestătoriu și răi', *Ibidem*, f. 13r.

<sup>9</sup> 'Atuncea va veni o pasere foarte frumoase care nime nice o dată nu va fi văzut nimica așa frumos pre această lumea. (...) și va începe a cânta cântări frumoase care nu să va mai putea pomeni și cântând paserea vor cură niște spume din gura paserei întru care spume va fi mistuit Antihrist. Iară fata cea de împărat va zice: aduceți un blid de aur și-l puneți să pice spumele în blid. Și văzând fata spumele cu flori și frumoasă va zice: aduceți-mi blidul să-l sărut și să mirosesc aceale flori frumoase. Și vor aduce ei blidul cu spumele paserii și îndată ce să va pleca față să serute blidul cu spumele aceale și din mirosul spumelor să va zămisli în fata aceaia Antihrist'. *Ibidem*, f. 13v.



deceptive character (*planos*), concluding that it expresses Antichrist's fundamental trait.<sup>10</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the second motif that can be traced is the supernatural or unnatural conception, as the birth of Antichrist was perceived as an exceptional phenomenon. For example, a manuscript that has been published in 1994 under the title *Antihristica*, in an edition which unfortunately does not give details about its localisation and dating, outlines different beliefs spread over time about this subject. Among others, it mentions that Antichrist will be born by a virgin, similar to Christ, but as a son of evil, that he will be conceived through an unnatural sexual relation or that his mother will be a whore.<sup>11</sup> These ideas are to be found in another text named *Semnele venirii lui Antihrist* [The Signs of Antichrist's Coming]. Some copies of it were produced in the South of Transylvania, at the end of the 18th century and today they are part of the Romanian manuscripts collection of Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the themes of the virgin mother and that of miraculous births are common both in mythology and folklore, legends of this kind aiming to determine the supernatural origin of founding heroes, kings or great religious characters.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, another recurrent motif is the kiss, as an instrument of incarnation. If the portrait of Antichrist is generally an antithesis of Christ's image there can also be traced a parallelism between this kiss and the one exchanged between Joachim and Anna or Joseph and Virgin Mary, perceived as symbols of conception.

However, the metaphors of the beautiful singing bird and of that foam with flowers are not so clear and common. Precisely these elements offer specificity to this text and might represent a good starting-point to determine the filiation and possibly a proper identification in the amorphous mass of apocalyptic and eschatological Apocrypha, with all their versions and variants. The only analogy that can be found is the Vision of Daniel, but not the canonical text of the Old Testament.

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<sup>10</sup> Bădiliță, *Manual de anticristologie*, p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> *Antihristica: semnele venirii lui Antihrist, învierea morților și înfricoșata judecată*, [Antihristica: Signs of Antichrist's Coming, Rising of Dead and Last Judgment], ed. Valentin Micle (Bistrița: Vâlcea, 1994), pp. 66-68.

<sup>12</sup> Bucharest, Romanian Academy Library (from now on B.A.R. Bucharest), Romanian Manuscripts collection, Ms. rom. 2325, Ms. rom. 2489, Ms. rom. 4975.

<sup>13</sup> Jean-Paul Roux, *Regele - mituri și simboluri* [The King. Myths and Symbols] trad. Andrei Niculescu (București: Meridiane, 1998), p. 92.

Wilhelm Bousset in his work concerning the legend of Antichrist and its tradition refers to Eugen Kozak's contribution on biblical Apocrypha from the Slavic world.<sup>14</sup> The latter author shows that a version of the Vision of Daniel has been preserved and even printed in South Slavonic (Serb) and in Russian, version which corresponds with the Greek Apocalypse of Daniel.<sup>15</sup> Kozak also mentions a *Narratio de antichristo* whose summary includes a prediction of a famine and the reign of a virgin queen who receives the Antichrist as a bird.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, Wilhelm Bousset underlines the idea of a virgin queen and makes a connection with the rule of a widow described in the Armenian and Greek apocalypses of Daniel.<sup>17</sup> The *History for the birth of Antichrist...* evokes both the virgin and the widow, fact that supports the hypothesis of such a filiation.

The second major sequence of the text refers to the rule of the Antichrist, but as a preamble it illustrates his appearance – a matter never neglected by all the writings concerning his coming. The grotesque description clarifies the manner in which these writings' audience came to visualize and to mentally represent the evil. The Antichrist will be born as a seven years old child, his face will be dark, his hair will look like arrows, his right eye will be like a morning star and the left one as a lion's eye, his mouth will measure a cubit, his teeth and his soles will also have exaggerated dimensions and his nails will look like sickles.<sup>18</sup> His entire appearance will be asymmetrical and wild. This passage introduces elements which reverberate from the biblical Book of Revelation (13, 2), respectively some features of the Beast from the sea,

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<sup>14</sup> Wilhelm Bousset, *The Antichrist Legend. A Chapter in Christian and Jewish Folklore* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1896), p. 69.

<sup>15</sup> Eugen Kozak, 'Bibliographische Uebersicht der biblisch-apokryphen Literatur bei den Slaven', *Jahrbuch für Protestantische Theologie*, 18 (1892):139, online version available at [http://idb.ub.uni-tuebingen.de/diglit/jpth\\_1892/0133?sid=d40143e3d\\_6188c8bfccce99163439a01](http://idb.ub.uni-tuebingen.de/diglit/jpth_1892/0133?sid=d40143e3d_6188c8bfccce99163439a01), accessed on 14 March, 2015.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 153.

<sup>17</sup> Bousset, *The Antichrist Legend*, p. 70.

<sup>18</sup> It is important to mention the original Romanian description as the translation may alter some nuances. Also it will be a term of further comparison: „și când va naște va fi ca un prunc de 7 ani și va crește mare și vederea feții lui va fi neagră și părul capului va fi ca niște săgeate, căutătura îi va fi sălbtecă, ochiul dreptul va fi ca o stea de dimineață, iară stângul ca de leu, iară gura lui de un cot, iar dinții lui de o palmă și unghete ca niște seceri, talpele lui de două palme, iară în fața lui va fi scris Antihrist.” BCU Cluj, Ms. 4390, f. 14 r-v.

and from other Apocrypha, such as the Apocalypse of Ezdra, the Armenian Apocalypse of Daniel or the Apocalypse of Elijah. This is not a simple coincidence. These ideas were circulating in the area and during the period I study those who copied manuscripts and compiled miscellanies were most likely familiar with such beliefs. A fragment from the Apocryphal Apocalypse of John preserved in *Codex Martian*,<sup>19</sup> a similar manuscript miscellany copied during the 17<sup>th</sup> century presumably in the North of Transylvania, stands as a proof. The portrait presented here is not only similar, but quasi-identical. Despite some linguistic differences, a single detail about Antichrist's eyelashes is added and his fingers, not his nails are described as similar to sickles.<sup>20</sup> If a hypothesis of interpolation might be hazardous to make based on this argument only, at least it is certain that the image of Antichrist, retold in the same form, was able to create a pattern in the collective mentality. The emergence of these two texts in the same geographical area makes comprehensible the manner in which elements of traditions and myths that are rooted in ancient times cross centuries, being transformed into cultural clichés.

The similarities are to be identified also in the sequence that refers to the rule of Antichrist – a deceptive reign of evil which manifests its power apparently to the benefit of people (he raises the dead and performs healings) in order to lure them. There are missing, however, the miracles related to nature and cosmos, frequently encountered in other apocryphal apocalypses.

Chapter XI of the Book of Revelation mentions the presence of two witnesses, presumed to be either Elijah and Moses or Elijah and Enoch as some traditions identified them.<sup>21</sup> Apocryphal writings are those which nominates the last pair – they are present in Pseudo-Efrem, Pseudo-John, Pseudo-Hippolytus, Syrian Apocalypse of Ezdra, different

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<sup>19</sup> This fragment is published by Nicolae Drăganu who also discussed its provenance and dating. Nicolae Drăganu, *Două manuscrise vechi: Codicele Todorescu și Codicele Marțian* [Two Ancient Manuscripts: Codex Teodorescu and Codex Marțian] (București, Leipzig, Viena: Socec&Comp., 1914), pp. 229- 231.

<sup>20</sup> The original Romanian text: 'vediară feței lui iaste negră întunecată și părul capului lui iaste ascuțit ca săgețile, gînele lui sămtu ca de ursu, ochiul lui cel dreptu iaste ca o ste alaltu-i iaste ca de leu, denții lui sămptu de o palmă degetele lui sămtu ca nește seceri, talpa piciorului va fi de unu cotu, iară în fața lui scrise va fi Antihristu'. *Ibidem*, p. 230.

<sup>21</sup> Bousset, *The Antichrist Legend*, p. 203.

versions of Apocalypse of Peter and some others.<sup>22</sup> From this point of view, the *History for the birth of Antichrist...* stands out. In this writing the characters are John the Apostle and Elijah. Their confrontation with Antichrist involves actions similar to those presented by other texts, but their conduct is distinct – here they are consecutive and not simultaneous. During the first confrontation John asks Antichrist to prove his divine origins by reviving stones, test which cannot be passed.<sup>23</sup> In a comparable way, the Beast from the earth uses his supernatural powers in order to reach his goal of alluring people to worship him and one of the miracles he performs is that of instilling stones with life. In the apocryphal text, John is the one who revives the stones through divine intervention. Then he rises back to heaven followed by Antichrist who is expected by angels and crashed again on earth in an Eastern city.

Once returned to earth he takes the appearance of a big snake, similar to the dragon of biblical Apocalypse. God sends Elijah from heaven to confront the devil with his thunders and lightings.<sup>24</sup> Two key-moments can be distinguished in their fight: the attack on Antichrist and then the attack on Elijah and his death. The first scene, in which the snake or dragon is split into two parts: one of which dies,<sup>25</sup> reminds of the Seven-headed Dragon from the Book of Revelation and of the episode that describes ones' head death. The second scene is part of the common tradition which recounts the death of those two witnesses. Following the victory of Antichrist the entire world is set on fire <sup>26</sup> – another recurrent theme of this literary genre. Analogies can be found in the Sibyls, a composite Judeo-Christian scripture, which stresses that when the power of the Antichrist will reach its peak, a searing power, a strong fire, will come out from the sea on the earth, and will destroy him. Even more relevant is that the writing of Hippolytus of Rome, *De Christo et Antichristo*, a real treatise on Antichrist composed in the 3rd century AD, the author enumerates twelve points about the coming of

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<sup>22</sup> Lorenzo DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2005), p. 87.

<sup>23</sup> 'tu diavole zici că ești Dumnezeu. De vei face pietrile să fie vie eu încă voiu creade în tine. Iară Antihrist nu va pute face să învie pietrile'. BCU Cluj, Ms. 4390, f. 15r.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 16r.

<sup>25</sup> 'și-l va trăsni de-l va rupe în doao părți, o parte va muri, iară o parte va rămânea vie'. *Ibidem*, f. 16v.

<sup>26</sup> 'să va cutremura tot pământul și să va aprinde din toate laturile'. *Ibidem*.

the Antichrist, including the burning of the world.<sup>27</sup> This analogy deserves to be mentioned, because a text entitled *Cuvânt a Sf. mucenic Ippolit, papa de Roma, pentru sfârșitul lumii și pentru Antihrist și pentru a doao venire a Domnului nostru Iisus Hristos* [Word of St. Hippolytus, Pope of Rome, for the End of the world and for the Antichrist and for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ our Lord] circulated in the Romanian Provinces during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>28</sup>

The last important sequence of the text concerns the Second Coming of Christ and the Last Judgment. The narration is somehow typical as it reiterates common symbols of apocalypse. It mentions the angels which will trumpet from the four corners of the earth, the extreme natural events, such as earthquakes, meteor showers or eclipses, but also the resurrection of the dead, and nonetheless the divine judgment which will take into account neither rankings and hierarchies, nor kinship. Only the good and bad deeds will determine the eternal place for each soul. The end adds an original element which brings an optimistic note: after the final judgment, God shows once again his mercy. Watching the punishments of sinners in Hell, He addresses to John the Baptist and tells him to ask anything he wants. John and Virgin Mary will pray together for people's forgiveness. The Salvation is promised with the single condition of repentance. The intercession of these two saints seems to be a narrative replication of the iconography of *Deisis*, visual representation which is always present in the scenes of the Last Judgment. Moreover, the way this passage ends resembles with the literary technique used in sermons – elements of rhetoric and orality followed by moral exhortations that also reveal a possible aim of this writing.

Based on the analysis of the text's content, two interim conclusions can be outlined. On the one hand, it becomes clear that the text operates with a widespread language and cultural code, perpetuating old ideas, well-known and seen as commonplaces in a number of apocalyptic apocryphal writings. Their simultaneous diffusion makes mixtures intelligible. On the other hand, it is possible to identify more precisely the textual tradition of this story, through some particular elements, especially the ones concerning the origin and

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<sup>27</sup> Bădiliță, *Manual de anticristologie*, p. 30.

<sup>28</sup> B.A.R. Bucharest, Romanian Manuscripts collection, Ms. rom. 2102, Ms. rom. 4241, Ms. rom. 5385, Ms. rom. 5457.

conception of Antichrist. The writing presented by Eugen Kozak under the title *Narratio de antichristo* seems to be identical with the text discussed here; all sequences coincide, even those which do not have any correspondent in other Apocrypha. Still, this information is insufficient, given that Kozak does not discuss the textual tradition. However, his conclusions are important because reveal the presence of the same writing in the Slavic world.

If other episodes leave room for interpretations, the sequence about conception guides us to a single source: the apocryphal Daniel literature. The discussion becomes even more complicated because of the many existing versions,<sup>29</sup> but as analogies are only possible with variants derived from the Greek Apocalypse of Daniel also known as *Diegesis Danielis*, thus this filiation is the most probable. This text also describes the appearance of Antichrist in a similar way. Unfortunately, there are no other common particular elements, even if general aspects coincide. The current state of research does not allow finding the archetype or any other specific sources of this text.

Therefore questions about the presence of this writing in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Transylvania can be formulated. Suggestions for an answer emerge by investigating the presence of some similar texts. For the moment, the only identified writing for the area of Transylvania, entitled *Vederia Prorocului Danil pintru vremia cea de apoi șã pentru Antihrist* [Vision of Prophet Daniel for the End of Time and for Antichrist], is to be found in a manuscript dated in the last decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, preserved at the Union Museum from Alba Iulia. The codex has been studied and partially published by Timotei Oprea.<sup>30</sup> The collections of Romanian Academy Library also contain copies which were diffused in

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<sup>29</sup> Lorenzo DiTomasso devotes an entire chapter to the apocalypses attributed to Daniel discussing the preserved manuscripts, their editions, but also the actual content of these writings while trying to explain the connections between them and the survival of ancient traditions. The content of four versions offers substantial analogies: The Seventh Vision of Daniel (probably a translation of a Greek apocalypse from the early Byzantine epoch although the text survives only in the Armenian language), *Diegesis Danielis* (better known as the Greek Apocalypse of Daniel), *The Vision of the Young Daniel*, *The Last Vision of Daniel*. Lorenzo DiTomasso, *The Book of Daniel*, cap. III *The Apocryphal Daniel Apocalypses*, pp. 87-224. It is noteworthy that all these writings have much more elaborated contents and only their end corresponds to the story told by the *History of the birth of Antichrist*...

<sup>30</sup> Oprea, *Rai și iad în cultura populară*, p. 51.

Wallachia.<sup>31</sup> This fact together with the information offered by Eugen Kozak about the presence of this writing in some Serbian manuscript<sup>32</sup> suggests a south Slavic channel of transmission. The situation is not clear enough because the copies of Daniel Apocrypha from Wallachia are dated after the manuscript preserved in Cluj. In order to find a more precise answer, further research should examine the amplitude of the spread of these Daniel apocryphal apocalypses in the whole Romanian territory through a systematic investigation of all collections, as there might be found other copies which, similarly to the one presented here, do not mention any authorship or any other clue for a quick identification.

Some explanations might also be traced in connection with other texts referring to the coming of Antichrist, copied in the same area and chronological period. As already mentioned, *Semnele venirii lui Antihrist* [Signs of Antichrist's Coming] is a writing preserved in Transylvania in three copies, two of them as independent manuscripts<sup>33</sup> and one as part of a miscellany.<sup>34</sup> A similar text is to be found in the Library of the Orthodox Mitropoly from Sibiu.<sup>35</sup> When describing them, Meda Diana Bârcă considers *The History for the Birth of Antichrist* as a copy of this writing.<sup>36</sup> A careful analysis shows that her identification is not accurate as the content of the *Signs* seems to be a shorter version of Thomas Malvenda's treatise *De Antichristo libri undecim*. The writing also

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<sup>31</sup> B.A.R. Bucharest, Romanian Manuscripts collection, Ms. rom. 4270, *Vederea prorocului Daniil pentru vremea de apoi și pentru Antihrist*; Ms. rom. 1432, *Vederea carea o au văzut pr<o>rocul Daniil pentru vremea de-apoi și Antihrist*

<sup>32</sup> Kozak, *Bibliographische Uebersicht...*, p. 153.

<sup>33</sup> B.A.R. Bucharest, Romanian Manuscripts collection, Ms. rom. 2325, *Pentru a doua venire, pentru înfricoșata judecată și semnele venirii lui Antihrist*, copied in 1773, at Răsinari, Sibiu, 126 ff.; Ms. rom. 4975, *Semnele venirii lui Antihrist*, copied by Radu Duma cantor at the Church of Schei from Brașov, cca. 1780-1790, 126 ff.- as suggested by Mihai Moraru, Cătălina Velculescu, Ion Chișimăia, *Bibliografia analitică a literaturii române vechi* [Analytical Bibliography of Old Romanian Literature] (București: Editura Academiei RPR, 1976-78).

<sup>34</sup> B.A.R. Bucharest, Romanian Manuscripts collection, ms. rom. 2483, *Semnele venirii lui Antihrist*, ff. 67;

<sup>35</sup> Sibiu, The Library of the Orthodox Mitropoly, Ms. 97, *Seamnele venirii lui Antihrist și ale sfârșitului veacului din scripturile dumnezeiești dovedite*, 1799-1800, 139ff.

<sup>36</sup> Meda Diana Bârcă, *Carte și societate în Transilvania secolului al XVIII-lea. Manuscrise de cărți populare românești*, [Book and Society in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Transylvania. Manuscripts of Romanian Folk Books] (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2002), p. 73.

circulated in Moldavia and Wallachia, seven other manuscripts being preserved in the collections of Romanian Academy Library from Bucharest,<sup>37</sup> some of them mentioning in the title that are translations of a text published in Russia by Iavorschi in 1703, precisely the work of Malvenda. Along with them in the extra-Carpathian area some manuscripts contain a similar writing assigned to Hippolytus. Summing up all this information, it seems that there was a significant interest for revealing the mystery which surrounds the end of the world and the Antichrist himself as an eschatological character. Although it does not clarify the way in which the text analyzed in this paper arrived in Transylvania, this context offers a clue surrounding the reasons of its arrival.

Another aspect which deserves to be studied is the purpose or the function of this text. The description of the whole manuscript and the information about its diffusion and content are the most relevant in order to understand if and how the contained writings articulate a homogeneous discourse, which was the target audience and what was its impact. As initially mentioned, the copyist of this manuscript began his work on the 29<sup>th</sup> of December 1761, date noted on the first page together with his name in an abbreviated form, Ioan Mold.,<sup>38</sup> usually completed as Ioan Moldoveanu.<sup>39</sup> The annotations indicate some other names: Lender Deorde, Ioan and Văsălica Pop, who also specify the place of their provenance: Boiu Mare,<sup>40</sup> a village situated in the Solnoc Interior county, nowadays in Maramureș. Other notes represent writing exercises, transcriptions of some lines, usually the last ones on a page, on the margin. These together with the important number of names are proofs of the owners or readers of this manuscript and of its use. If the codex is written in Romanian with Cyrillic alphabet, there is also an annotation that uses the Latin script. It seems to be the draft of a letter addressed to Pavel Szathmary Nagy, from February 1844.<sup>41</sup> On another page a different hand wrote with a pencil 1864.<sup>42</sup> These two dates help us determine the period during which the manuscript was used – at

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<sup>37</sup> B.A.R. Bucharest, Romanian Manuscripts collection, Ms. rom. 2164, Ms. rom. 2195, Ms. rom. 2989, Ms. rom. 3164, Ms. rom. 3371, Ms. rom. 5731, Ms. rom. 5919.

<sup>38</sup> BCU Cluj, Ms. 4390, f. 1r.

<sup>39</sup> Bârcă, *Carte și societate*, p. 229.

<sup>40</sup> BCU Cluj, Ms. 4390, f. 3, ff. 30v. - 34r., ff. 52v. - 54r., ff. 69v. - 70r., f. 75v.,

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 96v. - 97r.

<sup>42</sup> BCU Cluj, Ms. 4390, f. 133r.



least until the half of 19<sup>th</sup> century which means a century of circulation and/or a century of reading.

The content of this miscellany is generous regarding both the number of the writings assembled together and their genre. It includes texts like: *Întrebări și răspunsuri* [Questions and answers] (with substantial references to the Genesis, the fall of man, the occurrence of devil and his identity, the first death on earth and the life after death), The Apocalypse of the Holy Mother of God, the Parable of the Unicorn from the novel *Barlaam and Josaphat* (that has strong accents on repentance, being a warning on the pleasures of this life which distract man from caring for the afterlife), the Parable of the Vineyard present here under the title *Pentru omul care nu face fapte bune* [For the man who does not make good deeds], *Archirie and Anadan* (a moral story of Assyrian-Babylonian origin), another writing about the twelve dreams of a king named Sahancu about the end of time, explained to him by a philosopher, but also some lyrics and sermons for funerals (with the same emphasis placed on repentance and on the request for the man to always think of death). Therefore, the dominant theme regards the End. On one hand, some of the texts reveal how the end of world and the afterlife will be like; on the other, some have a moralistic tone and try to correct and to guide Christians to live an earthly life without sins for an afterlife without punishments. Given this context, *The History for the Birth of Antichrist...* seems to contain a discourse of an authority which wants to inoculate the fear of death and of the Last Judgment in order to assure the control and enforcement of discipline, rather than a message which responds to a curiosity regarding eschatological themes.

The lack of an explicit authorship in the title or in the text, the existence of some particular elements in its content and the rarity with which this writing is encountered in Transylvania suggested the need for its identification, for finding analogies and possible filiations. Thus, starting from these clarifications new research opportunities are opened. The two texts from Transylvania that seem to originate in the Visions of Daniel suggest a poor diffusion and a minor importance of this writing compared to other more frequent Apocrypha. Nevertheless, their study is worth undertaking because it can clarify aspects regarding the spread of this category of apocryphal apocalypses and of Byzantine Apocrypha more generally. The preservation of a Greek version, entered in Transylvania most likely from the Slavic world, raises questions concerning the channel of such texts' diffusion, crossing large areas, and

the connections of Transylvanian orthodox Christians with those from the extra-Carpathian regions. But it is also a proof of a wide and continuous spread of the writings assigned to Daniel from the moment of their creation until the Modern times.

