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Thesis of the Dissertation

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***The Mobility of the Ecclesiastical Middle Layer in the Szepes Chapter***

***The Personnel of the Szepes Collegiate Chapter from its Foundation to the Middle of the  
15<sup>th</sup> century (1209-1450)***

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**Introduction-The Aims, the Sources and the Methods of this Thesis**

There is still just a little information for the representation of the world of the ecclesiastical notarial, more exactly for the representation of the world of the provosts, archdeacons, canons and parish priests. Although some studies exist on bishop-or canon histories with archontological compilation, they are still incomplete. They only inform us sporadic data and they do not announce the layer's liturgical role and its political and cultural importance. So far only certain, scattered cases have been elaborated.

József Köblös<sup>1</sup> was the first who carried out research on this layer's biography. These researches demonstrate the personnel of four chapter bodies in the era of I Mathias and Jagellók. The aspects, assembled during the disquisitions, are appropriate for representing the inner relations of the Szepes chapter in similar way.

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<sup>1</sup> KÖBLÖS JÓZSEF: *Az egyházi középréteg Mátyás és a Jagellók korában*. Társadalom és művelődéstörténeti Tanulmányok 12. MTA TTI. Bp. 1994.

I have found it necessary to clarify and to define the foundation history of the chapter. The development of Szepes County and the creation of the chapter have been investigated by more researchers. As a result some smaller studies and some bigger special works have been written, however they referred to the issue, they did not demonstrate the causes and circumstances of the changes in the chapter's legal authority. Therefore I have examined how the inner and outer ecclesiastical decisions affected the changes and the vindication of the legal authority and how it influenced the change in the chapter's personnel.

During the exploration of this issue I created a separate part for the analysis of the chapter's inner and outer relation in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (considering its foundation, its constitutional body and its relation to the county) since the changes started in the Arpad- era which affected the chapter's personnel change. Furthermore, the ecclesiastical arrangements of our rulers of joint-dynasties extremely influenced the Szepes provosts' prebendaries. In the case of such a small collegiate chapter, the personnel mobility is very interesting which occurred even in this era.<sup>2</sup> The analysis of Szepes collegiate chapter's inner personnel mobility clarified the correlations among the countries' political decisions, the process and the results of the changes in the relationship of the Hungarian kingdom and the Vatican.

This thesis fulfils the analysis of the chapter's personnel from its supposed foundation (1209) until the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. If it was possible it touched upon the first part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The date of the foundation does not need explanation, because it is unanimously agreed by modern bibliographies.

The other chronological border accounted for the content border and for the more extensive research in the future. Although bigger archives (Archive of the Anjou-era, Archive of the Zsigmond-era) cover this period and what is more, the influence of some important ecclesiastical decisions affected the chapter's personnel's change the most in this chosen period.

The Szepes collegiate chapter's domestic research history meant the edition of the certificated material found in the private-and provost archives and in home archives (Wagner, Bárdosy, Schmauk, Weber) in the previous period (end of the 18<sup>th</sup>-beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century). Furthermore, it also denoted the preparation of the chapter's history from a chronological view. Among the modern researches, those studies which dealt with the change of chapter's personnel as a separate topic, (Mályusz Elemér, Fügedi Erik, Kubinyi András, Zsoldos Attila, Piti Ferenc) were in minority.

The issue of the Szepes collegiate chapter's history can be examined from many aspects starting from the relationship between other ecclesiastical corporations of Szepes and the chapter or the authorized activity of the chapter; to the investigation of the inhabitants' relationship between the chapter and Szepes. This thesis definitely aims at the analysis of the

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<sup>2</sup> I also analysed the changes in the 14th century since the chapter's inner relations was basically determined by the strengthening struggle between the papal reservation and the rulers' presentations. The ecclesiastical decrees of Zsigmond of Luxenburg and their influence meant a new period in the life of the chapter.

change in the chapter's body personnel in order to represent the Szepes canons' carrier opportunities and living conditions with the exploration of their benefices.