As Cristian Bădiliță claims, the emergence of the myth of Antichrist is due to a triple meeting between mythology, Scriptures and history.<sup>43</sup> I would go a step further and add that the propagation and the development of this myth reiterates this triple meeting and texts like the one analysed here can be sometimes surprising because of the mixture of images and symbols coming from a variety of sources. And still the person who took care of copying the manuscript or the one who commissioned the copy more likely did not have the consciousness of these sources; the important matter was the ethical message. Therefore, another meeting can be revealed, a meeting between histories: the history of a myth, perpetuated by such texts and transformed over time, and the history of those who were receiving the myth. Zamfira Mihail, in an article concerning the research on apocryphal literature from south-eastern Europe, draws the attention to the opportunity of publishing and studying such writings from a double perspective: that of the original contributions added in some cases in the process of transcription and diffusion and that of a horizon of expectations which determined the decision to copy a text.<sup>44</sup> Looking at the *History for the Birth of Antichrist...* from this double perspective a certain originality is noticeable in the manner in which images and elements coming from many sources assemble. Secondly, the manuscript as a whole, through its predominantly eschatological theme seems to indicate a horizon of expectations, a coherent discourse which aimed at condemning sins and exhorting to repent for the eternal salvation.

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<sup>43</sup> Bădiliță, *Manual de anticristologie*, p. 42.

<sup>44</sup> Zamfira Mihail, 'Les apocryphes - perspectives des recherches sud-est européennes. La prospection Roumaine', *Revue des études sud-est européennes*, XLVI, nr. 1-4 (2008):78-79.

# Information Concerning Currency Circulation in Maramureş County during the 14th-15th Centuries<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** This study examines, through the lenses of social and economic history, cases in which coins were present in the lives of the local social elites of Maramureş. The published documents that have been analysed are concerned with the economic situation of Maramureş County in the 14th and 15th centuries. The study focuses on currency circulation in the micro-area of Maramureş County that lies southeast of the Tisza River. The analysis highlights six everyday life situations in which coinage was present: pledges and sales of land, robbery, the payment of fines and litigation expenses, hoarding up money and property, the payment of bloodwite as compensation for murder, agreements or the payment of liabilities or damages. This research has led to the identification of similar situations in the Kingdom of Hungary, highlighting the fact that the Maramureş society adopted not only the institutions of the kingdom, but also its monetary system as reflected by the currency circulation at that time.

**Key words:** Maramureş County, social history, coins, nobles, currency circulation, microhistory

**Rezumat: Informații referitoare la circulația monetară în comitatul Maramureş în perioada secolelor XIV-XV.** Prezentul studiu analizează prin intermediul istoriei sociale și economice acele cazuri în care monedele erau prezente în viața elitelor sociale maramureșene. Astfel, au fost investigate documentele editate care privesc situația economică a comitatului Maramureş în secolele al XIV-lea și al XV-lea. Datorită particularităților spațiului geografic al comitatului Maramureş, studiul își propune să identifice caracteristicile circulației monetare într-o microzonă a comitatului Maramureş situată la sud-est de râul Tisa. Analiza evidențiază șase situații din viața cotidiană în care monedele sunt prezente: zălogirea și vânzarea pământurilor, jaful, plata amenzilor și cheltuielilor de judecată, teaurizarea banilor și a bunurilor, răscumpă-

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rarea prețului sângelui pentru omor, înțelegeri sau plata unor obligații sau a unor pagube. Pe baza acestei analize s-a putut observa o asemănare cu situații existente în alte regiuni ale regatului maghiar, dar s-au și putut reliefa modalitățile prin care societatea maramureșeană a adoptat nu doar instituțiile regatului, ci și sistemul monetar reflectat de circulația banilor.

**Cuvinte cheie:** comitatul Maramureș, istorie socială, monede, nobilime, circulație monetară, micro-istorie

In his treatise *De origine, natura, jure et mutationibus*, Nicholas Oresme (d. 1382), Bishop of Lisieux, a counsellor of the King of France and an influential thinker in the second half of the 14th century, wrote the following: "money does not directly relieve the necessities of life, but is an instrument artificially invented for the easier exchange of natural riches. And it is clear without further proof that coin is very useful to the civil community, and convenient, or rather necessary, to the business of the state."<sup>2</sup> Echoing the medieval philosopher, Carlo M. Cipolla (1922-2000), an economic historian, states that a difference should be made between the terms *coin* and *money*. Whereas the former should be seen as a medium of exchange, just like any other goods used in the early Middle Ages, the latter word indicates the monetary system of a governance.<sup>3</sup> While under the law of God and nature, all things were given to men to be used jointly, under human law goods were owned individually and divided unequally.<sup>4</sup> In the early Middle Ages, coins were used with a sole purpose: so that alongside other means of payment, goods or labour, serfs could pay off their debts to their landlords.<sup>5</sup> Economic expansion and changing perspectives on coins, which were rarely regarded simply as units of measurement or exchange any longer, may have originated in the pressure exerted by seigneurs on productive forces.<sup>6</sup> In addition to their unilateral function

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<sup>2</sup> Nicolas Oresme, apud. Jonathan Williams, Joe Cribb and Elizabeth Errington (eds.), *Money: A History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> Carlo M. Cipolla, *Money, Prices and Civilisation in the Mediterranean World, Fifth to Seventeenth century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Diana Wood, *Medieval Economic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> Cipolla, *Money, Prices and Civilisation*, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Georges Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy: Warriors and Peasants from the Seventh to the Twelfth Century* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), pp. 177 and 257.

mentioned above, coins gradually accumulated other functions as well, being also used in transactions or as a store of value.<sup>7</sup> A complex overview of the multiple functions of coins, which was to take shape along the centuries, was put forth by St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (354-430), a philosopher, theologian and Doctor of the Church: "What is so uncertain as something that roles away? It is appropriate that money is round, because it never stays in one place."<sup>8</sup>

The sovereign played the lead role in the organization, authorization and control of the monetary system.<sup>9</sup> The Hungarian Kingdom underwent a period of stability and economic development during the reigns of Charles I (1301-1364) and his successor Louis of Anjou (1342-1382).<sup>10</sup> Charles I left his imprint by promoting the development of mining and regulating the monetary system. The reform the king initiated in 1323 entailed the relinquishment of annually-issued coinage and the introduction of coins with a constant value.<sup>11</sup> Thus, it was stipulated that one-denarius silver coins should be issued and that florins, made of gold and inspired by the Italian coins originally struck in Florence, should also start getting minted. These were the main monetary values.<sup>12</sup> Another important coinage reform was launched by Matthias, King of Hungary (1458-1490), in 1467. The decrees he issued at that time concerned improving the quality of the silver denarius in relation to the florin.<sup>13</sup> Following this reform, the monetary system in the Kingdom of Hungary was based on florins, denarii, groschen and obols.<sup>14</sup> The fact that a significant part of what was produced was commercially traded indicates the inclusion of the Maramureş area in the system of the Hungarian Kingdom.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Wood, *Medieval Economic Thought*, p. 88.

<sup>8</sup> Wood, *Medieval Economic Thought*, p. 88.

<sup>9</sup> Wood, *Medieval Economic Thought*, p. 88.

<sup>10</sup> János M. Bak et al., *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary* (5 vols., Salt Lake City: Charles Schlacks, Jr., 1992-2005), vol. 2, p. XXIII.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p. XXV.

<sup>12</sup> Octavian Iliescu, *Istoria monetei în România [The History of Coins in Romania]* (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 2002), pp. 61-62.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>14</sup> Bogdan Murgescu, *Circulaţia monetară în Țările Române în secolul al XVI-lea [Currency Circulation in the Romanian Countries in the 16th Century]* (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 1996), p. 103. One florin was the equivalent of 100 denarii, one groschen represented 4 denarii, and one obol was worth ½ a denarius.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

The nobility of the county was predominantly Romanian. Over the course of the two centuries examined in this study, its members received recognition of this status by being awarded letters of ennoblement. Starting especially in the 15th century, documentary sources present the diverse ways in which coinage circulated among the nobility in Maramureş County. This study aims to explore these documentary attestations regarding the use and functionality of currency in this county. Emphasis is laid on the geographical space of Maramureş County, located southeast of the Tisza River, an area that is better known thanks to the archaeological and documentary information that has been preserved. The situations in the geographical space of the county located northwest of the Tisza will be considered alongside the cases encountered in the documents studied for Satu Mare County. Through both of the micro-areas under examination, the study focuses on the old Land of Maramureş, which adopted the county model of administrative organization and the economic system of the Hungarian Kingdom in the second half of the 14th century.

The present article is divided into two parts: in the first we shall enumerate the main archaeological finds consisting of coins that circulated in Maramureş County and discuss the information related to this issue that has appeared in more recent studies on the institutional and social history of Maramureş County. Secondly, we shall analyse documents referring to cases of coinage usage in the area.

A. As regards archaeological discoveries, we should first mention *The Archaeological Repertoire of Maramureş County*,<sup>16</sup> in which the author, Radu Popa, presents the coin finds unearthed at Giuleşti and Cuhea. We should also present the coin hoard from Vadu Izei, which comprises items from the 15th-17th centuries.

*The Numismatic Repertoire of Transylvania and Banat in the 11th-20th Centuries*, compiled by Francisc Pap,<sup>17</sup> refers to only one hoard discovered at Sighet, containing coins from the 16th and 17th centuries.

The volume *Coin Hoards and Monetary Finds in the Collection of the Maramureş County Museum* includes the coinage discovered in this area and preserved in the Maramureş museum, offering data about the hoard

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<sup>16</sup> Carol Kacsó, *Repertoriul arheologic al Judeţului Maramureş [Archaeological Repertoire of Maramureş County]* (2 vols, Baia Mare: Editura Eurotrip, 2011).

<sup>17</sup> Francisc Pap, *Repertoriul numismatic al Transilvaniei şi Banatului sec. 11-20: despre circulaţia monetară în Transilvania şi Banat sec.11-20 [The Numismatic Repertoire of Transylvania and Banat, the 11th-20th Centuries: On currency circulation in Transylvania and Banat, the 11th-20th centuries]* (Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă, 2002).

from Vadu Izei.<sup>18</sup> Of the 739 coins found in a pewter jug, six date from the 15th century. Of these, one denarius was issued by Vladislav II, King of Hungary from 1498 to 1501, five groschen halves having been minted by the Polish King John Albert in the period 1492-1499.

The most important coin finds are those discovered and published by Radu Popa during the archaeological campaigns carried out under the joint headship of the County Museum in Baia Mare County Museum and the Institute of Archaeology of the RSR Academy in Bucharest. The village of Cuhea (the present-day Bogdan Vodă) benefited from two archaeological campaigns, conducted in the periods 26 May – 26 June 1964 and 17 July – 22 August 1965.<sup>19</sup> Of the four points that were investigated, reference will be made only to the “Convent” sector. This sector targeted the discovery of the old stone church belonging to the nobles of Giulești. This is the second village with a relevant coin find. An archaeological survey was conducted here in 1966. The campaigns of the years 1967 and 1968, which lasted a period of 65 days, completed the image of both the stone church belonging to the nobles of Giulești and the village hearth, fulfilling the two objectives of the campaign.<sup>20</sup> The other surveys conducted in Ieud, Sarasău and Sighet did not lead to any coin finds.<sup>21</sup> In Giulești, research brought to surface two silver denarii issued by Queen Mary (1382-1387), two denarii minted by Sigismund of Luxembourg (1427-1437) and another eleven coins, six of which were struck during the timespan we focused on, namely the 14th and 15th centuries.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Chirilă Eugen - Socolan Aurel, *Tezaur și descoperiri monetare din colecția muzeului județean MM [Coin Hoards and Monetary Finds in the Collection of the Maramureș County Museum]* (Baia Mare: Muzeul Județean Maramureș, 1971), pp. 21-43.

<sup>19</sup> Radu Popa - Mircea Zdroba, *Șantierul arheologic Cuhea [The Cuhea Archaeological Site]* (Baia Mare: Muzeul Regional Maramureș, 1966), p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Radu Popa, *Cnezatul Marei [The Knezate of Mara]* (Baia Mare: Muzeul Județean Maramureș, 1969), p. 28.

<sup>21</sup> Radu Popa, ‘Noi cercetări de arheologie medievală în Maramureș. Șantierul Sarasău’, in *Studii și cercetări de istorie veche*, 22/4 (1971): 601-626, excavations were conducted in Sarasău in the spring of 1966 (p. 601 in the study) and Idem, ‘Urmele unui sat dispărut din feudalismul timpuriu în hotarul Sighetului Marmației’, in *Studii și cercetări de istorie veche*, 26/ 2 (1975): 271-282, excavations were conducted at Valea Mara, on the border of Sighet, in the autumn of 1968, more specifically from 22 to 30 October (p. 271 in the study).

<sup>22</sup> Popa, *Cnezatul Marei*, pp. 31-35 and Popa - Zdroba, Mircea, ‘Ctitoria cnezilor giuleșteni. Un nou monument românesc din piatră în Maramureș’, in *Studii și cercetări de istorie veche*, 20/2 (1969): 280-281.

The research undertaken at Cuhea identified: two silver denarii issued during the reign of Queen Mary of Hungary (1382-1387), a silver denarius, issued by Louis I, King of Hungary, in 1343, and another struck between 1346-1349, two denarii issued by Stefan Dušan, Tsar of the Serbs, in the period 1331-1346, and two groschen issued by Louis I, King of Hungary, in 1346-1351. Fragments of two other coins were also identified. These may have been coins of the latter two types. In any case, they seem to have been issued during the same timeframe, 1346-1351.<sup>23</sup>

In the historiography of the problem, it is Radu Popa's contributions that deserve mention first and foremost. The archaeologist ascribed the coin finds in the region to the trade in high-quality earthenware (as attested by the potsherds discovered in the archaeological sites investigated) and to the possible existence of blacksmitheries in the area. The urban centres in the county could have been marketing areas for the products crafted by the inhabitants of Maramureş. Goods such as the green enamel pottery produced at Cuhea or potsherds from a painted tumbler certainly came from outside the borders of the county. It is possible that the coins from the small hoard that also includes those issued by Serbian Tsar were related to King Charles Robert's participation in his military campaigns to Serbia. In the early stages of cemeteries, the numismatic inventory was absent. Similarly, coin ownership and currency exchange were sporadic in the economy of the county, but in time, the Maramureş society rallied to the various financial operations practised in that period,<sup>24</sup> as we shall reveal in the next part of our study.

Moreover, the historian Ioan Drăgan's study concerning the Romanian nobility in Transylvania emphasizes the importance of holding a nobiliary ownership document and signals out the expenses incurred for obtaining these diplomas that attested proprietorship over the lands owned. Another relevant reference is to the seals of Stanislau of Dolha, Vice-Comes of Maramureş, who owned, among other things, a round seal in 1419.<sup>25</sup> This reference may be related to the discovery of

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<sup>23</sup> Popa - Zdroba, *Şantierul arheologic Cuhea*, p. 38 and Popa, 'Biserica de piatră din Cuhea și unele probleme privind istoria Maramureşului în secolul al XIV-lea', in *Studii și cercetări de istorie veche*, 17/3 (1966): 517-520.

<sup>24</sup> Popa, *Țara Maramureşului în veacul al XIV-lea* [*The Land of Maramures in the 14th Century*] (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 1997), pp. 126-128.

<sup>25</sup> Ioan Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească din Transilvania între anii 1440-1514* [*The Romanian Nobility in Transylvania from 1440 to 1514*] (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 2000), pp. 195-198.



nine rings, 7 of which were signet rings, in Giulești. Radu Popa, the archaeologist who discovered them, considered that there was a link between these signet rings and the role played by the inhabitants of this village (Giuleșteni) at the helm of the county.<sup>26</sup>

A reference that exceeds the chronological range under study here, but can be useful, by analogy, to the present research is found in Aurel Feștilă's research on the exchange of goods between the inhabitants of Baia Mare and those of Maramureș in the mid-17th century. The goods that the people of Maramureș sold to the townsmen of Baia Mare included: animal hides (martens, foxes, wolves, rabbits), sheep's wool, wax, textiles (pillow cases, tablecloths), coarse, thick woolen long coats and planks of wood. In exchange, as it can be noticed from the documents, the peasants of Maramureș returned to their villages with salt, wine, grain, icing, plums and even with 30 scythes for the village of Moisei.<sup>27</sup> The commercial ties between the town of Baia Mare and the micro-area a part of the references to currency circulation in Maramureș southeast of the Tisza were detectable before the 17th century. It is known that in 1479, Ioan Forintvero, an inhabitant of Baia Mare, had large estates in Bocicoiul Mare and Lunca la Tisa, and that he also owned a house in the borough of Sighet.<sup>28</sup> A document from the year 1459 mentions that "at the source of the said river Maramureș," the road "heads once again towards the area of the citadel [known as] River of the Ladies; from there, it climbs straight to the west; eventually, it makes a turn and joins the other borders of the said town of Sighet."<sup>29</sup> This reference is found at the end of the document that retraces the boundaries of the town of Sighet. Trade ties were also influenced by price rises in 16th-century Europe.<sup>30</sup>

These represent only County, the target of this study being to outline a comprehensive and complex image of the circulation of currency and goods both in the County of Maramureș, and outside it, not only in this study, but also in future studies.

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<sup>26</sup> Popa, *Cnezatul Marei*, p. 36.

<sup>27</sup> Aurel Feștilă, *Monografia municipiului Baia Mare [A Monograph of the City of Baia Mare]* (Baia Mare, 1972), pp. 352-356.

<sup>28</sup> Ioan Mihalyi de Apșa, *Diplome maramureșene din secolele XIV și XV [Letters Patent issued in Maramureș in the 14th and 15th Centuries]* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Societății Culturale Pro Maramureș „Dragoș Vodă”, 2009). (Hereinafter Mihalyi, *Diplome. . .*), doc. 314, 315.

<sup>29</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome. . .*, doc. 248 (247). River of the Ladies, the present-day Baia Mare.

<sup>30</sup> Murgescu, *Circulația monetară în Țările Române în secolul al XVI-lea*, p. 16.

B. Documentary information was grouped according to how it relates to the economic life of the county. The reference source is the volume of Maramureş letters patent published by Ioan Mihalyi of Apşa.<sup>31</sup> Currency circulation may be traced in cases of land pledges, designed to cover financial needs, of property theft, the payment of fines and litigation expenses, hoarding up money and property, the payment of bloodwite as compensation for murder, agreements or the payment of liabilities or damages.

Many of the financial transactions and assets owned by the nobles or residents of Maramureş County were not recorded in documents.<sup>32</sup> Considering the fact that the volume of documents we have consulted is limited, the phenomenon of currency circulation can be analysed only from an incomplete perspective here.

One way in which money circulated at that time was through pledges. In *Tripartitum*, Ştefan Werbőczy noted that pledges could be looked at from two standpoints: the perspective of the debtor, who temporarily transfers (some of) his ownership rights for the benefit of someone else, out of necessity, and the perspective of the creditor, who holds, for a while, the debtor's ownership rights over a property and the revenues derived from it by paying the debtor a sum – capital – for the land received.<sup>33</sup> The Hungarian lawyer condemned pledges because many of the creditors refused to return the estate received as surety even if the debtor managed to raise the capital for which the estate had been pledged.<sup>34</sup> Following such a pledge, an estate could be regarded as alienated, since the amounts were too high to be returned,<sup>35</sup> but there were also exceptions, as discussed below.

In 1449, the son of Petru Gherheş of Sarasău decided that out of his penalty of 50 marks issued in the mint from Buda, he would be able to pay only half of the amount to the county; in order to obtain the rest of the money, he pledged the third part of the Breb estate to Nan Pop, with the possibility of redemption.<sup>36</sup> Also because of necessity, half of

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<sup>31</sup> See footnote 28 for the full reference of this work.

<sup>32</sup> Ion Sabău, 'Contribuţii la studiul circulaţiei monetare în Transilvania în prima jumătate a secolului al XIV-lea', *Studii şi materiale de istorie medie*, 4 (1960): 31.

<sup>33</sup> Bak et al., *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, vol. 5, I: 81.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, I: 80.

<sup>35</sup> Sabău, 'Contribuţii la studiul circulaţiei', 42-43. See also Murgescu, *Circulaţia monetară în Țările Române în secolul al XVI-lea*, p. 199.

<sup>36</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome ...*, doc. 198.

the estates Șugătag, Hărnicești and Mara were pledged in the year 1475, namely 16 sessions (*sesii*, plots of land) with their 30 serfs, in exchange for 400 Hungarian florins.<sup>37</sup> It was in the same context that the pledging of two sessions in Săliște and one in Moisei, for 40 gold florins each, took place in 1486.<sup>38</sup> The series of these pledges continued in 1487, when, in exchange for 27 gold florins, two serfs' sessions were pledged: one on the Șieu estate and another in Poienile Șieului.<sup>39</sup> In the year 1488, parts of the estate in Leordina, Rozavlea and Poienile Izei, belonging to the widow Stana, were pledged for 150 gold florins to the widow's daughters, Marișca and Caterina.<sup>40</sup>

A special case was that of the year 1490, when Lupșa and Dan demanded that their father's death should be redeemed. To atone for this murder, the aunt of the defendant, George Vancea of Oncești, and the defendant's brothers pledged to the sons of the murdered victim, Dan, two serfs' sessions in Nănești, worth 20 gold florins, with redemption rights. However, the descendants of George Vancea of Oncești redeemed the two estates.<sup>41</sup> Another relevant case occurred in 1498, when the noble Lady Marișca pledged to her cousins, in exchange for 50 gold florins, three of her sessions on the Leordina estate.<sup>42</sup>

All these pledges were made with the aim of overcoming certain situations of financial impasse, the pledged amounts ranging from 27 florins to 400 florins. In the cases studied, we also came across evidence of the redemption of a pledged estate, presented in the document of 9 February 1490, when two serfs' sessions were repurchased in the village of Nănești, for the sum of 50 gold florins.

In the Middle Ages, robbery and assailment represented ceaseless means of appropriating goods and money.<sup>43</sup> Criminals or *publici malefactores* were outlawed in the county assembly and their properties were confiscated.<sup>44</sup> There were two cases of theft, the first in the year 1462, when Mihai Stibor stole a gold florin from Lady Margareta,<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 306.

<sup>38</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 336.

<sup>39</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 339.

<sup>40</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 341.

<sup>41</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 347.

<sup>42</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 358.

<sup>43</sup> Sabău, 'Contribuții la studiul circulației', 46.

<sup>44</sup> Bak et al. *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, vol. 4, p. 329.

<sup>45</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 261.

and the second in 1479, when Petru of Deseşti stole 200 florins and other goods from the estates in Bocicoiul Mare and Lunca la Tisa, belonging to the nobleman Ioan Forintvero from Baia Mare.<sup>46</sup> Besides these cases, there were recorded instances in which property records, goods and estates were stolen.<sup>47</sup> In these cases, the value of the damage was mentioned.

The cases investigated involved murder, theft, damage and injury, but also the forced occupation of some estates. The most valuable things that were pillaged were property records, whose value ranged from 400 gold florins up to 1,000 gold florins.

In what follows, we shall focus on agreements, on payments of liabilities or damages. In the 14th-century, a custom that gained acceptance was that the gentry should pay certain amounts of money in order to obtain a good or to settle a litigation in which they represented the plaintiff or the defendant. This led to an increase in the exchange of payments and bilateral obligations, as the gentry were forced to pay certain amounts of money to obtain goods or obtain the resolution of a trial they were parties to. This intensification in the use of money can be seen as an evolution, given the fact that unilateral payment prevailed in the first decades of the period, the subjects paying now in money what they had previously paid for in goods. This obviously enhanced the revenues of the notables and the ruler.<sup>48</sup>

The agreement between the nobles Mihail of Şugătag and Ioan of Giuleşti regarding land plots in Copăceşti, Dorozlău and Berbeşti was made in the year 1421 and included the proviso that should either of the parties oppose the court ruling, they would be forced to pay 200 marks.<sup>49</sup> Another agreement concerning ownership over certain estates was struck between the nobles Petru Gherheş of Sarasău and the nobles of Giuleşti, Mihail Vlad and George Ivanca, in 1453. The arrangement was that the Breb estate and half of the Copăceşti estate would remain in

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<sup>46</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome. . .*, doc. 314.

<sup>47</sup> See Mihalyi, *Diplome. . .*, doc. 130(138), doc. 268, doc. 314, doc. 317, doc. 318. In this letter patent, it is noted that the assailments targeted the destruction of objects in the plaintiffs' house: gates, chairs, tables, but also the occupation of their house, their estates and of two milling houses. The plaintiffs were also deprived of grains, their serfs were killed, their parish church in Bocicoi was torn down, and its icons and candles were stolen.

<sup>48</sup> Sabău, 'Contribuţii la studiul circulaţiei', 32-34.

<sup>49</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome. . .*, doc. 149.

the possession of Petru Gherheș, while the noblemen of Giulești would receive 25 pure gold florins and goods worth 100 florins from Petru Gherheș.<sup>50</sup>

With regard to the Cuhea estate, the decision concerning the establishment of its borders was issued by the county officials in 1471, stipulating that should either of the parties not abide by its terms, they would have to pay 25 marks issued in the mint from Buda to the other party.<sup>51</sup> In the year 1474, a resolution was reached in the lawsuit concerning the division into four equal parts of the Nănești and Valea Stejarului estates belonging to the nobles in Oncești, and should either of the parties file another lawsuit, they would be liable to pay 100 gold florins, not counting the fees of the comes and the judges.<sup>52</sup> The year 1475 saw the division of other estates. The widow Anca and her sons received half of the estates: Ocna Șugataș, Hărniciești, Desești, Mara, Nireș and two parts of Giulești and Doroslău, while the other half of the said estates and the third part of Giulești and Doroslău went to Ioan Micle and his sons; the latter was to pay 100 florins of pure gold, not counting the fees of the comes and the judges.<sup>53</sup> The conflict between Ioan, the son of Andreica of Vișeu, and Andreica's widow was settled only in the year 1498. Hence, Ioan allowed his stepmother to live on the nobiliary estates throughout her life; she was free to dispose of her assets, which included 4 florins.<sup>54</sup>

Six cases were investigated in the third situation. They were concentrated in the eighth decade of the 15th century. These were mainly cases concerning the division of certain estates and the establishment of boundaries between them.

Regarding the payment of bloodwite as compensation for murder, the transition from payment in kind to payment in coins occurred relatively early in the 14th century, payment in kind being nonetheless used during that period, albeit exceptionally.<sup>55</sup> The amount paid as bloodwite depended on the social status of the victim and the status of the perpetrator. The price for barons was 100, while that for townsmen and nobles was 50 marks.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 218.

<sup>51</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 295 (293).

<sup>52</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 303.

<sup>53</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 307.

<sup>54</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 357.

<sup>55</sup> Sabău, 'Contribuții la studiul circulației', 39-40.

<sup>56</sup> Bak et al., *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, vol. 5, p. 451.

The assault perpetrated against Petru Gherheş of Sarasău by the townspeople of Câmpulung la Tisa was judged in the year 1457, when the wrongdoers were forced to pay 100 heavy-weight Buda marks, but also 25 gold florins as bloodwite for the death of one of the plaintiff's serfs. In the document, it is noted that if either party should protest the ruling and reopen the case, they would be obliged to pay 50 Buda marks.<sup>57</sup> The sons of the late Dan of Onceşti, Lupşa and Dan, demanded in 1490 to be redeemed from the estate of the defendant George Vancea of Onceşti and received as pledge two serfs' sessions in Năneşti, but the plaintiff's descendants redeemed them.<sup>58</sup>

In this case, two situations have been investigated: the first involved the redemption of a serf's death for a bloodwite of 25 gold florins, while the second situation concerned redeeming the death of a noble for a bloodwite of two serfs' sessions.

Besides the payment of bloodwite as compensation for murder, the payment of ransom for prisoners, of services or of those who fought in a duel, fines and litigation costs also came to be made in cash.<sup>59</sup> An example is the case of the son of Petru Gherheş of Sarasău, who was sentenced to pay 50 Buda marks in 1449, when the defendant's father paid half the amount to the comes; the other half, which he was supposed to give to the plaintiff, Nan Pop, was given in exchange for the pledged third part of the Breb estate, with redemption rights.<sup>60</sup> The violence done against Petru Gherheş of Sarasău was indicted in the year 1457. According to the sentence that was passed, the townspeople in Câmpulung la Tisa were to pay 100 heavy-weight Buda marks and 25 gold florins for the redemption of one of the plaintiff's serfs, with the provision that should either party deny the sentence and reopen the case, they would be bound to pay 50 Buda marks.<sup>61</sup> In the year 1461, there was a reference to a fine of 100 pure gold florins, applied in case one of the parties did not comply with the sentence.<sup>62</sup> The case involving the deceased Nan Pop and Petru Gherheş of Sarasău was heard in the year 1476, when the sentence included the provision that the party that resisted judgement being passed on the noblemen would be fined 50

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<sup>57</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 235 (236).

<sup>58</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 347.

<sup>59</sup> Sabău, 'Contribuţii la studiul circulaţiei', 40-41.

<sup>60</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 198.

<sup>61</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 235 (236).

<sup>62</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 256 (253).

Buda marks.<sup>63</sup> The case concerning the occupation of the Comârzana estate and of a serf's session was resolved in the year 1483, when it was ruled that the perpetrator should pay 50 marks, the sentence being subsequently changed to four gold florins.<sup>64</sup> In 1488, some nobles were asked to submit the letters patent confirming their ownership over several estates in Maramureş County in a case relating to the possession of said estates; the nobles were bound to pay 30 marks because they had not shown up in court.<sup>65</sup>

The amounts to be paid under sentence, even where the settled dispute was reopened, ranged between 50 Buda marks and 100 Buda marks or gold florins. In one case, several nobles were fined 30 marks.

If payment in cash gained ground, hoarding up money and property became less important from the 14th century on. Some reserves came to be used as usurious capital. Money was increasingly accessible to the masses or could be removed from circulation, counting as private reserves, but in cases of need it could be put back into circulation.<sup>66</sup> There are documents showing that although transactions came to be made, in part, with the help of money, there were nonetheless instances in which assets represented a means to cover financial needs. Mention should be made here of the girdle that was a subject of dispute among the nobles of Giuleşti in 1384.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, other letters patent we have investigated refer to cases in which the payment set under court rule changed from payment in money to payment in kind, with a value equivalent to the amount specified. Lady Margareta, for instance, had a small hoard in 1462 – the already mentioned gold florin.

Records of ownership include references to hoarded assets, whose value could be estimated to considerable amounts, considering the fact that even the drafting of these records was costly. Another noble woman came to freely dispose of her four florins, as specified in the letter patent issued in 1498. Another relevant letter patent was issued in 1417, mentioning the fact that items of clothing were expensive and were always potential targets of a theft.

The latter situation is illustrated by a few references to the cases of assets that included property records or a girdle.

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<sup>63</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 310.

<sup>64</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 323.

<sup>65</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 340.

<sup>66</sup> Sabău, 'Contribuţii la studiul circulaţiei', 41-42.

<sup>67</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 49.

As regards the north-western area of the county, the documents contain eight entries relating to the sale, pledge and exchange of estates or parts of estates.<sup>68</sup> This type of documentary records dates from the second decade of the 15th century. Half of these documents are placed chronologically in the first part of the 15th century and the other half in the second part of this century, the amounts varying between 24 and 700 florins. We have also examined the case of an exchange involving, on the one hand, the Sarcad and Macaria estates and, on the other hand, the Cuşniţa and Caraţca estates.<sup>69</sup> Those who requested the exchange were to pay all the legal expenses for the transaction to the notary, pledging to cover the costs of any potential future disputes.

The documents relating to the north-western area of the county present four cases of robbery and assaillment. In the cases studied it was goods, not coins that were stolen: garments, badger hides, horses, a bag with property records.<sup>70</sup> Insofar as agreements and obligations were concerned, the third situation mentioned in documents relating to the north-western area of the county refers to a case dating from 1423.<sup>71</sup> At that time an agreement was made between cousins, who wanted their ilk to be considered noble; the fine for noncompliance with the agreement was to be 50 heavy-weight marks. As regards the payment of bloodwite as compensation for murder, we have investigated a case involving the redemption of a nobleman's death in exchange for 50 Buda marks.<sup>72</sup>

Fines and court fees represented other situations encountered in the north-western part of the county. There is available information on five cases, dating from the first three decades of the 15th century.<sup>73</sup> Here the fines for crimes ranged between 3 and 6 marks, while the fine for reopening a case was either 50 or 30 marks. A special case refers to the fine of 450 florins and the legal expenses necessary for refilling a lawsuit, which reached the price of 200 denarii. The fines appear to have been lower in the north-western area of the county, but the amount set for reopening a case was generally the same throughout the county, namely 50 marks.

For the north-western part of the county we have information

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<sup>68</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 107, doc. 145, doc. 147, doc. 183, doc. 278, doc. 337, doc. 346.

<sup>69</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 209 (211).

<sup>70</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 92, doc. doc. 116, doc. 142 (140), doc. 309.

<sup>71</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 151.

<sup>72</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 304.

<sup>73</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, 102, doc. 109, doc. 117, doc. 131 (132).



about goods of treasury value, such as: badger hides, ladies' garments, horses and property records.<sup>74</sup>

The information in the documents presents a series of interesting cases that evince the role of money in Maramureş County during the 14th and 15th centuries. Across Maramureş County there were registered certain peculiarities, despite its seemingly unitary status. In the south-eastern part of the county, land was the main issue under dispute, to a greater extent than in the north-western area of the county, where land was pledged: here, therefore, the aim was to redeem, not sell land as in the north-western part of the county. The nobles in the south-eastern part of the county made transactions in their own territory, having few contacts with the nobles in the north-western area of the county and also holding few estates in this space. By contrast, the nobles from the northwest had contacts with those in Bereg County, located nearby, owning several estates and high value assets (recorded in documents) in this neighbouring county than southeast of the Tisza. In fact, the realities in the micro-areas southeast of the Tisza and northwest of the Tisza were similar, with certain differences resulting from contact with an adjoining county and from the geographical isolation of the former micro-area.

The examination of the situations in the neighbouring county of Satu Mare, in the timespan from 1350 to 1380, highlighted the existence of similar cases to those researched for the present study.<sup>75</sup> Of the 35 researched documents, twelve present cases of pledge, sale and redemption of a pledged estate, eleven other cases present situations of robbery and assaillment, three cases concern agreements relating to the payment of obligations or damages; there are six instances referring to the payment of bloodwite as compensation for the murder of serfs and nobles; we have researched two cases of fines and litigation expenses; as regards the hoarding of goods or coins, we have studied five situations.

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<sup>74</sup> Mihalyi, *Diplome. . .*, doc. 209 (211), doc. 116, doc. 142 (140),

<sup>75</sup> The documents researched for Satu Mare County are included in the volumes of documents: *Documenta Romaniae Historica. C. Transilvania*, (6 vols, Bucureşti: Editura Academiei Române, 1977-2006), vol. X (1351-1355), documents 5, 8, 16, 19, 27, 30, 57, 104, 126, 135, 148, 194, 248, 279, 336; DRH C. Transilvania, vol. XI (1356-1360), documents 98, 111, 197, 202; DRH C. Transilvania, vol. XII (1361-1365), documents 170 and 182; DRH C. Transilvania, vol. XIII (1366-1370), documents 126, 168, 178, 188, 361, 541; DRH C. Transilvania, vol. XIV (1371-1375), documents 43, 161, 236, 245; DRH C. Transilvania, vol. XV (1376-1380), documents: 154, 217, 237, 251.

The coins used in these cases were marks and florins, but marks were used in the majority of the cases.

The documents relating to currency circulation in Maramureş County, in the timeframe 1300-1500, feature six situations people were confronted with in the economic field, namely: pledges, robbery, agreements or the payment of damages, the payment of bloodwite as compensation for murder, fines, litigation fees and money hoarding. As demonstrated in this study, coinage became a medium of exchange this community increasingly resorted to. Archaeological coin finds in the two villages, Giuleşti and Bogdan Vodă, reinforce the image of a society that adopted the monetary system of the Hungarian Kingdom, the coins that circulated on its territory including: groschen, denarii and florins. Moreover, this was a community that conducted trade with the neighbouring counties, both to sell surplus agricultural products and to purchase raw materials for the production of goods necessary for everyday living. In Satu Mare County, a territory that adopted the administration of the Hungarian Kingdom two centuries before Maramureş County, we have studied the same situations in which coins were present.

An analysis of currency circulation in a well-defined area like Maramureş County reveals an interesting fact. Recourse to coinage had subtle institutional implications and could be seen not only as a factor of standardization at the level of the Hungarian Kingdom, but also as a consequence of the adoption of the kingdom's administration. Trade, tax and medieval law were factors that fostered the use of coins in the area analysed in the present study. Future research could identify more clearly whether or not there were any differences between the two micro-areas of Maramureş County bounded by the River Tisza. More specifically, whether the geographical isolation of the micro-area southeast of the Tisza had any economic and institutional consequences and whether the micro-area situated to the northwest was more open, at these two levels, given its contact with the neighbouring counties of Bereg and Ugocsa. What can also be researched is the rapport between the frequency with which payments in kind and coins were made over the course of those two centuries. The research questions that arise highlight the need for studies on the social and economic history of Maramureş County, the last of the counties that were incorporated in the Kingdom of Hungary.

# Rulers and Their Influence on the Boyars' Landed Estates in Wallachia during the Second Half of the 16th Century

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**Abstract:** This study aims to understand the modalities within which the boyars of Wallachia managed to extend their landed estates in the second half of the sixteenth-century. The selection of this period is determined by the internal and external changes that took place in Wallachian politics and society. Wallachia experienced growing political instability, reflected in short-lived reigns. At the same time, a large landed estate meant prestige for a boyar, a status that could be displayed for example in the churches he founded. The extension or the limitation of the boyars' landed estates was influenced by their relations with the ruler. Therefore the following questions are worth asking: How did the boyars manage to acquire villages? What were the uses these properties were put to? During which periods of time did the boyars receive villages from the rulers or on the contrary lose them?

**Key words:** nobility's land, politics strategy, prestige, enrichment, poverty

**Rezumat:** Domnii și influența lor asupra domeniilor boierești din Țara Românească în a doua jumătate a secolului al XVI-lea Studiul de față își propune să surprindă căile prin care boierimea din Țara Românească și-a extins domeniul în a doua jumătate a secolului al XVI-lea, o perioadă dominată de schimbări interne și externe care au afectat atât viața politică, cât și cea socială. Țara Românească traversează o perioadă de accentuată instabilitate politică, ilustrată de domniile scurte. În același timp, un domeniu extins reprezenta pentru un boier prestigiu, un statut care putea fi reflectat de bisericile pe care le-a fondat. Însă, extinderea sau dimpotrivă pierderea unor proprietăți a fost foarte mult influențată de relațiile boierimii cu domnia. De aceea, studiul de față încearcă să răspundă la câteva întrebări: Cum au reușit boierii să achiziționeze sate? Cum au folosit aceste proprietăți? Care au fost perioadele în care boierii au câștigat sau au pierdut sate?

**Cuvinte cheie:** domeniu nobiliar, strategii politice, prestigiu, îmbogățire, sărăcie

Ever since the beginnings of Wallachia as a political unit,

documents made reference to the rulers' close collaborators, who assisted these voivodes in acquiring and holding on to power. This study undertakes an in-depth research of boyars as the social class of the landed gentry. Over the course of time, this class has enjoyed the attention of other historians, too. In his work *Domeniul domnesc în Țara Românească* [*The Voivodal Estate in Wallachia*], Ion Donat analyses the ways in which voivodes could acquire or lose villages. In the context of his research, this historian also highlights the changes that affected the ruler and the boyars in the second half of the 16th century and that also influenced their landed estates.<sup>1</sup> These changes are also addressed in Paul Cernovodeanu's study "Clanuri, familii, autorități, puteri" ["Clans, Families, Authorities, Powerholders"]. This historian approaches the boyars' relations with the ruler during the 15th-16th centuries, noting the landed gentry's growing interest in acquiring positions and securing close relations with the voivode. The relations between the ruler and the boyars are also addressed in Nicolae Stoicescu's study "Legăturile de rudenie dintre domni și marea boierime (...)" ["The Kinship Ties between Rulers and the Great Boyars (...)]."<sup>2</sup> This researcher compiles a list of high dignitaries from the 15th-18th centuries who were related to the voivode, emphasizing the importance of such kinship ties for both the ruler and the boyars. The subject of the Wallachian landed gentry is also analyzed in Andrei Pippidi's work *Tradiția politică bizantină în țările române în secolele XVI-XVIII* [*The Byzantine Political Tradition in the Romanian Countries during the 16th-18th Centuries*]. The researcher demonstrates the transition of the boyars from a "social class" to a "political class" by means of obtaining political functions.<sup>3</sup> Such a change is also approached by Marian Coman in his study *Putere și teritoriu* [*Power and Territory*]. In analyzing this aspect, the historian shows that the role of boyars underwent transformations in the second half of the 16th century. There occurred a transition from landed gentry

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<sup>1</sup> Ion Donat, *Domeniul domnesc în Țara Românească (sec. XV-XVI)* [The Voivodal Demesne in Wallachia (15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries)], (București: Enciclopedică, 1996), pp. 92-115.

<sup>2</sup> Nicolae Stoicescu, 'Legăturile de rudenie dintre domni și marea boierime și importanța lor pentru istoria politică a Țării Românești și Moldovei (secolul XV- începutul secolului al XVIII-lea)', [The kingship ties between Rulers and the Great Boyars and their importance in the political history of Wallachia and Moldavia (15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries)] in *Danubius*, 5 (1971).

<sup>3</sup> Andrei Pippidi, *Tradiția politică bizantină în țările române în secolele XVI-XVIII* [The byzantine political tradition in the Romanian Countries during the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries], (București: Academia Republicii Socialiste România, 1983).

whose main role was military to a class of boyars who were interested in political functions.<sup>4</sup> Although this class has been a subject of interest for historians, the analysis of the boyars' landed estates in connection with the voivode represents a topic that has not been considered in a thorough manner by the existing research. In this study therefore, I will focus on the boyars' landed estates in Wallachia during the second half of the 16th century. The selection of this period is determined by the internal and external changes that took place in Wallachian politics and society. Although the Romanian Countries initially had a special status, being solely tributary to the Porte, in the second half of the 16th century they increasingly began to be considered a part of the Ottoman Empire. The financial difficulties of the Ottoman treasury brought about an increase in the tribute the Romanian Countries owed the empire. With it, the voivodes' obligations to the sultan also increased. The Turks' violation of the Romanian Countries' autonomous status became a practice in the second half of the 16th century. Although the ruler had, up to that time, been elected by boyars and confirmed by the sultan, during this period the Turks became increasingly involved in the appointment of the voivode. The Sultan offered the reigning insignia to that ruler who was compliant with the Ottoman policy and who paid the highest amount.<sup>5</sup> In such a context, Wallachia experienced growing political instability, reflected in short-lived reigns. Whereas until the second half of the 16th century there were 61 reigns and 35 voivodes, in the latter part of the century there were only 15 reigns and 11 rulers. Essentially, towards the end of the 16th century almost every reign was represented by another ruler. Three of the 11 voivodes ruled repeatedly: Mircea Ciobanul three times, Alexandru II Mircea twice, and Mihnea Turcitul twice. By contrast, in the previous centuries, almost every ruler had two or three reigns.<sup>6</sup> This demonstrates not only the instability of

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<sup>4</sup> According to Marian Coman, the "horse-tax" (*darea calului*) revealed the military role of the boyars. This tax was encountered with lesser frequency in the second half of the 16th century. See Marian Coman, *Putere și teritoriu: Țara Românească medieală (secolele XIV-XVI)* [Power and territory: Medieval Wallachia (14<sup>th</sup>- 16<sup>th</sup> centuries)], (Iași: Polirom, 2013), pp. 33-36.

<sup>5</sup> Constantin Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domnilor din Țara Românească și Moldova, Partea I. Secolele XIV-XVI* [Critical chronology of the Wallachian and Moldavian rulers. Part 1, 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries], (București: Enciclopedică, 2001), p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> Ioan Aurel Pop- Ioan Bolovan (eds.), *Istoria României: compendiu* [The history of Romania: compendium], Second revised edition, (Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2007), pp. 716-717.

central power, but also that of the dignitaries. The coming of a new voivode to the Wallachian throne entailed the fact that the dignitaries who had been close to the deposed ruler were sent into exile.<sup>7</sup> Besides facing exile, the landed gentry also experienced certain changes that affected their duties in the second half of the 16th century. Initially, the boyars formed a social class whose primary concern was military service. Their relations with the ruler consisted mainly of the military service they rendered to the voivode. In exchange for this, they received land from the ruler or were exempted from certain obligations, which did not include military service.<sup>8</sup> The documents of Wallachia present a change that took place during the reign of Mircea cel Bătrân, when the ruling council gained contour. Originally the ruling council was composed of boyars without political functions. In the second half of the 15th century, however, there was an increase in the number of high dignitaries who were members of the ruling council. Securing a political office brought social prestige to a boyar, all the more so since a political function demonstrated his close relationship with the ruler. Both the ruler and the boyar were interested in such a relationship. The ruler wanted to have loyal boyars by his side, to assist him in all his actions. The voivodes' interest in maintaining these relations grew during the second half of the 16th century, due to the influence that the landed gentry could exert on the enthronement of a ruler.<sup>9</sup> Not infrequently, however, the documents recorded the existence of tense moments between the boyars and the voivode. Most cases of this kind were encountered during the reigns of Mircea Ciobanul and Alexandru II Mircea.<sup>10</sup> These conflicts were fueled by the ruler's aggressive policy

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<sup>7</sup> Camil Mureșanu- Ioan Aurel Pop- Teodor Teoteoi, "Instituții și viață de stat," [Institutions and life in administration] in Ștefan Ștefănescu- Camil Mureșanu- Ioan Aurel Pop (eds.), *Istoria Românilor*, vol. 4. *De la Universitatea creștină către Europa "patriilor,"* [The history of Romanians. Vol 4, From the Christian University to the Europe of nations], (București: Enciclopedică, 2012), pp. 199-200.