This thesis applies the method of source analysis; therefore it intended to demonstrate the personnel's change with the elaboration of the certifications found in the chapter's private- and provost archives; in notable families' archives and in different archives (kings of the Arpad –dynasty, archive of the Anjou-era, archive of the Zsigmond-era, familiar archives: Szent-Iványi, Máriássy, Csáky), and the archive of Szepes e.g. Eperjes, Bártfa. Apart from the above mentioned archives I had to exploit the following sources: Monumenta Ecclesiae Strigoniensis (all the four volumes); Monumenta Vaticanae Hungariae (four volumes and a bit of the fifth of the first series); the works of Theiner and other Vaticanian historians like Bossányi, Lukcsics. Among these the following sources also were in the centre of my attention: the *analect* and *supplementum* of Károly Wágner, János Bárdosy, Mihály Schmauk; Latin and Hungarian monographs of the Szepes canons by József Hradzsky and Márton Pirhalla. Some other databases (the archontological works of Attila Zsoldos and Pál Engel-the latest in digital form) helped me to reconstruct the land relations of the canons' relatives and families.

At this point it needs to be indicated that in the case of the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries' canons the identifications of the benefices and their origin<sup>3</sup> remain inefficient because of their single names. In the case of the identifications of some civil canons who had had benefices, the toponym or parish name, indicated next to their names, could help us. The number of the serf canons is very moderate. Their identification was very hard too, because of their single name usage.

We also included some universities' registers of birth and their former and newer elaborations for the sake of the extension of the research. We used different works of ecclesiastical history (e.g. by Vilmos Fraknó, Karácsonyi, Egyed Hermann) and different works of ecclesiastical law (e.g. by Lajos Balics, József Szeredy, Péter Erdő) in order to recognize the circumstances of the chapter. Beside these the collection of Ferenc Kollányi and Remig Békefi were also useful.

During the research Elemér Mályusz and György Bónis's social historical monographs prove to be indispensable. Furthermore, the system of aspects of József Köblös's work dealing with the ecclesiastical middle layer was also decisive. László Solymosi's ecclesiastical- and chapter historical studies could not be excluded during the bibliographical process. Géza Érszegi's monographs and diplomatic studies were also important, particularly in connection with papal certifications.

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<sup>3</sup> As it is known the elaboration, the analysis of the certifications of the Arpad- and Anjou dynasty is more difficult since the names are rather inefficient therefore the identifications of the ecclesiastical persons did not lead to any result. However, the elaboration of the Anjou-era's sources is still in progress. Recently the exploration, of the bibliographical data, especially the reconstruction of family names and relatives, is hard because of the lack of the appropriate reference.

In addition to the above mentioned sources the studies of the ecclesiastical historians of the University of Pécs, especially Tamás Fedeles's study volume on the personnel's change; the writings of László Koszta on chapter research; the writings of the Capitulum of Szeged or György Rácz and Ilona Kristóf's studies all prove to be beneficial. In the recognition of the Saxon area of Szepes, where the chapter was created, the study of the following works were necessary: the social historical monograph of Antal Fekete Nagy, the manuscript of Miklós Czenthe's research, documents maintained by Slovakian and Polish historians (Richard Marsina, Vincent Sedlak, Frantisek Zifcák, Ivan Chalupecky, Sroka Stanislav and the Terra Scepusiensis conference volume).

The introductory study was prepared with the assembling of the database in which we intended to define the place of the Szepes chapter in the contemporary Hungary. For this we compared the data with both Tamás Fedeles and József Köblös's results. The database primarily contains case studies. The complete exploration requires further researches I did not intend to accomplish in the framework of this dissertation.