<sup>8</sup> *Documenta Romaniae Historica* (hereinafter DRH), B. Țara Românească, eds. Andrei Oșetea et al. (București: Academia Republicii Socialiste România, 1966), vol. 1 (1247-1500), pp. 50-51, 80-82.

<sup>9</sup> A. D. Xenopol, *Istoria Românilor din Dacia Traiană* [The history of Romanians from Dacia Traiana], (București: Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1988), vol. 3, pp. 459-462.

<sup>10</sup> The statistic refers to the reigns from the second half of the 16th century. It has been compiled on the basis of the internal documents preserved. Of course, the number of cases may change depending on new documentary discoveries. In any case, they were mentioned during the reigns of rulers who adopted a harsh treatment towards the boyars. The voivodes who adopted such a policy in the

against the boyars. In order to bring such a policy to an end, the boyars requested support from the sultan. Although they could influence the enthronement of the voivode, the boyars wanted to have close relations with the ruler. Such relations could ensure their growing economic power. The wealth of some boyars consisted in money and precious objects, as well as in landed estates. Land played an important role in the medieval and early modern world, as boyars were interested in owning estates that were as large as possible. A large landed estate meant prestige for a boyar, a status that could also be displayed in the churches he founded. Building places of worship and contributing to their maintenance through donations reinforced the prestigious image of boyars, as reflected in the murals of their churches. This led to the formation of what Răzvan Theodorescu calls “new men,” people who wanted to display their luxury, power and prestige. This power was also reflected in their vast landed estates, from which boyars made donations to the places of worship.<sup>11</sup> What other uses were there for the boyars’ estates? According to more recent studies on the economy of the Romanian Countries, Wallachia and Moldavia were not major producers of grain. The main occupation here was animal husbandry, animals being traded off.<sup>12</sup> Animals were also used for the payment of certain taxes, when coins were not sufficient,<sup>13</sup> but also in battles, like in the case of horses.<sup>14</sup> Thus, land was used mostly for grazing and less for agriculture. Used for various purposes, for increasing economic power

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period studied were Mircea Ciobanul and Alexandru II Mircea.

<sup>11</sup> Răzvan Theodorescu, *Itinerarii medievale* [Medieval Itineraries], (București: Meridiane, 1979), pp. 43-69.

<sup>12</sup> Bogdan Murgescu, *Țările Române între Imperiul Otoman și Europa Creștină* [The Romanian Countries between the Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe], (Iași: Polirom, 2012), pp. 175, 207-212, 240-243, 246-250. See also his studies *Circulația monetară în țările române în secolul al XVI-lea* [Monetary circulation in the Romanian Countries in the 16<sup>th</sup> century], (București: Enciclopedică, 1996), pp. 249-252 and ‘Comerț și politică în relațiile româno-otomane (secolele XVI-XVIII)’, [Commerce and politics in the Romanian-Ottoman relationships (16<sup>th</sup>- 18<sup>th</sup> centuries)] in *Revista Istorică*, VIII, 9-10 (1997): 576-577, as well as Iolanda Țighiliiu, *Economia domanială. Creșterea animalelor în Țările Române (secolele XIV-XVII)* [Domaniian economy. Animal farming in the Romanian Countries (14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries)], (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2009), pp. 85-87, 132.

<sup>13</sup> Murgescu, *Circulația monetară*, pp. 188-189.

<sup>14</sup> Ruxandra Cămărășescu, Coralia Fotino, ‘Din istoria prețurilor. Evoluția prețului cailor în Țara Românească (sec. XV-XVII)’, [From the history of prices. The horses price development in Wallachia (15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries)] in *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* (hereinafter SMIM), 6 (1973): 226-229.

or for displaying prestige, land continued to be an economic source of interest for boyars. The extension or the limitation of the boyars' landed estates was influenced by their relations with the ruler. If the relationship was favorable for the boyar, his estate could be extended through donations (*miluiri*) from the ruler and through invasions (*cotropiri*).

#### Donations (*miluiri*)

For fidelity to the ruler both in battle and in diplomacy, boyars received villages from him. In the documents of Wallachia, the term *miluire* meant both donation and confirmation. Confirmation was issued following the grievance a boyar presented to the ruler. While the reinforcement of ownership over an estate did not necessarily attest a very close relationship between the boyar and the ruler, the same thing did not apply in the case of donations. A voivode could grant villages to a boyar following the latter's "just and faithful services" rendered to him. Documents do not always make clear what service a particular boyar rendered to the voivode, but this can sometimes be learned from the ruler's policy, correlated with the moment of the donation. Analyzing documents from the second half of the 16th century, we may notice that most of the princely villages granted by the ruler to his boyars date from the period of Mihai Viteazul's reign. Even if we take into account the margin of error caused by the lack of information as to the owner of a particular village or the gaps in the documents from the second half of the 16th century, we can say that most of the princely donations date back to the time of Mihai Viteazul. Of course, this is based on the larger number of documents available to us, but the duration of his reign should also be taken into consideration. Mihai Viteazul had, indeed, the longest uninterrupted reign in the second half of the 16th century. The fact that this was a continuous reign fostered the creation of close ties between certain boyar families and the ruler. The vast demesne Mihai Viteazul had owned since the period in which he was a boyar may represent another reason for his multiple donations.<sup>15</sup> The larger number of donations should also be analyzed in the context of the military and diplomatic policy pursued by the

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<sup>15</sup> Documents compiled after the reign of Mihai Viteazul mention numerous cases of invasions perpetrated by the voivode, via the forced purchase of some villages. These villages became part of the voivodal demesne and represented an economic source used by various rulers who succeeded Mihai to the throne to reward some boyars. See Ion Donat, *Domeniul domnesc*, pp. 206-210.



voivode. He granted estates mostly to the boyars who had stood by his side in battle. By giving villages to these boyars, the ruler wanted to strengthen his ties with them. To cope with the military conflicts and changes in the political arena, he sorely needed the support of the boyars. In some cases, the boyars who received princely donations were referred to in documents as “belonging to my reigning house.” This syntagm shows the close relationship between the boyars and the voivode. In her work *De bono coniugali*, Violeta Barbu associates this term with three connotations:

- 1) “It designates the extended family (both consanguineous and by alliance), led by the head of the family, and its servants”<sup>16</sup>
- 2) The term “house” also has the meaning of “ilk” or “ancestry,” i.e. the totality of those who have a common ancestor<sup>17</sup>
- 3) “House” also means the totality of the individuals placed in someone’s service.”<sup>18</sup>

This notion, encountered in documents of the 15th-16th centuries, has been the research subject of the historian Marius Liviu Ilie. Like Violeta Barbu, he understands the term “house” in the sense of family, which could “include, in addition to blood relatives, also spiritual ones.” It “could comprise the dignitaries who rendered certain personal services at the ruler’s court.”<sup>19</sup>

The close rapports between a boyar and the voivode were not predicated solely on the performance of a gesture of loyalty by the boyar, but also on the formation of family alliances. Thus, donations are also encountered in documents in the sense of a wedding or baptism gifts. Those whom the ruler bestowed with donations were relatives of the voivode. For instance, Chamberlain Vlad (*postelnic*) received a village from his baptismal godfather, Voivode Alexandru Mircea. This represented in fact an aid that the voivode offered his relatives to increase their domains, as well as a means for the ruler to draw closer to

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<sup>16</sup> Violeta Barbu, *De bono coniugali. O istorie a familiei din Țara Românească în secolul al XVII-lea* [De bono coniugali. A family history of Wallachia in 17<sup>th</sup> century], (București: Meridiane, 2003), p. 21.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Marius Liviu Ilie, ‘Domnia și ‘casa domniei’ în Țara Românească. Etimologie și semnificație istorică (secolele XIV-XVI) [Rulers and ‘home rule’ in Wallachia. Etymology and historical significance (14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries)], in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie “George Barițiu” Cluj-Napoca*, 48 (2009): 27- 45.

his relatives in order to remove the “peril” of treason.<sup>20</sup> Wedding or baptismal gifts consisted in land or jewelry, or both.<sup>21</sup> Donations represented not only a means of emphasizing the close relationship between the boyar and the ruler, but also a means for the boyar to display his prestige.<sup>22</sup> Which were the princely resources that enabled the voivode to grant so many donations? The origin of the jewelry or of the villages granted was diverse. They could enter the royal treasury via the confiscation of assets belonging to the traitorous boyars,<sup>23</sup> through purchases<sup>24</sup> or through exchanges of estates.<sup>25</sup>

#### Invasions (*cotropiri*)

A frequently encountered way in which boyars increased their domains during this period was invasion (*cotropire*). An invasion meant taking possession of a village without any right to do so. It is significant that boyars invaded villages adjacent to their own estates. This was the case of Radu from Golești, who occupied the villages of Hareș, Cheiani and Căpățâneni.<sup>26</sup> All these villages were in Argeș County, just like the other estates Radu possessed.<sup>27</sup> Of course, there were also cases, few in number, in which the invaded villages did not belong to the same county as those owned by the boyars.<sup>28</sup> We should take into account the difficulty with which nobiliary estates could be formed in their entirety, as well as the lack of information regarding the moment when these boyars invaded other estates. Thus, it is difficult to determine whether a particular village was owned before or after the invasion of a neighboring settlement. The invasion strategy can be more clearly traced in the case of

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<sup>20</sup> DRH, B. *Țara Românească*, (eds.) Ștefan Pascu et al. (București: Academia Republicii Socialiste România, 1985) vol. VI (1566-1570), pp. 301-302.

<sup>21</sup> DRH, B. *Țara Românească*, (eds.) Ștefan Pascu et al. (București: Academia Republicii Socialiste România, 1988), vol. VII (1571-1575), pp. 118-120.

<sup>22</sup> In this case, monasteries enjoyed the boyars' attention, villages being granted to them for redemptive purposes. See DRH, B. *Țara Românească*, (eds.) Mihai Berza et al. (București: Academia Republicii Socialiste România, 1975), vol. XI (1593-1600), pp. 80-82.

<sup>23</sup> DRH, B. *Țara Românească*, (eds.) Ștefan Pascu et al. (București: Academia Republicii Socialiste România, 1983), vol. V (1551-1565), pp. 202-204.

<sup>24</sup> DRH, B. *Țara Românească*, vol. VII (1571-1575), pp. 159-160.

<sup>25</sup> DRH, B. *Țara Românească*, vol. XI (1593-1600), pp. 577-578.

<sup>26</sup> DRH, B. *Țara Românească*, vol. V (1551-1565), pp. 125-126.

<sup>27</sup> DRH, B. *Țara Românească*, (eds.) Ștefan Pascu et al. (București: Academia Republicii Socialiste România, 1981) vol. IV (1536-1550), pp. 138-139, 166-167.

<sup>28</sup> DRH, B. *Țara Românească*, vol. V (1551-1565), pp. 139-140.

the large boyar estates, confirming the hypothesis formulated above.<sup>29</sup> It is clear that boyars aimed to consolidate their land ownership in a given region, only the petty gentry owning scattered villages. When they owned an estate that was situated at a greater distance from their domains, boyars most often exchanged tracts of land with those who owned estates closer to their villages. For example, Vintilă the Steward (*vornic*) from Cornățeni attempted to consolidate his domain in Dâmbovița County. To that end, he exchanged land with Dealu monastery, giving the village Drugănești in Ilfov County in exchange for the village Conțești in Dâmbovița County.<sup>30</sup> He is also mentioned in the documents as having invaded, together with Drăghici the Steward, Albu's land in Dobrița, a village that was also located in Dâmbovița County.<sup>31</sup>

Invasions also referred to a boyar's ownership of a village as a result of a forced sale, "by throwing them a few coins (*aspri*) for their land against their will."<sup>32</sup> Invasion was not practiced only by boyars, but also by the ruler. Many villages were invaded through forced purchases by Mihai Viteazul. This may explain the multiple donations granted by the ruler to his boyars. Mihai Viteazul's practice of offering rewards to some of his loyal boyars, in the form of purchased villages, was also adopted by those who succeeded him to the throne.<sup>33</sup> The establishment of boundaries without witnesses was also considered an invasion.<sup>34</sup> A document from the time of Alexandru Mircea states that for setting the borders of the village Colareți, the ruler sent some of his boyars, together with "24 boyars, so that foreigners could be there, besides the relatives."<sup>35</sup> The stipulation that relatives should not be among those who drew the boundaries shows the voivode's intention to avoid

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<sup>29</sup> For instance, the Buzești boyars invaded the village Izlaz, which neighbored on their estate. See *DRH, B. Țara Românească*, (eds.) Andrei Oțetea et al. (București: Academia Republicii Socialiste România, 1965) vol. XXI (1626-1627), pp. 201-206.

<sup>30</sup> *DRH, B. Țara Românească*, (eds.) Mihai Berza et al. (București: Academia Republicii Socialiste România, 1975), vol. III (1526-1535), pp. 169-170.

<sup>31</sup> *DRH, B. Țara Românească*, vol. V (1551-1565), pp. 15-16.

<sup>32</sup> *DRH, B. Țara Românească*, vol. V (1551-1565), pp. 97-98.

<sup>33</sup> *Documente privind Istoria României* [Documents concerning the history of Romania] (hereinafter *DIR*), *B. Țara Românească*, (eds.) Ion Ionașcu et al. (București: Academia Republicii Populare Române, 1954), veacul XVII, vol. IV (1621-1625), pp. 107-108, 178-180.

<sup>34</sup> Florența Ivaniuc, *Instituția hotărniciei în Țara Românească secolele al XIV-lea-al XVIII-lea* [The institution of the property grants in Wallachia: 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries], (București: Academia Română, 2003), pp. 39-43.

<sup>35</sup> *DRH, B. Țara Românească*, vol. VI (1566-1570), pp. 207-208.

fraudulence. Drawing boundaries without consulting all the neighbors was not only a strategy of boundary invasion, but also a practice of abusive estate expansion. Invasion took place mainly during reigns that were favorable for the boyars. For example, during the reign of Voivode Vintilă, Șerban the Steward from Izvorani drew the boundaries of the village Izvorani "from Mărăcineni and Vierăș, unbeknownst to the owner of these villages, Mărăcineni and Vierăș."<sup>36</sup> The complaint about this invasion was made by Radu from Golești and his wife, Caplea, during the reign of Voivode Pătrașcu. The documents from the second half of the 16th century mention the largest number of invasion cases that are known of and that were solved during other reigns. Filing a lawsuit during the reign of another ruler gives us information about the connection that existed between the ruler and the boyar whose estate was invaded or who invaded another estate. Șerban from Izvorani was High Steward during the reign of Voivode Vintilă. In this capacity, he was involved in boundary setting trials.<sup>37</sup> His high prerogatives enabled him to abusively enlarge his domain. Radu from Golești was a close associate of Radu Paisie,<sup>38</sup> the father of Pătrașcu cel Bun, who married him to Caplea.<sup>39</sup> The end of Radu Paisie's reign was a tumultuous period, full of riots, which led to the voivode's replacement with Mircea Ciobanul. During the latter's reign, Radu from Golești was forced to go into exile. He returned to Wallachia during the reign of Pătrașcu cel Bun, when he filed a complaint against the invasion perpetrated by Șerban from Izvorani. Therefore, his closeness to the voivode helped the boyar not only to increase his estate, but also to regain some of his violated rights.

It was not just a boyar's high office that assisted him in abusively expanding his domain, but also his close relationship with the voivode.<sup>40</sup> Such was the case of Ivan Noroce, who invaded the village

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<sup>36</sup> DRH, B. *Țara Românească*, vol. V (1551-1565), pp. 124-125.

<sup>37</sup> Nicolae Stoicescu, *Sfatul domnesc și marii dregători din Țara Românească și Moldova (sec. XIV-XVII)* [The royal council and the high officials of Wallachia and Moldavia (14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries)], (București: Academia Republicii Socialiste România, 1968), pp. 124, 187-188.

<sup>38</sup> DIR, B. *Țara Românească*, (eds.) Ion Ionașcu et al. (București: Academia Republicii Populare România, 1951) veacul XVI, vol. II (1526-1550), pp. 294-295.

<sup>39</sup> DRH, B. *Țara Românească*, vol. IV (1536-1550), pp. 91-92.

<sup>40</sup> One example is that of *Sluger Drăgoiu* (Master of the Larder), who received from Baico, "of his own accord," an estate in Agești. After Drăgoiu removed it from tax obligations, Baico seized his estate back. The wrongdoing occurred "in the days of Voivode Mircea, Baico being in Voivode Mircea's house." See DRH, B. *Țara Românească*, vol. V (1551-1565), pp. 59-60.

Cernătești during the reign of Petru cel Tânăr. Ivan was the ruler's brother-in-law, having married Stana, the sister of Petru cel Tânăr.<sup>41</sup> The high dignitary owned the village until the reign of Alexandru Mircea, when the voivode confirmed that the village was in the property of Glăvăciog Monastery, because it was "the just inheritance of the holy monastery."<sup>42</sup> The fact that some invasions were discovered during the reign of another ruler could mean the lack of control on the part of the voivode, whose weakness was exploited by the boyars so that they might get rich. At the same time, it demonstrated the consolidated power of the boyar who was related to the voivode, a power that decreased as soon as his "protector" lost his throne. The arrival of a new ruler on the throne did not automatically entail the elimination of injustices produced during the previous reigns, as each voivode and his boyars followed their own interests. In order to reach their goals, they sometimes violated the law. Neagoe Basarab did so when, together with the Craiovești boyars, he invaded the village Tismana, giving it to Bistrița Monastery. They were able to invade it "because they were strong and powerful at that time." The moment they lost power, they also lost this village. This happened during the reign of Petru cel Tânăr.<sup>43</sup> Although there were cases of invasions perpetrated by the ruler, the latter stipulated, in the documents confirming ownership over certain estates, "that no one should dare take the above said pond, or the great ban, not even one of our highness's boyars, for that man will receive bad words from our highness."<sup>44</sup> Most invasions attested in the 16th century date from the reign of Mircea Ciobanul. This may also explain the lack of control exerted by the voivode, despite his authoritative policy, as well as an increase in the economic power of some boyar families who were close to the ruler.

The enrichment of some boyars who were close to the voivode led to the impoverishment of the aristocratic class whose members were hostile to the ruler. They could lose villages under various circumstances.

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<sup>41</sup> Nicolae Stoicescu, *Dicționar al marilor dregători din Țara Românească și Moldova (sec. XIV-XVII)* [Dictionary of the high officials from the Wallachia and Moldavia (14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries)], (București: Enciclopedică, 1971), p. 66.

<sup>42</sup> DRH, B. *Țara Românească*, vol. VI (1566-1570), pp. 184-185.

<sup>43</sup> DRH, B. *Țara Românească*, vol. VI (1566-1570), pp. 3-5.

<sup>44</sup> DRH, B. *Țara Românească*, vol. V (1551-1565), pp. 173-174. Invasions were condemned by the Patriarch of Constantinople, Jeremias II. See DIR, B. *Țara Românească*, (eds.) Ion Ionașcu et al. (București: Academia Republicii Populare România, 1953), veacul XVI, vol. VI (1591-1600), pp. 41-42.

*Treacherous conspiracies (hicleonii)*

The desire to place on the throne of Wallachia a ruler who was close to them or even to occupy the throne themselves caused some boyars to rebel. One such case was that of Stanciu Benga, who went into exile in Transylvania after the death of Pătrașcu cel Bun. From there, he returned with an army, rising against Alexandru Mircea, who defeated him at Boian. In this respect, we should mention the kinship between Stanciu and Pătrașcu cel Bun, the former serving as the latter's High Chamberlain (*postelnic*). Stanciu was the husband of Steward Calotă's niece; Calotă was the father-in-law of Cîrstina, who was the sister of Pătrașcu cel Bun.<sup>45</sup> Thus, Stanciu was a member of the faction that was hostile to Alexandru Mircea, the enemy of Pătrașcu cel Bun. For this reason, Stanciu was forced to go into exile and his return with an army against Alexandru Mircea was regarded as proof of his treason, which is why his estates were confiscated.<sup>46</sup> The estates that were confiscated from exiles could be regained when a new favorable ruler came to the throne or, sometimes, during the reign of the same ruler.<sup>47</sup> The villages of exiles belonged to the ruler,<sup>48</sup> and those who wanted to buy them without the consent of the voivode risked being killed. During the reign of Petru cel Tânăr, Oprina bought a village from Radu, who was in exile in Transylvania.<sup>49</sup> In response to this deed, the "late Pătru Voivode imprisoned Oprina and wanted to hang her, for she had bought land from exiles."<sup>50</sup> The estates confiscated from exiles were used by the ruler for donations to the boyars who were loyal to him. It should be noted that most of the estates confiscated from some boyars were granted by the voivode to other boyars. Beyond this, we cannot have a

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<sup>45</sup> Stoicescu, *Legăturile de rudenie*, p. 124.

<sup>46</sup> DRH, B. Țara Românească, vol. VII (1571-1575), pp. 45-46.

<sup>47</sup> Some boyars retrieved their estates during the reign of the same voivode, who "retrieved the wanderers from the death penalty." For example, Dragomir from Cîrțuclești got his estate back during the reign of Alexandru Mircea, who "called on those boyars, in good faith." See DRH, B. Țara Românească, vol. XI (1593-1600), pp. 230-231.

<sup>48</sup> Valeria Costăchel, Petre. P. Panaitescu, Anatol Cazacu, *Viața feudală în Țara Românească și Moldova (sec. XIV-XVII)* [Feudal life in Wallachia and Moldavia (14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries)], (București: Științifică, 1957), p. 280.

<sup>49</sup> Radu's exile to Transylvania was also caused by his kinship to Pătrașcu cel bun. Radu was the nephew of Bogdan from Popești, the brother-in-law of Radu cel Mare (the grandfather of Pătrașcu cel Bun). See Stoicescu, *Legăturile de rudenie*, pp. 122-123 and DRH, B. Țara Românească, vol. VII (1571-1575), pp. 338-339, 359.

<sup>50</sup> DRH, B. Țara Românească, vol. VII (1571-1575), pp. 338-339.

comprehensive view of all the acts of treasonable plotting (*hiclenii*) committed in Wallachia, as a land confiscated on this account was reported only when the ruler bestowed it upon other faithful boyars.<sup>51</sup> This form of treason represented the way in which a boyar exhibited his intention to install a ruler faithful to his policy on the throne. When it was discovered, the boyar lost his estates to the voivode.

### *Theft*

The boyars' hostility toward the voivode and their concern to increase their fortune could also manifest themselves through theft. Although it was intended to ensure the boyar's welfare, theft from the royal treasury could entail the loss of his estates.<sup>52</sup>

Although the means through which certain villages could be gained or lost by the boyars, depending on the ruler enthroned, were also encountered during other periods, these cases multiplied in the second half of the 16th century. This was due, as seen above, to the short reigns, to the growth of the boyars' interest in holding offices, as well as to their influence on the enthronement of the ruler. From the 16th century on, with the enthronement of Neagoe Basarab, there could be sensed a change at the level of the voivode and the boyars. The ruler was no longer required to be of "princely blood." The boyar family that enthroned a ruler had great economic power. It is clear that since the boyars could influence the enthronement of some rulers from among their own or other families, they enjoyed, at the time, greater economic power, which was also reflected in the expansion of their landed estates. The influence exerted by boyars on the enthronement of the voivode grew in the second half of the 16th century. This was due to the growing financial needs of the Ottoman Empire. Having access to economic resources, a boyar could bribe the sultan to enthrone a voivode who was favorable to him. If this treasonable plot was discovered by the voivode in office, the boyar risked losing his life, and his landed estate was confiscated. In compiling the statistics concerning cases of

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<sup>51</sup> Donat, *Domeniul domnesc*, pp. 98-101.

<sup>52</sup> Among these was Manda - a tax collector in Rîmnîcu-Sărat, who fled with the tax money across the Danube. "So Manda fled with the ruler's *aspri* (coins) for the tribute, 88,000 across the Danube, to Voivode Mircea," "during the days of the late Voivode Petrașcu." See DRH, B. *Țara Românească*, (eds.) Ștefan Pascu et al. (București: Academia Română, 1996) vol. VIII (1576-1580), pp. 358-360 and Damaschin Mioc, *Despre modul de impunere și percepere a birului în Țara Românească până la 1632* [About the ways of imposing and perceiving tribute in Wallachia until 1632], in *SMIM*, II (1957): 96.

donations, invasions and treacherous conspiracies from the second half of the 16th century, we have used mainly internal documents. Of course, this statistic may undergo changes with the discovery of new documents. It is attached to the study for a better understanding of the relations between boyars and their voivodes during the second half of the 16th century and the way in which those relations affected the boyars' landed estates. It should be noted that as regards donations, we took into account cases of voivodal donation and not the confirmation of boyar estates by the voivode. The main reason is that confirmations did not expand a boyar's landed estate, but merely confirmed his ownership rights over a particular village or another. We have not counted the villages used in donations, but the cases themselves. If the same village was given to several brothers, just one donation (*miluire*) was taken into account. Boyar landed estates represent not just a topic of economic history, but also one of social and political history. Examining this topic will contribute to better understanding the relationship between boyars and voivodes in different periods.

<b>Reign</b>	<b>Donation</b>	<b>Invasion</b>	<b>Treacherous plot</b>
Mircea Ciobanul	11	13	10
Radu Ilie (Haidăul)	-	-	-
Pătrașcu cel Bun	4	6	4
Petru cel Tânăr	3	9	1
Alexandru II Mircea	11	2	7
Vintilă	-	-	-
Mihnea Turcitul	6	7	1
Petru Cercel	1	1	-
Ștefan Surdul	1	-	-
Alexandru cel Rău	-	1	-
Mihai Viteazul	20	10	4
Nicolae Pătrașcu	3	1	-
Simion Movilă	-	3	-



# The Princely Fathom. Uniformization of Measures and State Making in Wallachia, 1775-1831<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** This article discusses the relationship between the uniformization of measures and the transformation of the state in Wallachia from 1775 to 1831 by focusing on the fathom (stânjen), a measure of length used before the introduction of the metric system. The extant Romanian historiography of weights and measure tended to consider early modern measures as standards easy to convert in the metric system. To the contrary, my article shows that that consistent attempts made by the central power – the principality – to define and control the measures can be documented consistently only from the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century on. Triggered by the dissolution of communal property and the incipient commodification of land, this process of standardization contributed to the bureaucratisation of the state apparatus and to the constitution of the state as an impersonal entity.

**Key words:** fathom, standardization, Wallachia, Phanariot period, state, state idea, bureaucratisation.

**Rezumat:** Stânjenul domnesc. Uniformizarea măsurilor și constituirea Țării Românești, 1775-1831. Articolul de față discută relația dintre uniformizarea măsurilor și transformarea statului în Țara Românească din perioada 1775-1831, concentrându-se asupra stânjenului, o măsură de lungime folosită înainte de introducerea sistemului metric. Istoriografia metrologică românească a tratat măsurile premoderne ca standarde, ușor de convertit în sistemul metric. Articolul meu arată în schimb că încercările coerente ale puterii centrale – domnia – de a defini și controla măsurile pot fi documentate doar din ultimul sfert al veacului al XVIII-lea. Provoocat

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de disoluția stăpânilor obștești și de comodificarea incipientă a pământului, acest proces a contribuit la birocratizarea aparatului de stat și la constituirea statului ca entitate impersonală.

**Cuvinte cheie:** stânjen, standardizare, Țara Românească, perioada fanariotă, stat, ideea de stat, birocratizare.

## Introduction

Witold Kula, one of the most important historians of metrology, noted that weights and measures have a political dimension in that ‘the right to determine measures is an attribute of authority in all advanced societies’. Moreover, this authority ‘was able to gain further prestige by arbitrating [metrological] conflicts’.<sup>2</sup> Starting from these observations, this paper explores further the relation between the incipient uniformization of measures and the transformation of the state in the last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Wallachia. For reasons of space I will insist on one measure, namely the fathom (*stânjen*<sup>3</sup>), used to measure length (land plots, roads, buildings).

First, I am interested in the circumstances and timing of the transition from fathom to princely fathom that is, from a local to a centrally defined and authorized measure. Second, I ask how the central authority benefits the standardization process and how it is affected by it. Correspondingly, I make two main claims. First, I show that consistent efforts to control weights and measures are documented towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and therefore, operating with a notion of standard measure, as the historiography of metrology has done, leads to anachronism. Secondly, I believe that it is much more profitable to look at the process of metrological standardization which was constitutive of the modern state in Wallachia; on the one hand it fostered rationalization in the activity of the state apparatus; on the other, it created the possibilities for imagining the state as an objective entity.<sup>4</sup> This argument

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<sup>2</sup> Witold Kula, *Measures and Men*, transl. by R. Szepter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 18 and p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Wallachian vocabulary, like the weights and measures, was not standardized. Thus, several variants of the word appear in documents: *stânjen*, *stîjnen*, *stînjân*, *stănjăn*, *stănjen*, *stăngen*, *stîngen*, *stîjin*. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Romanian to English are mine.

<sup>4</sup> I am building on works that have pointed to the connection between metrological standardization and administrative centralization: Julian Hoppit, ‘Reforming Britain’s Weights and Measures, 1660-1824’, *The English Historical Review*, 108/426 (Jan., 1993): 82-104; William J. Ashworth, ‘Metrology and the State: Science, Revenue,

has a wider implication with regard to the history of modern transformations in Wallachia (and Romania) usually centred on the image of a weak, corrupt and abusive state apparatus.

In what follows I will discuss the notion of state as I use it; I will review the Romanian literature on weights and measures and highlight what I regard as a major weakness; I will trace the process whereby the fathom comes under the central control and definition; finally, I will discuss the implications of this reconsideration of the metrological history for the study of the state and of the political modernization in Wallachia.

### What is the state?

During the period under study, the notion of state did not enter the political and legal vocabularies in Wallachia. What is usually called Wallachian state was a patrimonial organization called principedom (*domnie*) from the title of the incumbent prince (*domn*). The notion of state as an apparatus distinct from society with a legitimate space of intervention and activity emerged later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is my contention that the standardization of the fathom contributed to this transition from *domnie* to state. But what is the state? In the literature on the transformation of the (early-) modern state, this is conceived as an organization or set of organizations fulfilling several functions, in short as government.<sup>5</sup> According to these views the state is a given, the scholar having only to study how it grows, it is built, it develops and only rarely how it breaks.<sup>6</sup>

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and Commerce', *Science*, Vol. 306, No. 5700 (2004): 1314-1317; James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State. How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Heaven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 25-33

<sup>5</sup> Here are some of the most influential contributions to the early-modern and modern state formation employing the institutional notion of the state: Charles Tilly ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990-1992* (Blackwell: Cambridge MA & Oxford UK, 1992); Brian M. Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Thomas Ertman, *Birth of Leviathan. Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: Verso, 1974).

<sup>6</sup> See for instance the massive study of Jack A. Goldstone who focused on the breaking down of states, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

Recent reflections on this matter departed from this conceptualization of the state. In a seminal article, Philip Abrams has argued that the state does not possess the unity, coherence and purpose which are usually attributed to it. The state is a matter of belief-'the idea of the state'-and is the result of an ideological project meant to conceal domination. The state idea is achieved through techniques of governmentality, artefacts, rituals and generally administrative practices. The limitation of Abrams' reflection on the state is the lack of a historical perspective. There is no place for transitions in Abrams' approach. It is not clear how something which is not state evolves to something that we can call state in his terms and how his argument would apply to polities where there is no notion of state whereby multiple are given the appearance of a block. It is important however to retain from Abrams that the governmental organizations and practices usually designated as state need the 'idea of the state' to be (mis)recognized as such, as a unitary entity.

Pierre Bourdieu offers a better angle to study the transition from a patrimonial form of power to the modern state. He similarly conceived of the state in terms of beliefs and defined it as an authorized and, therefore, legitimate representation of social reality which is rendered visible through the manifestations of the public order.<sup>7</sup> The state is 'this mysterious reality' which 'exists through the effects and the collective belief in its existence' according to Bourdieu.<sup>8</sup> Specific to the (modern) state is the idea of the 'universal', a principle of universal applicability as against the personal and the privileged. By invoking the universal, the agents in the field of administrative power consolidate their position as disinterested actors; but they can base their actions only if they act in the name of an entity possessing the same attribute of universality - neutral, impersonal, objective. In the same vein, two British sociologists - Derek Sayer and Philip Corrigan claim that administrative routine practices make the state.<sup>9</sup>

In this view the state is performed and constituted through the actions of its agents and through the interactions of the subjects with the agents and other objects which embody the state - such as standard

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<sup>7</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Sur l'État. Cours au Collège de France (1989-1992)* (Paris: Raisons d'agir/Seuil, 2012), p. 15.

<sup>8</sup> Bourdieu, *Sur l'État*, p. 25.

<sup>9</sup> Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, *The Great Arch. English State Formation as Cultural Revolution* (Oxford UK & Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1991), p. 3.

measures. By imposing metrological standards, the officials – recruited from higher and lesser boyars – were in a position to manipulate a ‘universal’, a norm valid throughout the country, at all times and all places; in doing so, they asserted their power as neutral and objective, but they could do so only in the name of an entity or principle endowed with the same attributes and believed to exist out-there. So, the state, both as objective reality encapsulated in various things and practices and as subjective category of perception, is made and re-made in the course of daily interactions involving administrative practices.

### **Historiography.**

*General evaluation of the period.* The period under study, corresponding to the last phase of the Phanariot period and the ‘indigenous princes’ (*domniile pământene*), scattered with military occupations by Russian, Austrian and Ottoman troops, is hardly regarded as a period of modernization or development. Without constituting an object of analysis, the state was considered to consist of the body of venal officials, corrupt, inefficient and usually abusive in their relations with the common subjects. It was also the period when the Wallachia (like Moldavia) lacked an army and sovereignty, playing the role of temporary provider for various occupation armies. These aspects favoured summary judgements and precluded any problematization of the state and of its transformation in the period under study as the current article attempts.<sup>10</sup>

*Metrological Historiography.* The most important historians of weights and measures in pre-modern Wallachia were Nicolae Stoicescu and

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<sup>10</sup> The bibliography on the Phanariot period is voluminous. For a recent dismissal of the Phanariot state see Damian Hurezeanu, ‘Regimul fanariot. O poartă spre modernizarea Țărilor Române?’ [The Phanariot Regime. A Gate to the Modernization of the Romanian Principalities?] in Violeta Barbu (ed), *Historia manet. Volum omagial Demény Lajos* [Historia manet. Tribute to Demény Lajos] (Bucharest-Cluj: Kriterion, 2001), pp. 399-412; the historiography on the Phanariot period and its stereotypes were subject to criticism by Ion Ionașcu, ‘Le degree de l’influence des grecs des principautés roumaines dans la vie politique de ces pays’ in *Symposium. L’Époque phanariote, 21-25 Octobre 1970. A la mémoire de Cléobule Tsourkas* (Thessaloniki: Institute of Balkan Studies, 1974), pp. 217-228 and Ștefan Lemny, ‘La critique du régime Phanariote: clichés mentaux et perspectives historiographiques’ in *Culture and Society. Structures, Interferences, Analogies in the Modern Romanian History*, ed. Al. Zub, (Iași: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1985), pp. 17-30.

Damaschin Mioc, yet their approach was weakened by the so-called 'juridist method', a notion I borrow from Henri H. Stahl to designate the search of a country-wide valid rule or norm in a pre-modern society which lacked such norms<sup>11</sup>. In such societies, a large extent of the social life was local or locally based and so were the norms, the units of measurement included. The problem with such an approach, besides operating with ahistorical categories of norm, is that it obscures the process of norm making at country level. The 'juridist method', or rather the 'juridist' fallacy, in my case refers to the assumption that a pre-modern measure - say the fathom - has a standard size. Sources mentioning it are in this view either confirmations of this standard or deviations from it (hence confirming the existence of the standard). The possibility that there were more legitimate 'standards' (on estates or in towns) or that the principedom was not always keen on implementing standard measures is not taken into consideration. Hence, studies of historical metrology always indicate the metric equivalent of this or that medieval measure and some of them even end with conversion tables. In doing this, historians actually operate with an anachronistic notion of standard measures. This approach is illustrated by the most important historians of pre-modern Romanian metrology, Nicolae Stoicescu and Damaschin Mioc;<sup>12</sup> other studies which touch only tangentially the problem of

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<sup>11</sup> For a critique of the "juridist" method see H.H. Stahl, *Controverse de istorie socială* [Controversies in Social History] (Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1969), pp. 5-61. In reviewing the problem of feudalism in Romanian history he noticed that Romanian historians interpreted various disparate documentary references as expressions of the "feudal laws".

<sup>12</sup> There are few modern (post-WWII) studies dedicated to the problem of weights and measures in the Romanian historiography and their aim was to provide instruments for economic historians, hence the inclination to find stable measures in the past: Nicolae Stoicescu and Damaschin Mioc on the early modern metrology in Wallachia, each of them ending with tables of conversion of various measures in the metric system: Damaschin Mioc and Nicolae Stoicescu, 'Măsurile medievale de capacitate din Țara Românească' [The Medieval Capacity Measures in Wallachia], *Studii*, 6 (1963): 1151-1178; Damaschin Mioc and Nicolae Stoicescu, 'Măsurile medievale de greutate din Țara Românească. Instrumentele de măsurat capacitatea și greutatea' [The Medieval Measures of Weight in Wallachia. The Instruments for Measuring the Capacity and the Weight], *Studii*, 1 (1964): 88-105; Damaschin Mioc and Nicolae Stoicescu, 'Măsurile medievale de lungime și suprafață și instrumentele de măsurat lungimea din Țara Românească', [The Medieval Measures for Lengths and Area and the Instruments for Measuring Length in Wallachia], *Studii*, 3 (1965): 639-665. The most important book on Romanian pre-modern metrology is Nicolae

weights and measures suffer from the same limitation.<sup>13</sup> More aware of the historical character of the standardization process-though inconsistently so -was I. Brăescu in his study from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup>

Contrary to this approach I start from the premise that the fathom was not standardized and the mentions of fathoms are actually local measures which had not yet been displaced by the official fathom. Consequently, the standard or the official fathom is the result of a protracted process of standardization that needs to be documented and explained. By standardization I don't refer to a system in which 'units of measurement are precisely defined and related to one another in a

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Stoicescu, *Cum măsurau strămoșii. Metrologia medievală pe teritoriul României* [Medieval Metrology on the Romanian Territory] București: Editura Științifică, 1971); the book is based on the previous three articles but its scope is wider, covering both Moldavia and Transylvania in the fashion of national historiography. His position is rather ambiguous, than it might appear in my short rendering. He does acknowledge in introduction that the state manifested interest in the control of weights and measures towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (pp. 25-26) yet his practice and particular treatment of the measures actually contradict at every pace such assumptions. Everywhere he looks for the standard of this or that measure, for the standard used in a region and for the metrical equivalent. These works form the basis of two articles on Romanian early modern weights and measures by Alexandru Constantinescu which brings no other contribution to the field: 'Măsurile în evul mediu românesc' [Romanian Units of Measurement during the Middle Ages] (I), *Studii și articole de istorie* XXVI (1974): 138-145 and Măsurile în evul mediu românesc (II), *Studii și articole de istorie*, XXVII-XXVIII (1974): 183-195. Corina Pătrașcu does not fall into this category; she approached the issue at a later stage, overlooking earlier attempts at standardization, 'Uniformizarea măsurilor și greutateților folosite în comerțul Țării Românești, o acțiune de unificare a pieței interne (1829-1840)' [The Uniformization of the Measures and Weights Used in the Trade of Wallachia, an Action of Unification of the Internal Market], *Studii*, 4 (1968): 667-683.

<sup>13</sup> Emil Vărtosu, 'Sigiliu de târguri și orașe din Moldova și Țara Românească' [ET] *Analele Universității C. I. Parhon*, nr. 5 (1956), Seria Științelor Sociale, Istorie, p. 137. Igor Ivanov - Gheorghe Ivanovici, 'Istoricul învățământului metrologiei în România', [The History of Metrologic Teaching in Romania], *Buletinul științific al Institutului de Construcții Bucharest*, Year XIII no. 2 (1970): 228-231.

<sup>14</sup> Ion Brăescu, *Măsurătoarea pământului la români din vechime până la punerea în aplicare a sistemului metric*, [Land Measurement in the Romanian Principalities from the Ancient Times to the Introduction of the Metric System], (Bucharest: Atelierele grafice Socec & Co., 1913), passim.

consistent, coherent manner', as the metric system.<sup>15</sup> Less ambitiously, it was a process whereby the central power in Wallachia attempted to stabilize and officialise two and then one version of the fathom. In Wallachia, such an attempt is discernible in the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is part and parcel of a larger process of transformation of the modes of rule.

Before going further, I have to clarify what can be considered a standard fathom in the documents I use. Not only that fathoms differed in terms of size, but no such fathom survived to be measured according to the metric system. Hence, it is hopeless to try to equate these pre-modern fathoms with a metric measure. We have instead documents which refer to a fathom controlled by the central authority by adding an attribute: "the princely fathom" (*stânjenul domnesc*), "the fathom of Șerban Cantacuzino" (*stânjenul lui Șerban Cantacuzino*) and the fathom of Constantin Brâncoveanu (*stânjenul lui Constantin Brâncoveanu*). In the 1820s the documents refer to a "timber fathom" (*stânjenul cheresteliu*), used in measurements of civil constructions in Bucharest. As these are the only indicators of a central control and attempt at standardization of the fathom, it is important to know when and why did they appear. Let us now turn to the evidence of the fathom and this process.

### **From Fathom to Princely Fathom.**

The idea that the fathom was standardized by Șerban Cantacuzino (1678-1688) and Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688-1714) is common currency in the Romanian metrological historiography. So, if the information is correct, around 1700 Wallachia had two "standard" fathoms, one of Șerban Cantacuzino, the other of Constantin Brâncoveanu. The fact contradicts the notion of standardization itself; this was partially and unconvincingly solved by claiming that the fathom of Șerban Cantacuzino was more widespread. This fathom measured 1.962 m according to Nicolae Stoicescu and Damaschin Mioc. At a closer look, their statement is problematic.

First of all, there is no direct or contemporary evidence that Șerban Cantacuzino or Constantin Brâncoveanu issued official standard fathoms. Associations between their names and official fathoms are documented almost a century later. But whence do the notion of

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<sup>15</sup> Daniel R. Headrick, *When Information Came of Age. Technologies of Knowledge in the Age of Reason and Revolution, 1700-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 40.



standard fathom and its precise metrical equivalent arise? A closer examination of the sources mobilized by Stoicescu and Mioc to support their idea of standard measure indicate that they are from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a period when the process of standardization was well advanced – if not fully accomplished throughout the country.<sup>16</sup>

There are however several documents which refer to princely fathoms before the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1709 several plots are sold in Bucharest and their measure is expressed in ‘princely fathoms’.<sup>17</sup> In 1719, one document mentions a plot of ‘four princely fathoms’ (*stânjeni domnești patru*) received by a boyar from the former prince Constantin Brâncoveanu, as an exchange for another plot;<sup>18</sup> similarly, a plot of land sold in 1734 was demarcated with the ‘princely fathom’.<sup>19</sup> Still, none of these documents was known to Damaschin Mioc and Nicolae Stoicescu – or at least they didn’t cite them (it is true that only one of these documents was published before their studies).

To sum up, the documents I presented above suggest that there was an official fathom at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and some people used it in their private transactions. Yet, there is no evidence that the principedom attempted to implement throughout the country an official and uniform fathom. Moreover, Nicolae Stoicescu and Damaschin Mioc

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<sup>16</sup> Brăescu, *Măsurătoarea pământului*, pp. 4-5. Brăescu cites in turn a work of metrological conversions from 1880, Alexandru Zane, *Barem de măsurii și greutateți ...* [Standard of Measures and Weights ...] (Bucharest: Imprimeria Statului, 1880); The work was republished with revisions in 1904, but it is impossible to determine which edition did Brăescu use since he does not specify the date of publication in the reference. Another source invoked by Stoicescu is a dictionary from 1830s. The cited author, Iordache Golescu, was the author of two dictionaries in that period (a Romanian explanatory dictionary in 1832 and a Romanian-Greek dictionary in 1838) yet Stoicescu refers rather imprecisely to “the dictionary of Iordache Golescu”; other sources are Ion Ghica, *Măsurile și greutatețile românești și moldavești ...* [The Romanian and Moldavian Measures and Weights ...] (Bucharest: Tipografia lui K.A. Rosetti & Binterhlader, 1848) and Dimitrie Iarcu, *Măsurii și greutateți sau aritmetică socială* [Measures and Weights or Social Arithmetics] (Bucharest: Typographia Națională a lui St. Rassidescu, 1862).

<sup>17</sup> George Potra ed., *Documente privitoare la istoria orașului Bucharest (1594-1821)* [Sources regarding the Town of Bucharest] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1961), pp. 245-246. (hereafter Potra, 1594-1821).

<sup>18</sup> Potra, 1594-1821, pp. 285-286.