### **The Summary of the Bibliography about the Szepes Chapter's History**

In the next chapter of this thesis we aimed at taking all the works, archives and studies which deal with the Szepes chapter's history into consideration. The thesis mapped the fortune of the archives of Szepes County, its vicissitude and the circumstances of the certifications' destructions. It was necessary to map the work, the aims and the members of The Historical Association of Szepes County for the sake of the complete survey. We also examined studies written by them which contained the social and sociological relations of the Szepes area and its ecclesiastical historical monograph. The recognition of the region's history would be difficult without the arrangement of the archives by Kálmán Denkó, János Bárdosy, Mihály Schmauk, János Illésy or without Samu Weber's bibliography of Szepes. Kornél Divald's history of art studies are the basis in the exploration of the medieval memories of the history of art and culture. They also help to explain the region's social- and economical history. They are the first professional catalogue of the ecclesiastical monuments. In this section the short representations of the region's most important researchers and the examination of the practicability of their abstracts of certifications collections can be found- unfortunately because of the content border it could not be done completely. The researchers of the former era did not announce a conventional system for summarizing therefore it became obvious that the abstracts appeared in individual reading and transcription without index can be uneasily applied for modern researches. But at the same time they did pioneer work in the arrangement of the data of the Szepes archives. The chapter's place and role in the region's history could not be understood without the history of the area and without the social historical works of later monographs (Antal Fekete Nagy, Miklós Czenthe).

## The Szepes Collegiate Chapter's Constructional and Constitutional Conformation

The next chapter aimed at reviewing the older and newer theories related to the county and the chapter's foundation during the representation of the geopolitical relations of the Szepes region. Today it is considered as a fact that the county and the chapter's organisation happened at the same time.

For the verification of the above mentioned fact we touched upon Attila Zsoldos's hypothesis that Szepes was a royal county therefore in terms of its organisation it cannot be neglected that this area was in close relationship with the foundations of Gömör and Torna counties. The inhabitation of Szepes is explained by a demographic change started from Gömör and Torna since Torna belonged to Borsod in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and it extended as far as Szepes. This area belonged to the bishop of Eger in the former periods, but later Torna and Szepes came under the authority of Esztergom in terms of ecclesiastical government because of the strengthening legal claim of the primacy of Esztergom. From the previously mentioned rationale it can be declared that Szepes belonged to the late-organisational counties of the Medieval Hungary. Its territory was uninhabited or under populated in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. It was populated from the earlier mentioned areas preceding those German and Slavonic inhabitants who arrived in the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup>-and in the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Gyula Kristóf originated Szepes's land- later county name form a Hungarian personal name. He also thinks that the area was transformed into a county in the turning of the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century, with the same time of the foundation of the forest bailiff of Torna. The royal county transformed into a noble county without any premise in the turning point of the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century. From these facts it can be declared that the foundation of the Szepes area was unique where different masses of bailiffs were created therefore they made its management rather mosaic. According to some researchers (Zsoldos, Kristóf) this county was such a royal county where the institute of the bailiff had not been developed completely because of the late-foundation of the area. Some other researchers like Marsina Richard and Antal Fekete Nagy think that the county was founded in the middle part of the region and in the Poprás valley in the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The region of Szepes was managed by some of the royal family for shorter or longer time. Researchers have a debate on whether the right over Szepes was given to Kálmán, the son of IV. Béla, either from 1209 or from 1229-1241; or it was given to a bailiff called Dénes, who was the son of Ampod who acted on behalf of Kálmán prince. Later, between 1274-1275, Moys, the *camerarius* who represented Izabella, the wife of IV. László, became the bailiff of Szepes. Between 1279-1280 the widow queen Elizabeth governed the region which is proved by the certificates delivered under her name. However, the actual governor of the region was the all-time *camerarius* who carried out economical issues. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that Szepes was such a royal manor which was surrendered to the queen or to the prince in some cases.

The Szepes chapter was formed in the furthest, north part of the country-exactly from Dunajec to Cserhát, some areas from Torna and Sáros and from Lipót to Palocsa. According to some accepted assumption the chapter existing from 1209 was formed such an uninhabited

and unclaimed royal land in the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century which was shared among some other ecclesiastical constitutions because of later bestowal. The archdeacon of the region was the provost of the royally formed collegiate chapter. He had uniquely extensive rights, which was not common among the cathedral chapters or the collegiate chapters, except for Pozsony. In terms of Szepes it can be explained with the big distance.