<sup>19</sup> George Potra ed., *Documente privitoare la istoria orașului Bucharest (1634-1821)* [Sources regarding the Town of Bucharest] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1982), p. 166. (hereafter Potra, 1634-1800).

were unaware of the few documents which could partially support their thesis about the existence of an early standard fathom. And, as I have already showed, they grounded their assertions about the metric equivalent of the fathom in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century sources and studies. Hence, the statement of Stoicescu that ‘usually, in distinction to Moldavia, one of the two fathoms [of Șerban Cantacuzino or of Constantin Brâncoveanu] was used’<sup>20</sup> is unjustified; the mentions of the measures associated with the two princes appear after their reigns and are part of a process of standardization that can’t be documented in their lifetime.

To the sparse and late evidence about official fathoms one has to add the evidence, some of it provided by the two authors, that plainly contradicts the idea of a fixed fathom easy to convert in metrical units. A fathom, dating from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, was incised on the walls of the church from Marița and measured 2.060 m.<sup>21</sup> In 1697, a fathom was made on the spot in Meriș in order to measure some piece of land.<sup>22</sup>

Local fathoms still existed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1776 a similar fathom is mentioned in the village Moșteni-Mănăilești (Vâlcea county); it is one of the few physical traces of a pre-modern measure as it was incised on the wooden beam of the local church which was built in the same year. In the metric system is 2.010 m long and inside the scratch an inscription reads: “this is the fathom from Craiova, [measuring] eights palms, Bujorianu”.<sup>23</sup> So, it is a fathom made according to a standard sent from Craiova (not from Bucharest), by Bujorianu, most likely the official entrusted with the measurement.<sup>24</sup> Its metric measure is different from the standard established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1.962 m). The interpretation of this piece of evidence raises several problems. As the region in discussion communicated with Bucharest through the *caimacam* of

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<sup>20</sup> Stoicescu, *Cum măsurau strămoșii*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>21</sup> Stoicescu, *Cum măsurau strămoșii*, p. 53. We can ascertain the metric equivalents of pre-modern measures only if their physical remnants exist! The observation is valid for the next preserved fathom.

<sup>22</sup> Stoicescu, *Cum măsurau strămoșii*, p. 48.

<sup>23</sup> Stoicescu, *Cum măsurau strămoșii*, p. 53.

<sup>24</sup> Alternatively, “Bujorianu” could be a local boyar commissioned by princely order to carry out a task, in this case measurement. Almost certainly he was part of the boyar family Bojoreanu which possessed estates in the same county (Vâlcea), see Octav-George Lecca, *Familii boierești române. Istorie și genealogie* [The Romanian Boyar Families. History and Genealogy] (Bucharest: Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române, s.d.), pp. 163-165.

Craiova,<sup>25</sup> it is possible that the fathom was actually sent from Bucharest. So it might have been a 'princely fathom', but in the local consciousness, the origin of the measure was not the capital of the country but the centre of the region. Alternatively, the fathom could have been made on the spot, by an authorized official sent from Craiova. In either situation, the fathom can hardly be considered a central standard measure.

Towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the villagers from Cotești, Mușcel county, complained that the fathom employed by the officials who measured their property was two inches (*degete*) shorter than the fathom incised on the walls of their church, resulting in a significant shrinking of their plots.<sup>26</sup> So, there was a centrally validated fathom, but apparently the villagers rejected it as a violation of their customary measure. In the same period, two wooden laths were made to measure the lands of Tismana moastery and preserved in a register. They represented one palm, one of the fathom of Șerban Cantacuzino, the other of the fathom of Constantin Brâncoveanu; 8 such palms made one fathom. In neither case, the resulting fathom is tantamount to the 19<sup>th</sup> century standard.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, the only physical remnants of pre-modern phantoms differ in size from the standard fathom of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which was assumed to represent a legalization of a pre-existing standard measure. Moreover, the evidence I presented above suggests that at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century there were still local fathoms. When fathoms were delivered

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<sup>25</sup> The *caimacam* appeared in documents in 1761 and replaced the Great Ban of Craiova. In the middle ages (15-16th centuries) the Great Ban enjoyed a significant autonomy and was regarded as second in rank after the prince; by the 18th century his power was much reduced, the establishment of the *caimacam*, as just a princely representative in Oltenia being a sign of this trend. The great *ban* became a member of the divan, residing in Bucharest, whereas the *caimacam* had administrative and judicial tasks in the five counties of Oltenia (Mehedinți, Gorj, Dolj, Vâlcea and Romanați).

<sup>26</sup> Ion Răuțescu, *Mănăstirea Aninoasa din județul Muscel* [Aninoasa Monastery from Muscel County] (Câmpulung-Muscel: Tipografia și Librăria Gh. N. Vlădescu, 1933), pp. 235-236. The document has no date but the author dates it on the basis of diplomatic analysis to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Another argument in favour of this date is that the document reflects the attempt made by the central power to impose its own official measure at the expense of the local one, a process which, as I show below, can be documented no earlier than the last two decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>27</sup> Ileana Leonte, 'Două etaloane: palma lui Șerban Vodă și a lui Constantin Brâncoveanu', [Two Standards: The Palm of Șerban Vodă and that of Constantin Brâncoveanu] *Revista Arhivelor*, I (1958): 217-219.

from outside of the community, it was either perceived as coming from the regional centre (Moșteni-Mănăilești) or was rejected on the grounds that it violates the local customary measure (Cotești). This resilience of the local fathoms is less surprising given that the first consistent attempts by the central power to control the size of the fathom are documented by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. What is the logic of this attempt to standardize measures?

The first attempts at standardization went in parallel with a massive administrative overhauling initiated by Prince Alexandru Ipsilanti (1775-1782) and continued by subsequent princes. The “reform” consisted in the multiplication, specialization, hierarchization and territorial penetration of the administrative apparatus; this went hand in hand with intensive regulation, more and more regulations being issued, covering a widening area of the social life; concomitantly, there was a renewed interest in the storing of information, the number of clerks affiliated to administrative offices increasing and their duties being well specified.<sup>28</sup>

On a deeper level, this new preoccupation with measures has to do with a massive social and economic transformation, the dissolution of the communal property and the individualization of plots. The process entailed attempts by individuals to mark out their own plot, to measure it with correct and just measures and obtain valid title deeds. The inheritance, sale/purchase, renting and pawning of plots were affected by the same phenomenon.<sup>29</sup> Naturally, a growing number of litigations ensued. When in 1815 Prince Ioan Gheorghe Caragea demanded from the princely council to establish a standard fathom, he invoked the proliferation of litigations.<sup>30</sup>

In parallel, there was a visible trend of urban concentration in Bucharest which meant both the disappearance of large tracts of cultivated land (usually orchards) and the growing number of houses;

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<sup>28</sup> For a perspective on these transformations of the Wallachian state, see my PhD thesis Vasile Mihai Olaru, *Writs and Measures. Symbolic Power and the Growth of State Infrastructure in Wallachia, 1740-1800* (PhD diss, Central European University, 2013) and the relevant literature discussed there.

<sup>29</sup> The process is traced with impressive erudition and theoretical sophistication by H.H. Stahl, *Contribuții la studiul satelor devălmașe Românești*, [Contributions to the Study of Communal Romanian Villages] vol. II, and 2nd edition (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1998).

<sup>30</sup> Apud Brăescu, *Măsurătoarea pământului*, p. 5.

the consequence of this trend was the raise of the prices of real estate. Naturally, this development could only bring a preoccupation with exact and reliable measurement of the land plots.<sup>31</sup> It is not surprising that the first documents speaking of a princely fathom are from Bucharest and have to do with transactions of real estate. As taxation became the main preoccupation of the Phanariot princes, princely stamped fathoms were used where the taxes were assessed per acreage. Finally, in the last decade studied here, an official fathom is mentioned in matters of civic constructions and prohibitions to infringe on the public roads.

Socio-economic transformations and administrative reforms demanded a more stable metrological system and triggered two responses from the principedom. One was to legalize an official measure in the legal texts enacted from 1780 on. The other was to impose official measures bearing the official stamp in the country for various metrological operations (delimitation of boundaries, sales, and litigations). The two undertakings did not correspond to different periods, but were interwoven and illustrated continuous attempts by the central power to adapt to developments in economy and society.

The first legal text to include stipulations about standard fathom was The Legal Register (*Pravilniceasca condică*, 1780); it was followed by The Law of Caragea (*Legiuirea lui Caragea*, 1818) and The Organic regulation (*Regulamentul organic*, 1831). The Legal register, printed in 1780, stipulated that all land measurements are to be done with the "old" fathom but in the act describing the boundary the measurement was to be expressed in 'present day fathom' (*stînjenul de acum*)<sup>32</sup>; it is the first mention of an attempt to establish a single, standard length measure throughout the country; alas, which fathom was the new one, is not indicated. Evidence which I will discuss below suggests that actually two fathoms were established now as standards, of Șerban Cantacuzino and Constantin Brâncoveanu.<sup>33</sup> From now on it is legitimate to talk of

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<sup>31</sup> Potra, 1634-1800, 'Introduction', p. 9. For the economic and demographic development of Bucharest at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries see Constantin C. Giurescu, *Istoria Bucureștilor*, [History of Bucharest] 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. (Bucharest: Editura Vremea, 2009), pp. 223-245.

<sup>32</sup> *Pravilniceasca condică* [The Legal Register], Editura Colectivul pentru vechiul drept românesc al Academiei R.P.R. (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Romîne, 1957), p. 140.

<sup>33</sup> Apparently both fathoms had had old and new variants, to which the text of the Legal register refers. For instance, in 1797 a tract of land in Bucharest is measured

standard fathom(s) which the central power decreed and tried to implement.

Yet the duality of the standard only caused other problems. Hence, in 1815, Prince Ioan Caragea demanded the boyars of the princely council to investigate and chose between the fathom of Șerban Cantacuzino and that of Constantin Brâncoveanu, 'because many litigations occur because of the fathom used to measure the estates'; significantly, he also demanded a solution 'to preserve the measure so as to be always trusted and without doubt'.<sup>34</sup> For the first time in the history of Wallachia, the idea that a measure was to be established and then preserved as a standard was formulated.

In 1818, the Law of Caragea incorporated this choice of the princely councillors. Chapter 3, ruled that all properties have to be delimited from the surrounding properties. The plots were to be measured by the fathom mentioned in the title deeds, namely that of Constantin Brâncoveanu or Șerban Cantacuzino; if the acts did not mention explicitly which fathom was used previously, it was to be measured with the fathom of Șerban Cantacuzino.<sup>35</sup> And the Law of Caragea adds: '[h]enceforth in the acts of boundary settlements and the contracts of sales of estates the fathom of Șerban Vodă is to be mentioned.'<sup>36</sup> Thus, the fathom of Șerban Vodă Cantacuzino was declared the official one and all measurements of plots had to be expressed in this fathom.

The Organic Regulation from 1831 is much more succinct on the subject of the weights and measure. Only one paragraph touches on the measurement of land plots, in the section dedicated to the 'reciprocal rights and obligations between owner and villager'.

The customary measure in the country is the acre [*pogonul*] which is 24 poles [*prăjini*] long and six poles wide, each pole measuring three princely fathoms; the fathom of Șerban Vodă being considered established measure.<sup>37</sup>

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'both with the old and the new fathom of Brâncoveanu' (*cu stânjănul Brâncoveanului, atât cel vechiul cât și cel nou*), Potra, 1594-1821, p. 610.

<sup>34</sup> Vasile Alexandrescu Urechia, *Istoria Românilor*, [The History of Romanians], vol. X, part B (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice Carol Göbl, 1902), pp. 203-204.

<sup>35</sup> *Legiurea Caragea* [The Law of Caragea], ed. Aurel C. Sava, (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Romîne, 1955), p. 18.

<sup>36</sup> *Legiurea Caragea*, p. 43.

<sup>37</sup> *Regulamentele organice ale Valahiei și Moldovei* [The Organic Regulations of Wallachia and Moldavia], eds. Paul Negulescu - George Alexianu (Bucharest: Întreprinderile "Eminescu" S.A., 1944), p. 38.

What is interesting is the tone of the text. If in the previous legal texts the standard measure was something to be achieved and implemented at the expense of other fathoms, now, the fathom of Șerban Vodă is simply considered the standard length measure, without references to other fathoms. It is simply considered 'established measure' (*măsură statornicită*).

According to the new legislation on the fathom, the principedom tried to impose the new measure in concrete measurements. Standard fathoms were not distributed at once throughout the country, as it will happen after 1831, but delivered on an ad-hoc basis. The domain in which official fathoms are best documented – and probably most needed – was that of land measurement, either in case of adjudication of litigations or of real estate transactions. The official measure was demanded either by local officials or by one of the parties involved in a litigation or transaction. The 'princely' fathoms authorized by the central power and bearing signs of this validation – the sigils of the principedom impressed on metal measures or hanging like a seal – were sent with princely officials who took active part in the operations of measurement. Hence already in 1777 and 1779 princely sealed fathoms were brought from Bucharest by princely officials who had to adjudicate litigations over land boundaries.<sup>38</sup>

In 1780 two boyars – together with several merchants, priests and 'town elders' – measured the land from Craiova belonging to the bishopric of Râmnic 'with the sealed fathom sent from Bucharest, which is called the fathom of the late Constantin Vodă Brâncoveanu'.<sup>39</sup> More interestingly, in 1780 a plot of Radu Vodă monastery is measured again 'with the fathom of the late Prince Constantin Vodă Brâncoveanu which was used during his reign when the plot was measured, as the title deed [from 1696] of the monastery proves'.<sup>40</sup> Apparently, the document testifies to the existence of the fathom of Constantin Brâncoveanu at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Yet, the title deed from 1696 contains no mention of an official fathom.<sup>41</sup> The original measurement was done in the reign

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<sup>38</sup> *Acte Judiciare din Țara Românească 1775-1781* [Judicial Documents from Wallachia 1775-1781], eds. Gheorghe Cronț et al. (Bucharest: Editura Academiei R.S.R., 1973), pp. 345-347, pp. 444-445, pp. 716-717.

<sup>39</sup> 'Documente de proprietate ale Episcopiei Râmnicului asupra caselor Bănești din Craiova' [Documents Attesting the Ownership of the Houses of *Bănie* by the Râmnic Bishopric], *Arhiva Olteniei* VI (1927): 53.

<sup>40</sup> Potra, 1634-1800, p. 282.

<sup>41</sup> Potra, 1634-1800, pp. 112-113.

of Constantin Brâncoveanu and this is probably the origin of an invented tradition of a standard fathom of this prince, related to the efforts of standardization already under way.

Standard measures are required not only for settling boundary disputes but also for putting land transactions on a firmer footing. After 1780 the references to official measure multiply, in the form of the fathom of Șerban Cantacuzino or of Constantin Brâncoveanu. It is obvious from several documents that the two measures were associated with various neighbourhoods, which usually belonged to one landlord (monastery, boyar, prince) who employed one sort of measure to delimit the property. For example, the land sold and rented by Maria Bălăceanca or her foster son in the Sfântul Dimitrie neighbourhood, in 1793, 1796 and 1798 respectively, was measured with the 'fathom of Șerban Vodă'.<sup>42</sup> A property rented out by Colțea monastery to a townsman in 1799 was measured with the same fathom.<sup>43</sup> Conversely, similar transactions in Tîrgul Cucului were done with the fathom of Constantin Brâncoveanu in 1797, and 1802.<sup>44</sup> In the last decade investigated here, the fathom of Șerban Cantacuzino seems to have gained pre-eminence in the transactions in Bucharest, probably as a consequence of being declared the official fathom in the Law of Caragea (1818).<sup>45</sup>

Who had the initiative of asking an official fathom? Sometimes the officials demanded it. Hence, in 1793 the *Caimacam* of Craiova requested an official central *stânjen* and was given a positive response (October 22, 1793) announced the delivery of two ells, "halves of poles", one after the *stânjen* of the prince Constantin Brâncoveanu, the other after the *stânjen* of the prince Șerban Cantacuzino. Both of the two

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<sup>42</sup> Potra, 1594-1821, p. 575; pp. 599-600, p. 614. In 1805, the Zimnicile and Fântânele estates (Teleorman county) of Princess Safta Ipsilante, the wife of the prince Constantin Ipsilanti, were measured with 'the fathom of the defunct Prince Șerban Vodă Cantacuzino', Urechia, *Istoria Românilor*, vol. VIII (Bucharest: Tipografia și Fonderia Thoma Basilescu, 1897), pp. 575-580, 581-586.

<sup>43</sup> Ion Ionașcu, *Documente bucureștene privitoare la proprietățile mănăstirii Colțea* [Documents from Bucharest regarding the properties of Colțea Monastery] (Bucharest: Fundațiile Regele Carol I, 1945), pp. 270-271.

<sup>44</sup> Potra, 1594-1821, p. 610, p. 611, pp. 611-612, pp. 634-635.

<sup>45</sup> Potra ed., *Documente privitoare la istoria orașului Bucharest (1800-1848)* Documents concerning the History of Bucharest (1800-1848) (Bucharest: Editura Republicii Socialiste România, 1975), p. 191; pp. 213-215; pp. 318-319 (hereafter, Potra, 1800-1848).



measuring sticks were authenticated by the *vel vornic* and the *vel logofăt* <sup>46</sup> and sealed with princely seals at the both ends.<sup>47</sup>

Equally, the official fathom is requested by the subjects, usually by boyars who want to protect their investments from subsequent litigations. In 1779, the great boyar Manolache Brâncoveanu asked to have a tract of land purchased in Bucharest, in the Popescului neighbourhood (*mahalaua Popescului*) measured with the princely fathom so as to avoid „dispute with the neighbours”.<sup>48</sup> For instance in 1793 Ioan, the son of *stolnic* Gheorghe Cernovodeanu, auctions his estate Prejba from Teleorman county. The deal is struck with the *vel spătar*, Ianache Văcărescu, the two agreeing to a price of 40 taller per fathom. Yet the buyer does not trust that the acreage of the estate – 1200 fathoms – as showed by the old acts of ownership (*sineturile vechi*) is correct. So, the organizer of the auction, the grandmaster of the merchants’ guild, asks from the central authorities to send an authorized fathom with which the estate was to be measured. In his resolution (May 5, 1793), the prince announces the delivery of “the princely fathom”.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, in 1816, the boyar Nicolae Glogoveanu addresses a petition in which he demands to have his estate Flocești ‘delimited with the fathom of the deceased Constantin-Vodă Brâncoveanu’.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Customarily, the *vel logofăt* had judicial competence in settling property disputes, Valentin Al. Georgescu - Ovid Sachelarie, *Judecata domnească în Țara Românească și Moldova (1611-1831), Partea I. Organizarea judecătorească, vol. II (1740-1831)* [The Princely Justice in Wallachia and Moldavia (1611-1831). Part 1. The Judicial Organization, vol. 2 (1740-1831)] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1982), p. 134. The *vel vornic* received attributions in identical matter towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when his general judicial competence was reduced in favour of the *ispravnici* and the judicial departments, Georgescu - Sachelarie, *Judecata domnească*, part 1/vol. 2, p. 128.

<sup>47</sup> Urechia, *Istoria Românilor*, vol. V (Bucharest: Tipografia si Fonderia de Litere Thoma Basilescu, 1893), p. 187. Urechia mentions another delivery of an official *stânjen* in October 22, 1793, but he does not publish the document, Urechia, vol. VI, p. 632.

<sup>48</sup> Potra, 1634-1800, pp. 272-273.

<sup>49</sup> Urechia, *Istoria Românilor*, vol. VI (Bucharest: Lito-Tipografia Carol Göbl, 1893), pp. 484-85.

<sup>50</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Situația agrară, economică și socială a Olteniei în epoca lui Tudor Vladimirescu. Documente contemporane* [The Agrarian, Economic, and Social Situation of Oltenia in the Age of Tudor Vladimirescu. Contemporary Sources] (Bucharest: Editura Ministerului de Agricultură, 1915), p. 77.

A more interventionist state – as the Wallachia state became during the 18<sup>th</sup> century – coupled with an agrarian economy could not but favour the resort to standard measures. In June 5, 1784 the regulation of farming out the tobacco tax (*tutunărit*) and the letters of authorization rule that the tax-farmer has to proceed “according to the custom” and “to measure the acres with the sealed fathom which is given from the treasury”; the tax is 4 taller per acre (*pogon*) and an extra fee of 80 per individual.<sup>51</sup> In 1811 the wording of such letters is even more explicit: the tobacco plots were to be measures “with the fathom of eight princely palms which would be given from the Treasury stamped”.<sup>52</sup> The same rule applied for the assessment of the wine tax of the foreigners (*pogonăritul străinilor*).<sup>53</sup>

Finally, during the 1820s a new fathom appears in documents: the “timber fathom” (*stânjenul cherestelii*); its name resulted most probably from the measuring of the wooden planks used to pave the main streets in Bucharest, but was most likely the fathom of Șerban Cantacuzino. However, in documents is mentioned in contexts in which the construction rules were infringed. Hence, according to the princely regulations the road “has always to be 4 fathoms wide, measured with the timber fathom” and nobody has the right to infringe this width ‘regardless of the rank’ (*oricine de orice treapta va fi*).<sup>54</sup> The last mention is of utmost importance. Although it was understood that the standard fathom was valid for everybody, this is the first explicit proclamation of the equality in front of the fathom.

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<sup>51</sup> Urechia, *Istoria Românilor*, vol. I (Bucharest: Lito-Tipografia Carol Göbl, 1891), p. 412. An identical letter was issued on July 9, 1785. The same methods of assessment of *tutunărit* are established in 1786 and 1787, Urechia, *Istoria Românilor*, vol. III (Bucharest: Tipografia “Gutenberg” Joseph Göbl, 1892), pp. 630 and 82 and in 1816, Urechia, *Istoria Românilor*, vol. X, part B (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice Carol Göbl, 1902), pp. 140-151.

<sup>52</sup> Urechia, *Istoria Românilor*, vol. XI, (Bucharest: Tipografia și Fonderia de Litere Thoma Basilescu, 1900), pp. 566-568.

<sup>53</sup> Urechia, *Istoria Românilor*, vol. X, part B, p. 151.

<sup>54</sup> Potra, 1800-1848, pp. 290-292; pp. 294-297. The supposition that the timber fathom was the same with the fathom of Șerban Cantacuzino is supported by the mentioning of a princely fathom used to assess the price of the planks for the pavement of the road in Bucharest in 1823, Potra, 1800-1848, pp. 121-122.

### **Standardization and state making.**

Where to situate this process of metrological standardization? How to interpret it? And above everything, what was its impact on the mode and capacity of rule and on the way the state was imagined and perceived?