### **The Foundation and Historical Antecedent of the Provost of Szepes**

In this part of the chapter the royal foundation of the chapter and the issue of authority are proved by theoretical verification and by the reconstruction of direct circumstances of the foundation. The authority of Szepes provost covered not only the Territory of Szepes County but also Sáros County's (neighbour county) archdeacon of Tárcafő and Liptó county's neighbouring parts. These facts are proved by geographical facts. The area of the archdeacon of Torna, torn off by IV. László, also belonged to the provost of Szepes. The archdeacon of Tárca was in similar situation. The bishops of Eger started to fight against the archbishop of Esztergom in order to detach that area. It was successful. While the reannexation of Torna happened in 16<sup>th</sup> century, then after a long action the rank of Tárcafő remained in the authority of the bishop of Eger in the aspect of ecclesiastical government and authority by the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, I. Lajos compensated the provost with the Liptó region because he felt sympathy for Szepes.

We have just a few concrete data about the number of the chapter body. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century there are 4 chapter dignitaries named in the sources, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century it reduced to 16, later it was 12, and then there were only 10 members in the body. Szepes could not devoid of those aggravations which were made by the Vatican in order to keep the residence. These aggravations were complied first with its legatos then by the members of the chapter who were forced by the archbishops of Esztergom. In the case of Szepes it was more difficult because the members of the chapter body were from the neighbouring parishes and from those members only a few lived in Szepeshely.

### **Dignitaries**

The next chapter of this thesis analyses and takes the chapter's dignitaries and their duties into consideration. We score four pillars, the so called master canons (*provost, lector, cantor, custos*) and eight notarial canons. Analysing the election of the provost and the circumstances of the fulfilment of this dignity it became obvious that in the 14<sup>th</sup> century a provost could live with the right of election only two times. It could only happen in special cases. Mainly the following custom was applied: the papal bull could give dignity to the leaders of the chapter with the ruler's introduction and with the strengthening of the archbishop of Esztergom. Reservation was operated more often according to Vatican and the decisions of former synods in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Although I. Lajos and king Zsigmond applied for their own candidates at the Vatican referring the fact that otherwise their prestige would suffer damage. From another point of view this

also helped the strengthening of the royal power in the period of unstable internal affairs. During the ruling of king Zsigmond this practice was explained by the state of the canon law evolved by the schism.

As a deputy of the provost the dignity of the vicar appeared which was fulfilled mainly by one of the pillars, but sometimes notarial canons could get such assignment. Provost vicars substituted their absent provost who was in charge of economical issues, and judicial assignments. In Szepes it was common that the elected local rulers appeared in litigious issues as testimonies. During passing certain sentences it was easier to elect the later local representatives from those appeared at trials. By the time of obtaining the position of a local representative they gained the knowledge of canon law, law and they also had experience in this sphere. Furthermore, they knew their ways in local relations, they had personal influence and they gained experience in justice. It was also common in Szepes that the vicar, who already carried out dean's tasks, became the supervisor of the chapter's economical issues and revenues.

In the constitution of the Szepes chapter the reader canon was the second most prestigious dignity after the provost. Therefore, during the absent of the provost or when the benefice became vacant the canon reader controlled the chapter. He was in charge of the authority place. He was the main lector and he had unique authority among the canons because he was also responsible for the attentive reading of rewrote certificates, he had to check their close content and he had to seal the correct document in front of the canon. The tax, which was inlet from the activity of the authority place, was divided into three parts among the chapter, the lector and the notary.

The organization and the control of the chapter's school also belonged to the lector's assignment in Szepes. This kind of responsibility implies an extensive cultivation. However, I did not find data whether the chapter's reader canons could gain university degree and if yes when and where they could do it.

From the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century mainly the king gave dignity to the appropriate person because of the strengthening reservational effort of the pope. However, it often happened especially at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century that one got the right of a reader canon because of the papal reservation.

The chanting canons of Szepes played important role mainly in cathedral masses and in prayer sessions similarly to other bodies. They prepared the liturgy, and coached and lead the cathedral choir. As far as we are concerned they occasionally checked the body's ability to sing and they also test them. They also supervised the education in the chapter's school mainly from musical aspect.