The increasing control of the fathom documented especially from the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century indicates the transition towards a modern form of political power. The standard measures were part of the wider process of standardization inherent in the modernization of the Wallachian state. As students of organizations have showed, the activity of bureaucracies is facilitated if their activity and their instruments of work are standardized. Not only can they process more information but also the amount of information - that is of physical work - which they process is reduced by the reduction of "variance of inputs, outputs, activities, and behaviour".<sup>55</sup>

To return to our case, the standardization of the fathom fulfils the same function of facilitating the working of the Wallachian judges. As the litigations over land - with the inherent problems of measurement - multiplied, the using of local fathoms became inefficient; not only that the adjudication had to be preceded by measurement, but the expression of land surfaces in the documents pertaining to litigation was uncertain unless expressed in the standard fathom. In this sense we have to read the repeated attempts by the central power to impose a standard fathom, more ambiguous in 1780 but then more clearly in 1817 and 1831. Hence, the standardization of an instrument favoured the standardization of the incoming and outgoing information handled by the judicial instances. Of course, this does not amount to a wholesale bureaucratisation of the Wallachian state apparatus, but to a fraction of its activity and an early stage of this process, a stage in which the central power had to struggle with the local custom on which the local fathom was based. The change is nevertheless significant.

Following Witold Kula's insight I referred to at the beginning of this paper, I also claim that the authority which arbitrated metrological disputes gained prestige. But how did this happen? I read prestige here

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<sup>55</sup> Jane E. Fountain, *Building the Virtual State. Information Technology and Institutional Change* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2001), p. 54; James R. Beniger, *The Control Revolution. Technological and Economic Origins of the Information Society* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 15.

as 'symbolic power', a notion I borrow from Mara Loveman to denote the capacity to make something appear natural and not a product of political decision or political struggle; when a state possesses 'symbolic power', its actions and prerogatives in a certain area of the social reality are legitimate, are not questioned anymore and go without saying, at the same time denying other competing claims.<sup>56</sup> This brings back Pierre Bourdieu's idea that the state is not only an organization, but also an authorized and therefore legitimate perspective upon social reality. By enacting a single legitimate fathom, the state asserts its monopoly in the field of measurements. Yet, in this process of monopolization, the state itself is constructed.

The measurements made by princely officials armed with the princely sealed fathom were all instances in which the subjects encountered the "state" embodied in the official, universal measure imposed by an authorized official. The implementation of the standard fathom on an estate is not just an illustration of the state action; it is a performance which actually constitutes the state, both as subjective perception and objective representation. As the princely official, wearing princely uniform<sup>57</sup>, accompanied by other lesser officials or a small armed retinue, endowed with a princely letter of authorization, comes on an estate carrying a princely fathom which he uses to settle a land dispute, he proclaims the latter as the official and legitimate measure in land matters. By the manipulation of the official and universal (measure), he enacts the state at local level.

This enactment of the state has three interrelated dimensions. First, it asserts the power of the officials by invoking the universal, that is the impersonal and objective, which the officials control and manipulate. Secondly, this can be done only in the name of an entity which is presumed to have the same attributes. "Disinterested" officials can impose standard that is, neutral, measures only if they speak and act on behalf of an entity which is thought of as equally neutral and detached from sectional interests and having a certain "thingness", an objective existence. By such actions, the state is brought into the daily life of the subjects and constituted as legitimate power. Thirdly, such metrological

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<sup>56</sup> Mara Loveman, 'The Modern State and the Primitive Accumulation of Symbolic Power' *American Journal of Sociology*, 110/6 (May 2005):1651-1683.

<sup>57</sup> Such a uniform is mentioned in 1801, when the peasants from Slăvești, Vlașca county, beat a princely agent and tore his uniform received from the principedom (*mondîrul ce i s-au dat de la domnie*), Urechia, *Istoria Românilor*, vol. VIII, p. 217.

practices institute dyadic relations - centre-periphery, central-local, state-subjects, official-unofficial, legitimate-illegitimate etc. - which reify the state and constitute its "others".

It is important to keep in mind that the effect of these enactments is not automatic; people don't fall immediately or obligatorily in the "trap" of the 'idea of the state', but only through a historical process. It would be very difficult to measure this transformation and it was not the aim of this paper. Nonetheless, a measure of the success of this accumulation of symbolic power is the request of the princely fathom by local officials or by parties in transactions or litigations. The former acknowledge the need of a standard measure for a legitimate action; the latter accept the right of the state to impose an official fathom. This is the sense in which the Wallachian state was transformed, a transformation which the habitual concentration of historians on corruption and lack of administrative fine tuning obscured.

**Lidia Gross, *Bresle și confrerii sau despre pietatea urbană în Transilvania medievală (secolele XIV-XVI)*, Cluj-Napoca, Argonaut, 2014, 266 p., ISBN 978-973-190-502-8**

Following the two editions of the book *Confreriile medievale în Transilvania (secolele XIV-XVI)* ["Medieval confraternities in Transylvania (14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> c.)"] and also of several studies regarding the larger theme of the devotional phenomenon for the same time and space context, Lidia Gross brings to the historiographical debate the results of six different researches, reunited into a dense volume. Put under the sign of urban life, a research domain still exotic for the Romanian historical writing, the present work offers several insights on how piety functioned within medieval society. Overall, she aims to outline the general framework of Transylvanian townspeople – men or women, privileged or not – in which their religious life found its most appropriate and strong expression in connexion with the group they were part of, but also with the demands of the era. On the other hand, the six studies can be categorized either according to the sources put under investigation or pursuing the concepts articulated on the basis of their highly critical survey.

The studies consist of extensive analysis, most of them revolving around a single historical document, which was either recovered directly from archives or was known from a prior critical edition. Thus, the volume brings to light the unpublished testament and funeral expenses of Thomas Jo (castellan of Ieciu / Wetsch / Marosvécs castle who died at Bistrița / Bistriz / Beszterce in 1531 and was buried in the parish church) and fragments of the registry belonging to the Confraternity of the Rosary from Bistrița (which records the period 1525-1544). Where documents were known from previous editions, the information was processed in the form of lists or tables – the testamentary legatees of Ursula Meister Paulin from Bistrița, the members of the above mentioned confraternity and of the ones of Saint John's Confraternity in Sibiu (Hermannstadt, Nagyszeben), with the role of emphasizing quantitative aspects, namely the impact these institutions had among individuals.

Therefore, the first category includes four studies discussing two types of historical sources – the individual testament and the registry of a well determined organization – each of them serving the definition of the spiritual profile of the medieval townspeople. In approaching the two testaments, Lidia Gross did not applied the same research strategy, but rather a complementary analysis intended to highlight that this type of historical document represents "ways for expression and exercise of piety". Thus, despite the fact that medieval testaments generally followed the same

pattern, in the case of Ursula Meister Paulin the legatees and the possessions they received were carefully analysed, while for Thomas Jo's was emphasized his attempt to ensuring a "good death" throughout his specific legacies. In both cases, the information gathered from testaments was highly contextualized and details were added for a more complete point of view. The approach of these two testaments is even more valuable due to the double perspective upon the exercise of piety in the urban society – woman vs. man, townsman vs. nobleman, family vs. celibacy. Although a justly disavowed matter among historians – republishing already edited documents – one might ask if it would not have been useful, with this occasion, a textual resumption of the testament of Ursula Meister Paulin, since the study itself wished to be "a detailed examination in order to highlight and to return its distinctive feature in relation to other documents of the same type".

Starting from two confraternal registries, Lidia Gross reconstructs the history of the two associations, the Confraternity of the Rosary from Bistrița, developed within the Dominican convent, and the Saint John Confraternity from Sibiu, started by the local shoemaker journeymen. The matters regarding to the establishment, duration, members and the religious life sustained by the two institutions were emphasized through a rigorous argumentative structure. Furthermore, Gross offered thorough documented contextualization and also comparisons with similar examples from several German cities in order to create a more coherent demonstration. One might notice here too, the complementary value of both researches – if one refers to a clerical confraternity founded within a larger European pattern, the other is individualised by the wide social origin of its members (952 only for the period 1484-1508), therefore exceeding the borders of a single craft and even of a single town. This gives to the association from Sibiu the profile of a lay devotional confraternity that seems to have originated in a handicraft fraternity of the shoemaker journeymen, an associative form discussed in a separate study of the present work.

The second category consists of two studies which relate to a problem still "thorny" in the European historiography, the professional confraternity, both from the perspective of masters reunited into a guild and also of journeymen grouped into a fraternity, this type of association representing "the union – and not the fusion – between economy and religion". Following the example of the German type of handicraft confraternities, Lidia Gross examined to what extent the Transylvanian corporations resonate with this paradigm. The complex relationship between corporation and confraternity within the same profession, considered Gross, is also suggested by the diplomatic language used within

the official guild documents, which is why she undertook a thorough investigation of this type of historical source from Cluj (Klausenburg, Kolozsvár), Sibiu, Braşov (Kronstadt, Brassó) and partially Bistriţa. Without forcing the conclusions, but grounding her assessments on extremely limited information provided by the sources, in some cases only the presence of the term *confraternitas* within guild statutes, such as the weaver's Confraternity of the Holy Spirit in Cluj, Lidia Gross considers that during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries the handicraft confraternities are more detectable in Cluj, while in Sibiu and Braşov guilds had a more prominent role in organizing the religious life for the community of masters. The idea that professional confraternities were forerunners for the Transylvanian urban craft guilds is formulated with high caution, an entirely present-day point of view for this geographic area, but a known and validated theory within the Western historiography. With a similar approach was managed the issue of journeymen's fraternities in Transylvania, scarcely mentioned by historical sources. Most of them were identified in Braşov, namely five, while at Sibiu, Cluj and Saschiz (Keisd, Szászkézdvéra) was traced only a single association for each town. Unlike confraternities developed within craft guilds, the main aim of this type of association was to implement several social and religious behaviour standards, especially against immoralities that could corrupt the youngest considered to be an unstable social and professional category of the medieval town.

To conclude, Lidia Gross's present work consists of detailed studies referring to well-defined segments of urban laity from Transylvania – women, masters, journeymen and so forth. In other words, if the study of different associative forms captured a series of religious ideals common to all members, the testaments that were examined created a favourable background about the extent to which these ideals could have been achieved or not by each individual. A noteworthy feature of this volume is represented by the publishing of several unedited historical documents, one of them discovered just recently. Very useful are the English and German abstracts and, especially, the final name and place index. Unfortunately, one cannot fail to notice some discrepancies and inconsistencies among the six studies, especially text editing problems. Even so, the overall value is not diminished, each study making an important contribution not only to the history of medieval Transylvania, but to the entire associative phenomenon – devotional and/or professional – specific to the European urban world of this time.

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**Carlo Baja Guarienti, *Il bandito e il governatore. Domenico d'Amorotto e Francesco Guicciardini nell'età delle guerre d'Italia*, Viella, 2014, 235 p., ISBN 978-88-6728-208-1**

The work of the young researcher Carlo Baja Guarienti, published in 2014, represents the outcome of his doctoral research, finished seven years ago. Guarienti is currently a professor of Modern History at the Department of Humanist Studies from Ferrara University. This is the institution where he obtained his BA in Classical Studies and later completed his PhD in models, languages and traditions in Western culture. The PhD thesis, *Francesco Guicciardini e il bandito Amorotto. Poteri e culture in conflitto nella Reggio del Cinquecento*, as well as the articles and studies published in scientific journals in recent years, reveal Guarienti's deep knowledge of his subject matter, based on both successive accumulations and refined understanding of this area of investigation.

After half a millennium, two different characters are put face to face in a new confrontation. The context is traced from the beginning, the wars between Guelph's and Ghibelline's, the local conflicts from the Reggio area, given the reconfiguration of political arena as a result of the appearance of new protagonists, new families. The character around which the book is built, Domenico da Bretti, known to the contemporaries and to the subsequent traditions as Domenico D'Amorotto is introduced in the second chapter of the book, through first sources that mentioned him: the writings of Panciroli and Giambattista Bebi, created several decades after the passing of the so called "bandit". These sources arise in the author's mind a defining issue for the way he builds his entire work: how much of the data on the biography of Domenico represents historical truth and how much of the construction is legendary? Trying to give a convincing answer, the next sequences of the book will focus on the reconstruction of the character's life, gathering information from a variety of sources, assembled in a biographical puzzle that is then compared with the legends surrounding him.

If formally the book includes six chapters and an introduction, in terms of analysis it is divided into two parts. The first one (chapters 1-5) captures Domenico's actions in relation to different events and individuals involved in the conflicts that occurred in Italy at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The second part, which comprises the last chapter, represents an analysis of the manner in which the image and the story of Domenico evolves and it is transformed in subsequent periods, through mythicization and attempts to fit him into the typology of the bandit.

Domenico and his early life are analyzed in connection to his family and his place of origin, a mountainous region, located away from the town

and characterized by dispersed houses, elements likely to influence relations with the authorities, with the law and the way it is applied. The author draws attention to the concepts of center and periphery, not only as elements of spatiality, but also as cultural realities. The fact is relevant, because it explains the human behaviors, including Domenico's actions. As anticipated, the relationship with the authorities is also a key theme, as the very title suggests. The typology within which Domenico's existence is framed, the "bandit", is defined by reference to the balance of power. This way it is introduced a second character, Francesco Guicciardini, seen here in his position of political authority, governor of the province of Reggio. There are also illustrated events that took place before Guicciardini moved to this area, events which, in one way or another, led to his appointment as governor: his political experience, along with specificities of his political thought, his governance profile, his expectations and intuitions, his complaints and conflicts and events in which he got involved, as well as events from his private life. However, it should be noted that Guicciardini appears rather in the background, being given a low profile. All this information is relevant in as much as it helps shaping the context within which Domenico acts and to complete an objective characterization, including Guicciardini's perspective and perception of the relationship between the two.

But we must not forget the third actor, significant both for the action and for the book: the community. The community's reaction is likely to influence the course of events; the support or disapproval of the community tips the balances; the bandit or the outlaw himself cannot exist without reference to a community from which he tries to escape, without its support, without a good cause to fight for, without the perpetuation through legends, folk stories and collective myths. Therefore, in most cases the analysis is accompanied by an interpretation on a symbolical level and an interpretation of the popular perception.

In addition, the author always makes the connection between events or local developments and what is happening in other areas, in the Italian space or Europe, providing a good contextualization. Beyond presenting the facts the way they were stated by the sources, the evidence is completed in an integrative approach, with interpretations that includes the particularities of the geographical area, the economic characteristics, perceptions and sensibilities of the era. Last, but not least, there is interrogated a wide variety of sources and the information obtained is corroborated to discern not only the manner in which the characters act, but also what they think about these actions, how they understand the events, how aware of what is happening they are. While investigating chronicles

and correspondences that transcribe speeches or direct dialogues, the author highlights their limits and the potential concerns: possible distortions in the transition from oral to the written form, the intervention of subjectivity, the false impression of extreme precision and accuracy. The effort in collecting sources (from archives of Bologna, Modena and Reggio Emilia and other major libraries in the region) is matched by the effort required by the necessary methodology to approach very different types of sources, produced by religious corporations or communities and urban councils, narrative sources consulted in manuscript or printed editions.

Thematically, Guarienti's book brings clarification regarding political strategies, the relationship between politics and justice, the way families and factions used to act, aggregation and social dynamics in Italy during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Emphasis is placed on the attempts made in order to seize power, to increase the prestige and honor. The manifestations of violence are everywhere: plots, murders, mutilations-some of them used as demonstrative, exemplary actions. As expected, different perceptions of power have a central role, whether coming from those who hold it, those who challenge it or those on which it is exercised: central and local authorities, secular and ecclesiastical authorities, families, communities, etc. In fact, this is an investigation which gives contours to early modern society. Thus, the intention of the authors of micro-stories - that of recreating through the story of an individual an entire era - is easily discernible.

The work is worthwhile reading also because it can provide an example of approaching a subject of local history, a model of decentering history, to which some contemporary historiography currents tend. By comparison with what Natalie Zemon Davis claimed in her speech at the Holberg Prize Symposium in 2010,<sup>1</sup> Carlo Baja Guarienti's investigation falls among the ones assuming a decentralizing approach. The subject of banditry is uncommon, the geographical space is treated as a symbolic space, two very different characters are brought together, the Italian wars disclose another face, Guicciardini's profile and the sources created by him are analyzed in different terms, other than the historiographical perspective.

In conclusion, even if sometimes the reading is hampered by complicated constructions of long sentences, by the development of the action itself and the multitude of analytical levels followed parallel or successively, *Il bandito e il governatore* offers an exemplary approach of a slightly unusual topic. The vision is integrative when it comes to the

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<sup>1</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Doing Decentered History. Decentering History: Local Stories and Cultural Crossings in a Global World', *History and Theory*, 50 (2010): 188-202.

sources, the themes, perspectives and even historical genres, combining the biography and micro-history with historiography and cultural history.

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*Toleranță, coexistență, antagonism Percepții ale diversității religioase în Transilvania, între Reformă și Iluminism* (eds.)  
Joachim Bahlcke and Konrad Gündisch, Editura Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2013, 393 p., ISBN 978-606-543-353-3

The book edited by Joachim Bahlcke and Konrad Gündisch represents the result of a conference held in Stuttgart in 2008. Several scholars from Germany, Hungary and Romania gathered together in order to speak about what the organizers of the conference called "Toleranz - Koexistenz - Antagonismus. Wahrnehmungen religiöser Vielfalt in Siebenbürgen zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung." As the title suggests, three centuries of the Transylvanian past are considered, the "specific" case concerning the topic of identities. Nonetheless, as the contents disclose, the situation of non-Christian groups is not addressed by this book. Therefore, in my view, it would have been more appropriate that at least the title should reflect this situation, by indicating that the book would be focusing on "Confessional diversity" (konfessionelle Vielfalt/diversitate confesională), as for instance, the Jews (the community of Alba) do not represent the explicit theme of any of the articles.

The introduction I would name it "atypical" for the German historiography: no focus on terms, "Begriffe", as tolerance, coexistence and antagonism are seen as only terminology proposals and not "as terms with a high capacity of delimitation" (Introduction, p. 9). The contents of the articles are not resumed in advance. The article of Joachim Bahlcke, (*Diversitatea religioasă în Europa Centrală și de Sud-Est în Evul Mediu și în epoca premodernă. Cauze, efecte, percepții*" pp. 11-27) refers to "methodology and theoretical traps" and discusses some evolutions in Central Europe, without a specific focus on Transylvania. Gerald Volkmer's article is a generous presentation of the context in which Transylvanian confessional diversity was born ("*Premisele politice și cadrul juridic al diversității religioase în Transilvania între Reformă și Iluminism*" pp. 28-54).

Relying on hitherto historiography results, but especially on Saxon and German literature, the author clearly shows that after the Battle of Mohács the political situation in the Principality, as well as the complex international context (Habsburgs and Ottomans) favored confessional diversity. The analysis is carried out in a chronological and very expressive manner, the author answering several questions: what was the Transylvanian organization like before the fall of the Hungarian Kingdom, how it developed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, what was the role of the diets and princes, when emerged the crystallization of the codes which allowed confessional diversity: he beautifully answers in the end, “the intensive mutual connections between politics and law on the one side and religion on the other side, rather represented the rule than the exception in Central Europe during the confessional age, even if these crossings seem to be very tenacious in Transylvania” (p. 54). The text is concise and useful for a better understanding of Transylvanian “confessional diversity”; nevertheless it does not address the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as the title suggests. Detlef Haberland (*Descreri de călătorie despre Transilvania în epoca premodernă. Implicații pentru istoria genului și a receptării în ceea ce privește reprezentarea și oglindirea religiei și a bisericii* pp. 55-68) investigates trip descriptions, pointing out the importance of this specific type of source. After a short description which addresses the Transylvanian situation in rather general terms, the author concludes that the texts cannot bring a unique interpretation, as it highly depends on political circumstances, education and knowledge of the author. This suggestion might also be taken into consideration by other historians working on mentalities in (Early) Modern Transylvania. The study of Edit Szegedi (*Religie și politică în jurnalele clujene din secolele al XVI și al XVII-lea*, pp. 69-84) intends to answer the following question: whether and how was perceived the connection between politics and confession in Cluj by the contemporaries? A theological “Sonderweg”? Edit Szegedi shortly presents the “tolerance” in Cluj with the local anti-trinitarianism and the three main sources of her article: the journals of Segesvári, Linczigh and Szakál, i.e. the period between the rule of Gabriel Báthory and the advent of the Habsburgs in Transylvania. She makes several noteworthy observations, such as the confessional identity of Segesvári, the “town voice” of Linczigh or the messianic expectations of Szakál. Nonetheless, she concludes that from the Cluj journals, one may not understand that a theological orientation brought about a unique political attitude. Another scholar from Cluj, Enikő Rűsz-Fogarasi (*Cadrul juridic al vieții religioase în Principatul Transilvaniei*, pp. 85-96) describes the role of the diets and princes in confessional matters until the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is a general view on all confessional groups

including Jews! She skillfully introduces to the reader some key terms very often used, such as confessional freedom, *religio recepta* or tolerance as laws of the country, by depicting a quite chronological evolution. However, the process of “confessionalization” needs a more nuanced approach, in order to construct or deconstruct its usage for Transylvania. Another reputed scholar from Cluj, Maria Crăciun (*Arta sacrală ca izvor istoric și ca indicator al diversității confesionale a Transilvaniei în secolul al XVII-lea*, pp. 97-124) considers art as an indicator of confessional identity. By starting her analysis from the pulpit of Cisnădioara, the author claims that the research of Protestant art at the periphery (such as Transylvania) contributes to a better understanding of Lutheran culture in Europe. Indeed, the author convincingly demonstrates that the visual representations of the seventeenth century were meant to disseminate specific Lutheran teachings, that they had a pedagogical aim, as certain motives were quite often represented (such as the Evangelists and the Eucharist). As contemporary authors suggested, art was an indicator of confessional identity, above all in the difficult context of defense against Cryptocalvinism during the second half of the 17th century. Still dealing with the Reformation, Alexandru Ciocîltan (*Iradierea Reformei transilvane în Țara Românească preponderent ortodoxă*, pp. 125-143) presents the case of Wallachia, with a main focus on the Saxon communities from Cîmpulung. Although the scarcity of sources may suggest that a reconstruction of the early phase would be quite problematic, the author succeeds to present the peculiarity of a late Reformation and the final success of the Franciscan mission eighty years later after the spread of the Reformation in Cîmpulung. Tamás Szócs’s article (*Curențe religioase reflectate în cărțile germane de cântări bisericești din Transilvania dintre secolele al XVI-lea și al XVIII-lea*, pp. 144-163) addresses German song books. The author claims that these books were a marker of identity; they had a catechetical and educative role. Szócs presents plenty of books bearing the imprint of various influences that the Moravian Brothers and Lutherans edited in Brașov and Sibiu and even in Bistrița. He demonstrates that they were in connection with abroad song books (from the Empire), although the Medieval Latin texts survived until the mid of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Robert Born (*Coexistența etniilor și a confesiunilor din Transilvania, reprezentată în cărțile de costume și în vedutele urbane din secolul al XVII-lea până în secolul al XIX-lea*, pp. 166-213) investigates the role of clothing books and town “Veduten”, a subject quite “new” for me, as well. Andreas Müller (*Construcția celuilalt. Despre imaginea ortodoxiei românești în Transilvania, Johannes Honterus (1542/1547) și Johannes Tröster (1666)*, pp. 214-225) describes what two authors from Transylvania wrote about the Orthodoxy of the Romanians, by mainly relying on the

edited texts and German or Saxon literature, thus ignoring some “recent” approaches from Transylvania! In my view, the author attempts to emphasize how the Orthodoxy of the Romanians was instrumented during important or “dangerous” times for the Transylvanian Saxons. Mihaela Grancea (*Călătorii străini despre relațiile interetnice și interconfesionale din Transilvania, Banat, Țara Românească și Moldova (1683-1789)*, pp. 226-240) analyses what foreigners had to say about the confessional and political relations existing among Transylvanians. She brings into discussion the importance of confession as an identity factor. Connected to this approach is the study of Gábor Kárman (“Puzderia de religii” în Transilvania în relatarea de călătorie a studentului luteran Conrad Jacob Hildebrandt, pp. 241-263). The author discusses the trip of a Lutheran student from a region under Swedish occupation and, after a contextual description, Kárman extrapolates what Hildebrandt said about the confessional „diversity” in Transylvania. Harald Roth (*Percepția tradițiilor romano-catolice în orașele luterane ale Transilvaniei între secolele al XVI-lea și al XVIII-lea*, pp. 264-271) explores the survival of Catholic practices in the Lutheran Church after the Reformation until late eighteenth century. His arguments concerning this evolution are convincing: during the first century after the Reformation, the main danger came from the Calvinists. Greta-Monica Miron (*Iezuiții despre Uniți și despre sine. Construcția unui discurs identitar în literatura iezuită din Transilvania secolului al XVIII-lea*, pp. 272-284) stresses out the Jesuite official discourse in the eighteenth century: they educated and guided the Romanians, thus placing great emphasis on the Order’s importance within the Uniate Church. Stefan Sienerth (*Urme pietiste în literatura germană din Transilvania*, pp. 285-298) discusses Pietism in Transylvania, its emergence and general development. It is a useful introduction to the letters of Andreas Teutsch and other authors; nonetheless, the author does not refer to the result of the more recent Hungarian and Romanian historiography (Edit Szegedi, Daniel Zikeli and Zuzsa Font). Irmgrand Sedler (*Între luteranism și anabaptism. Mărturii ale credinței la transmigranții austrieci în Transilvania secolului al XVIII-lea*, pp. 299-339) is a brilliant study as it relies on a comprehensive approach: the author sketches out the entire phenomenon of the confessional diversity among the groups of immigrants, from the investigation of their situation in Austria to their arrival to Transylvania, by depicting their encounter with an Orthodox Lutheranism and a “tolerated” group of Anabaptists in Vințu de Jos. It is a very useful study in order to prove that eighteenth century confessional politics has to be perceived far from an exaggerated “tolerance” of the Theresian Age, as “heretics” were still persecuted by both Catholic and Lutheran authorities. Márta Fata (*Diversitatea religioasă din perspective*