Among the chanting canons' duties we can find that he was the keeper of liturgical equipment, of devotional objects, of jewelleries, of the chapter's seal, of its documents and archives. He had to check the decoration and the tolling. He earned 1 florin for the watching of the archives.

The next part of this thesis deals with the civil canons. Among them the most important was the dean. The dean's duties were the following: they governed the chapter's estate, they divided the chapter's revenues among the canons, they controlled the serfs of the chapter, they arranged the debates and litigations among the canons and they also represented the body in outer panel discussions. They were usually elected in every year from the canon's body with simple majority. The newly elected dean received the administration from his ancestor. The ancestor had to report within 8 days after the date of completion of mandate about the annual work and the chapter's economical position. Since the dean had great responsibility in his duties he could gain other revenues apart from his canon benefice. He had a casual helper, *notary*, for the collection of the ninth. From the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (1286) the dean of the Szepes chapter was elected among the canons. The dean had to manage the chapter's benefice and husbandry. He also supervised and made an annual report of the benefice. Beside the supervision of the chapter's possessions, he had to make a statement and a report when he resigned. His completion usually lasted for a year. At the beginning there were three deans during its authority: Szepes, Torna, Tárcafő. The latter two broke away from the Szepes collegiate chapter at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the archdeacon's duties were carried out by the provost. I found only one example when a separate archdeacon was appointed: Miklós Beke, between 1323-1336 he was the chapter's prebend. It can be possibly explained by the fact that because Henrik provost was raised to the rank of bishop of Veszprém, therefore the appointment of a reliable deputy was necessary.

Elemér Mályus draw the attention to the fact that the method of obtaining a benefice was the following: the members of the chapter gained such a cultivation which was appropriate and suitable for the era. As a consequence a temporary but well-educated layer formed which was appropriate for the substitution of the canons. Therefore the clergy, who substituted the canons, could not be considered as private employee. The chapter consolidated their compliment and ensured their living. This layer was called *prebend* after the prebend which was granted for them.

At the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century it was general that the canons receded from chanting and they were the constant deputy in Szepes chapter. At the end of the century all the 16 canons under the chapter's provost received their benefice, but they did not live in the chapter's seat. There were some who were canons in Buda, and some who become parson in the territory of Szepes. They only got together in special occasions like the provost election in 1301. In connection with the absent members it was claimed that only those should have become canons that could really fulfil their duties. As a consequence a custom was acclimatized that if a canon had to be absent because of the chapter's affairs he also had to ensure a substitution. As a consequence a temporary but well-educated layer formed which was appropriate for the substitution of the canons. Therefore the clergy, who substituted the canons, could not be considered as private employee. The chapter consolidated their compliment and ensured their living.

## **Other Dignitaries**

### **Altar-or Chapel Director (*rector altaris*)**

In Szepes not only the cathedral's altar has a prebend but also the chapels of the cemetery of the Szepes church. The benefice of the altar directory primarily ensured the raise of the canon's revenue. Moreover they lived from this because the canon's or the parson's benefice could not possibly assure the living.

The Christ's Body chapel was especially notable and obtained a special role in the life of the chapter. The "old" Christ's Body chapel was constructed and sanctified in 1382 because the old cathedral was too small for bigger events and festivals. Palatine, István Szapolyai built a new gothic chapel on the place of the former one in 1488. He built it to the Saint Martin cathedral. He built this chapel for the sake of the dead member's salvation. After the death of the palatine, his wife Hedvig Tescheni started the allowance of the chapel. She created a new dignity for the place of the chapel director and this was *comes capellae*. This meant that beside the chapel director there were six chaplains who served the mass on certain days and chanted for the dead members of a family. The chapel director had to employ four chanting boys who chanted psalms day by day and they delivered masses on Sundays and on high days.