Curții vieneze. Criteriile de observație și evaluare folosite de Iosif al II-lea în timpul călătoriei sale în Transilvania din anul 1773, pp. 340-358) attempts to show the opposite of these times, the confessional philosophy of Joseph II, *religio naturalis*. Nevertheless, the author correctly depicts what the characteristics of confessional Theresian politics were like, albeit using a quite “old” literature, particularly in what concerns the Greek Catholic Church.<sup>2</sup> The description of Joseph II’s trip to Transylvania relies on his edited journal (Teodor Pavel), where the emperor refers to the confessional reality of a multiconfessional region which, according to the author, engendered the implementation of the Patent of Tolerance (1781). The last article of this book should have been placed somewhere at the beginning, as it focuses on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the formation of confessional identity: Andreas Ulrich Wien (Despre formarea spațiului confessional în Transilvania secolelor al XVI-lea și al XVII-lea. Percepția sașilor luterani asupra reformaților, pp. 359-372). The author starts his analysis by analyzing the case of a notorious Saxon preacher from late sixteenth century, Damasius Dürr, I would name it, a conservative Lutheran. Thus, he highlights the theological orientation of the conservative Dürr, without neglecting the later “hostility” towards the Calvinists and “irenics” in what concerns musical texts. In my view, the irenics’ influences might require more detailed explanations, were they really meant to approach or reconcile the two confessional groups?

I would also like to add some personal remarks, although my arguments cannot be fully developed in a few rows and my analysis might be biased, as I know very well many of the contributors to this volume. All in all, this is a very useful book, as it covers the entire Transylvanian Early Modern Era with important references also to Central Europe or the two Romanian principalities. It brings into discussion a variety of topics, from “state” politics to confessional identity including art, although the focus on the Lutheran Church predominates. It certainly fills a lot of gaps due to the variety of sources and fresh information brought by some authors. It still confirms that the current research on Transylvania has its limits: some “trendy” topics are still not researched and the eighteenth century needs to be revisited, not only from the point of view of the Romanian historiography!

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<sup>2</sup> For instance, the work of Greta-Monica Miron is not considered.



**David van der Linden, *Experiencing Exile: Huguenot Refugees in the Dutch Republic, 1680-1700* [Politics and Culture in Europe, 1650-1750], Ashgate 2015, 291 p., ISBN 978-1-4724-2927-8**

This book by David van der Linden, a Dutch young scholar with solid expertise on French immigration in Early Modern Europe, deals with Huguenot exiles in the Dutch Republic. Albeit the topic is not new within the European or even American scholarly debates, the approach it employs stands out, indeed. The author aims to analyze the experience of ordinary refugees and not only that of the elites, “rather than covering the process of integration or fortunes of elite Huguenots, it re-inserts the vast masses of refugees into the history of exile” (p.8). In my view, this may represent an intended collective biography of a Protestant group, which includes both a social and a cultural perspective that may be integrated into a broader history of the Huguenot Church. The investigated period is 1680-1700 which witnessed high levels of tension across the European continent, as well as an intensification of religious exile. The approach is both chronological and analytical, while the presentation is structured into three main parts, namely “The economy of exile”, “Faith in exile” and “Memories in Exile.”

The analysis is empirical and largely relies on unpublished and edited source material, such as journals, correspondence and, obviously, sermons; additionally, the author compiles an appendix with tables, that reflects the quantitative data used. This can be considered a very fruitful methodological approach as it avoids an overwhelming supply of information to the reader and, at the same time, makes the text more “digestible” and certainly very concise: Van Linden gets to the point. Nonetheless, a more detailed methodological presentation and terminology, including the analysis of key concepts such as “Counter-Reformation” or “confessionalization”, even by rejecting them, i.e. not only refugee and exile, would have helped the author to better position his research within current research trends and to integrate the phenomenon into the broader history of Early Modern Europe in a more detailed comparative perspective.

The first chapter discusses the circumstances in Normandy, notably Dieppe, after the famous edict of Fontainebleau which revoked the Edict of Nantes. It analyses the possible reasons that prompted Huguenots to leave the French Kingdom and attempts to identify which of them took the path of exile. His main assessment is that “socio-economic opportunities played a crucial role” (p. 38). His arguments rely on several cases and the table with the social categories of refugees is very persuasive in this sense (Dieppe, p. 27). In fact, the author convinced me more than other historians did, that we should consider religious exile as a planned action rather than an ad-hoc

decision, refugees considering several factors before leaving France. Thus, he does not resume to confession as a mere pretext. The second chapter examines how successful or rather unsuccessful refugees were in their new home. In the analysis, he places great emphasis on cities such as Rotterdam and Amsterdam, and professions such as entrepreneurs in the textile industry, booksellers, publishers, and ministers, without however, neglecting the poor. The main point made by the author is that religious concerns, which had existed in France, were replaced by struggles for self-sustaining in a very competitive market, such as the Dutch Republic. It is a phenomenon which may be confirmed in other parts of Europe, including remote Transylvania, and it confirms my view that massive emigration disrupted denominational solidarity in Early Modern Europe due to economic reasons and difficulties encountered in the new home. Thus, we find out that entrepreneurs faced financial issues and, contrary to the hitherto findings in the historiography, the author claims that although booksellers encountered a competitive market, they strove to "gain a foothold", even in the Dutch Republic where the book market was very developed (p. 51). They took the risk of emigrating, indeed due the freedom of worship, as censorship and controls in France were very strict. Success was nevertheless limited, not all booksellers and printers thrived. Unlike the others, ministers who were forced to make use of *ius emigrandi* faced the challenge of finding a parish, building a reputation and network of connections. The number of poor Huguenots was very high, as the reader may expect it, but Van Linden argues that the phenomenon was indeed widespread. In the third chapter, which addresses the "comforts of preaching", Van der Linden analyses sermons by stressing the topic of exile, how ministers tried to comfort people spiritually. The chosen sermons were quite known and the author maintains that the discourse was intended to provide answers to the anxieties of the refugees: Divine interference and punishment for human sins (the Revocation) with the subsequent, I would call it "happy end", return to France. Considering this, the author shows that sermons criticizing those who remained in France were circulated widely. The fourth chapter discusses both the topics and the recipients' reaction to the message, what Van der Linden notes as being the dialogue between the minister and his audience, the art of preaching with certain criticism and positive reactions from the listeners. Important from this point of view, are the pages devoted to printed sermons which were smuggled into the Kingdom. Thus, we find out that preachers were both admonished and asked to return, i.e. there was disappointment in France, an issues empirically addressed by the author. The fifth chapter examines the end of exile, the return of certain refugees, which is a less researched topic in historiography: the hope for restoration, as it happened in England after the Glorious Revolution. The author

considers the peace of Rijswijk a disappointment for the Huguenots as it was followed by the return and conversion of part of the refugees. Because converts were viewed by Huguenot preachers as *neoconvertis* who sold themselves, show us that refugees did not make up an homogenous group, rather the opposite being true as even during the exile people reacted differently. Memoirs are approached in the sixth chapter, as a matter of identity, "recounting their own past, in other words, gave Huguenots a new sense of purpose and belonging: it defined who they were" (p. 163). Here the author chose several examples which led to contrasting memories of the past: persecution on the one hand, and cross denominational friendships on the other. It is exactly what we expect, subjective perceptions which the author skillfully integrated into the text. The last chapter addresses the writing of the Huguenot past and collective memory, arguing that "...by examining the various ways in which they did, we may better grasp the formation of group identities in this period" (p. 177). Thus, Van der Linden claims that these memories "transformed specific individual stories to create an unashamedly heroic past" (p. 178). Nevertheless, the argument is built on writings such as those of Pierre Jurieu or Elie Benoist. For this reason, this may reflect only "part" of the collective identity, as memoirs were usually produced at that time by what we call in German "gelehrten Bürger". The self-image of the lower strata is less visible in this kind of memories and more visible in everyday social behaviors, as the author highlighted when describing different reactions: exile, fight for food, return and conversion.

Is this book filling a gap in our understanding of the Huguenot settlement in the Dutch Republic, as Professor Bertand Van Ruymbeke (Paris) is claiming on the back cover? In my view it certainly does, as the author brings significant nuances to the overstated positive impact of French refugees on Dutch society. It puts forward new questions which may enable us to look beyond the official pretext of the refugee (at that time, but not only (sic!)), to contextualize the local social situation and to widen the spectrum of analysis by taking into account a variety of motivations. Nonetheless, the multitude of cases may lead to as many reasons as refugees; however, given the lack of so many testimonies, there might always be a risk of omission. Certainly, this may be answered through a more minute research of social categories, my own curiosity in this regard concerns the ministers: did they flee just for the sake of preaching the "true religion" according to their clerical conscience and identity?

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**Ovidiu Bozgan, Bogdan Murgescu (coord.) - *Universitatea din București (1864-2014)*, Editura Universității din București, 2014, 444 p., ISBN - 978-606-16-0478-4.**

In recent years, and particularly after 2000, there has been a notable increase in the number of works focusing on intellectual or cultural history in the Romanian historiography, a research area notoriously misused or neglected during the communist years. The book that we are discussing here is no exception to this general trend. In fact, this volume, *Universitatea din București (1864-2014)*, illustrates, as one of the recent examples, the renewed interest in the narrow subfield of university history. Many of the leading Romanian universities or other higher educational institutions have recently celebrated various anniversaries and, due to this festive context, a good number of studies started to analyze their institutional history and their social significance. The public was thus presented in 2010 with a comprehensive research dedicated to the 150 years of evolution of the University of Iași: Gheorghe Iacob, Alexandru Florin Platon (coord.) – *Istoria Universității din Iași*, 2010-2011, 2 tomes. It was followed, in 2012, by a detailed account of the long and varied existence of the Cluj University, a tribute to the 90 years of academic teaching in Romanian language and to the 125 years since the foundation of a modern university in Transylvania: Ovidiu Ghitta (coord.) – *Istoria Universității Babeș-Bolyai*, 2012.

In 2014, the University of Bucharest equally celebrated a milestone – 150 years of uninterrupted activity since its establishment (the founding decree being issued on 4/16 July 1864 by prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza). This provided the perfect opportunity to investigate and evaluate with the help of a new paradigm, the twists and turns of university life in Romania's capital city. *Universitatea din București (1864-2014)* is a commemorative book that marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a prestigious academic establishment and, at the same time, completes the panorama of the role played by universities in modern and contemporary Romania. Coordinated by two esteemed historians, Bogdan Murgescu and Ovidiu Bozgan, this book was written by a team of specialists that includes established scholars, with previous expertise and publications in educational history (Adina Berchiu-Drăgichescu, Ovidiu Bozgan, Cristina Gudin), in social and economic history (Bogdan Murgescu, Florentina Nițu), as well as a number of younger academics and researchers (Matei Gheboianu, Alexandru Murad Mironov, Mirela Rotaru, Andrei Florin Sora). Last but not least, the team of authors includes Ioan Pânzaru, former rector (2005-2011) and vice-rector (2000-2004)

of the University of Bucharest, one of the most influential personalities in the modernization of this institution after 1989.

The opening pages of this volume explain to the interested readers the background and the methodological principles followed by all the authors. This research chose to focus on the members of the academic community, as they are those who define and determine the "good functioning of the university" (p. 16). Consequently, *Universitatea din București (1864-2014)* is primarily a history of the university within the society, or, in other words, a social history of the university, looking at interactions between professors and students, and, also, at relationships established over time between this institution and various actors or authorities on the social stage. The second principle assumed by the authors and constantly reflected in their writing was that of academic freedom. We are warned that this book did not intend to be an "official" (meaning exclusively glorifying) history of the university, but examines both positive and controversial episodes of the academic life. The aim was to assess the existing situation, to "synthesize and make sense of a century and a half of university teaching, research and social involvement at the University of Bucharest" (p. 21).

Structured in six large sections, the book *Universitatea din București (1864-2014)* makes us travel from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century until the present days, in a chronological overview that outlines with remarkable attention the numerous transformations undergone by the university. Furthermore, readers can follow these changes with increased ease because, at every stage, there is a thorough analysis of the legislative and political context that shaped the existence of the university.

Several superior schools that played a significant role in educating the local elites preceded the appearance of the modern University of Bucharest. In the first chapter, Florentina Nițu discusses the main features of the Royal Academy founded in 1694 by Constantin Brâncoveanu and the School of Saint Sava, developed since 1818. Unlike many other similar institutions of Central and Eastern Europe, these forerunners of the modern university had a predominant laic character and were significantly influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment, as professor Nițu appropriately emphasized (p. 32). Another highlighted aspect is the gradual and constant effort made for teaching in the national language, namely Romanian, starting with the efforts of the Transylvanian Gheorghe Lazăr from 1818 onwards and continuing with the directives of the Organic Regulations of 1832 and of the 1847 reform of Prince Gheorghe Bibescu (pp. 41-44).

The second chapter, authored by Cristina Gudin, describes the founding of the Bucharest University in 1864 and deals with its evolution until the end of the First World War. As expected, these opening years were

marked not only by enthusiasm and energy, but also by many hesitations and debates over the best ways of developing the newly created academic establishment. It is relevant from this perspective that the final faculty structure of the Bucharest University was officially sanctioned after more than two decades after its opening: it was only in 1890 that the Faculty of Theology joined the rest of the original faculties, namely the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Letters, the Faculty of Sciences and the Faculty of Medicine (the latter created in 1869). In our opinion, the most interesting parts of this chapter are those dedicated to the first rectors and founding fathers of different chairs and disciplines (pp. 79-93), as they include nuanced characterizations of many distinguished scholars, as well as references to the students' associations and newspapers that started to function in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (pp. 101-103). Equally worth mentioning are the short analyses regarding tense or conflictual moments of the university life, such as the boycotting action started by Nicolae Iorga in March 1906, which Gudin rightly considers as an example of "cultural isolationism" (p. 107), or the professors' attitude during the troubled years of the First World War (pp. 108-109). However, there is little, if no mentioning of the few professors that chose not to rally themselves with the Allies during the war, in particular after 1916, when Romania officially joined the Anglo-French camp. This is certainly a regrettable omission, especially as we are currently commemorating the centenary of the Great War and historians all over Europe are revisiting many aspects of this world conflict, including issues concerning the field of intellectual history.

The third section of the book, authored by Ovidiu Bozgan, presents the 1919-1938 period, a golden time in the existence of the University of Bucharest, when this institution exerted, as the author rightly points out, "*a comfortable hegemony in the area of academic teaching, as well as in the scientific and cultural life of Romania*" (p. 215). From the beginning, we are warned that this chapter is a republication, with some additions, of a previous text, since Bozgan has written extensively about the history of the University of Bucharest over the last decade and a half. Although this editorial choice is understandable, it is equally slightly disappointing. In our opinion, a fresh interpretation of the academic facts and events of the interwar years could have brought to surface or drawn attention to some less investigated aspects: for instance, the international scientific networks and relationships developed by the University of Bucharest, or the mobility of the Romanian academic staff back and forth between the University of Bucharest and the other Romanian universities.

The interwar years saw the growth of the University of Bucharest, as new faculties were integrated into its structures: the Faculty of Veterinary

Medicine (in 1921) and the Faculty of Pharmacy (in 1923). Ovidiu Bozgan also explores the evolution of the Law Academy from Oradea, which, for a short time, represented a point of contention between the University of Bucharest and the University of Cluj. After a rather long autonomous existence, between 1932 and 1934 the Law Academy of Oradea was integrated into the University of Bucharest. However, Bozgan explains that in 1934, "*at the meeting of the Interuniversity Council, the influential rector of the University of Cluj, Florian Ștefănescu-Goangă pleaded in favor of merging the Academy with the Law Faculty of Cluj, which was going through some difficult times and had a teaching staff of uneven professional value; thus, the transfer of professors from the [Oradea] Academy was seen as a salutary solution*" (p. 152). Goangă won the argument and the Law Academy of Oradea was finally absorbed within the University of Cluj. Another interesting part of the third chapter analyses, based on various statistics, the social situation of students during the interwar years, sometimes comparing the situation at the University of Bucharest with other main Romanian academic centers (pp. 175-199). The author equally discusses in a critical note the various forms undertaken by student societies and students' social and political manifestations, warning about the persistent lack of solid research on the interwar student movement, especially as regards the left wing student organizations, so much praised by the communist regime, which in fact did nothing, but distort their real role (p. 204).

The fourth chapter, jointly written by Alexandru Murad Mironov and Andrei Florin Sora, deals with a very difficult period: the 1938-1948 decade, when Romania was confronted with the authoritarian reign of King Carol II and then with the troubled years of the Second World War. The authors describe in detail the growing intrusion of politics within the University of Bucharest and its influence on the careers of the teaching staff, as well as the attacks and limitations imposed to principle of academic autonomy by all the regimes that succeeded one after another during this critical time. Readers can discover in these pages interesting and sometimes paradoxical information about the turnovers operated (or merely attempted) by some of the professors. For example, it is relevant to read that a prominent personality such as the sociologist Dimitrie Gusti turned from a strong supporter of King Carol II in the late 1930s into a member of the leading structures of the *Romanian association for the strengthening of relationships with the USSR* (ARLUS), while at the same time some of his scientific works were being purged by the communist Groza government. (pp. 222-223 and pp. 264-267).

The last two chapters of the book *Universitatea din București 1864-2014*, which address the communist period and the development of the

University of Bucharest after 1989, bring to light the largest quantity of previously unpublished, original materials. Most of the data testify to an intensive research work done by Bogdan Murgescu, Ioan Pânzaru and their younger colleagues (Andrei Florin Sora, Matei Gheboianu, Mirela Rotaru) in the national and university archives. This team of researchers attempted to recreate the specificities of the academic life in Bucharest in the last six decades in the most accurate and comprehensive way.

Communism affected the functioning of the university at unprecedented levels, from dictating how the university had to organize its faculties, departments and scientific institutes to what disciplines to teach and, most importantly, how to teach them. Even the selection of students accepted at the university was politically regulated. What becomes obvious as we browse the pages of the chapter entitled *Universitatea din București în timpul regimului communist* is that this university had to face a higher pressure from the communist authorities than, perhaps, other regional universities such as Cluj or Iași, because it was situated in the capital city and because it was considered to be the most important academic institution in Romania. The closeness to the epicenter of political power also gave birth to relevant actions of intellectual resistance. The pages that discuss the case of Mihai Botez, a notorious opponent of communism in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as well as those of Nicolae Manolescu or Iorgu Iordan testify to the surviving critical qualities of the academic community of Bucharest, even in very oppressive times (pp. 320-323). Another interesting part of this chapter is the section dedicated to the international relationships of the Bucharest University from 1948 to 1989, as they show, despite some difficult periods, an uninterrupted link with international science (pp. 362-368); for example, in 1980 the University of Bucharest managed to host the 15<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Historical Sciences. As the authors rightly conclude, "*the communist regime was a contradictory period for the University of Bucharest*" yet, despite all the hardships, the institutional and scientific development progressed (p. 369).

The final chapter of the volume deals with the last 25 years in the life of the University of Bucharest. Written for the most part by Ioan Pânzaru, a direct actor and contributor to the transformations that restored the normalcy in the academic life of Bucharest and developed its prestige, this is a fine example of recent history. The description of the university's involvement in the 1989 revolution and the 1990 events - namely the *University square* phenomenon (pp. 374-379) - deserves particular attention. Another interesting part is the presentation of the academic management and management strategies adopted by the university over these last decades, especially the section dedicated to the way in which the elections of



the succeeding university authorities (Rectorate, Senate) were organized (pp. 387-393).

In conclusion, *Universitatea din București 1864-2014* is a major contribution to the field of university history in Romania. Incorporating a lot of illustrations and with a beautiful layout, this book benefited from an extensive archival and bibliographical research. However, not every title mentioned in the footnotes is listed and can be identified in the final list of bibliography, which is a regrettable oversight. But, despite the minor imperfections mentioned in our review, this volume is a must-read, benefiting from all the qualities to both stand the test of time and impose a high standard for future commemorative publications of Romanian academic institutions.

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