This chapel director could only be elected from the canons of the chapter. He was appointed by the provost or by the vicar. Important criteria were that he had to fulfil the service unconditionally and he had to live virtuous life appropriate for a priest. The new prebend was engaged to hold residence. For his living he, together with his personnel, got the duty of Somogy village found in Abaúj-torna county, and Kolbach, Kisfalud and his lands in the villages of Szeg.

### **Parsons of the Szepes Chapter:**

Parsons were the „mid-level” members of the clergy and like the canons they also had the right and opportunity to get a university degree and teach the young clergymen. Small wonder, by the 14<sup>th</sup> century gainful parishes just like canon position are also demanded by the clergymen from the Vatican. Exactly like canons they are also exempt from keeping a residence.

It often happened that some of the parishes were designated to support a prebendary doing non-physical work. Rulers also had the habit of bestowing a gainful parish to some of the clergymen living and working in their surrounding.

The relationship with the provost of Szepes was special as the Saxon had the right to elect their parsons freely. In this case the provost could not appoint the parsons of the parish churches belonging to him.

This special situation made the Saxon parsons realize the importance of protecting their interests. The interests of the Saxon parsons were for example represented by the parsons of bigger towns like Lőcse, Leibic, Váralja, Igló or Olaszi towards the Szepes chapter or the archbishop of Esztergom. “Universitas” being organised at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century is a somewhat stronger pool also beginning to stand on legal basis. The members of this community were equal as to their duties and rights.

The parsons elected by the Saxon settlements and consented by the provost of Szepes had the right to collect tithes in a territory assigned by the provost in return for which he was to pay a tax of silver between one half to one and a half fertó. Parallel to the organization of the 24 Saxon settlements, the corporation of the 24 Saxon parsons was also formed. The ecclesiastical standing of the Saxons in Transylvania or in Szepes was different. The ones in Transylvania had their own archdeaconal level of authority while the ones in Szepes belonged to the provost of Szepes. The parsons of these Saxon settlements owing to their privileged situation, their assets and erudition were highly respected. Their great sway was clearly shown by the fact that most of them became canons.

### **How to Become a Prebendary in the Chapter:**

Most probably the procedure was that the members of the chapter elected the provost who was then later approved by the authorized bishop of the diocese, which was the archbishop of Esztergom in this case. As the Szepes chapter was a collegiate chapter what often happened was that the electoral body elected the provost with the patronage of the ruler who, in an average case, was then later approved by the archbishop of Esztergom. Becoming a member could happen in three ways: the bestowal of the king, the bestowal of the pope or through the influence of the archbishop of Esztergom. In Szepes all three cases were present. Because of the reservation of the pope, the reasons of which are disputed in details in this thesis, the number of foreign canons significantly increased, coming mainly from the Krakow and the Boroszló chapters. In the meanwhile the phenomenon of *cumulatio beneficiorum* appeared. In the beginning it is only the foreign prebendaries who use this technique. However, it becomes widespread later. They could also get into the prebendary by means of exchange but it is not at all common.

The next chapter of my thesis enumerates all the possible ways of getting into a chapter drawing the conclusion that there is an overlap between the different possibilities or sometimes they mix while at other times even several ingredients play a role at the same time in getting into a chapter. In the case of Szepes the role of ecclesiastical support or the role of the relatives, that is, awarding played an important part. Analysing this, the Köblös method could only partly be used as the identification of the people because of the one word naming was simply not possible even in the case of provosts.

The number of canons coming from Polish territories in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century is outstandingly high, though even later they still represent a high percentage of the body. The Szepes chapter was not far from the Polish border and the trading route connecting the two countries crossed the border at Ólubló, where also the wine was transported. Getting prebendary in the Szepes chapter as a really attractive perspective even for those on the Krakow chapter as the Northern-Szepes region only belonged to the Krakow diocese until the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Later it belonged to authority of the Szepes provosty.<sup>4</sup> It is also of outstanding importance that the Polish-Hungarian personal union and the close family relations between the Hungarian and the Polish royal families could also greatly facilitate the Polish canon to become a prebendary. Among the prebendaries of the chapter 9 can be found of Polish origin.

The next chapter analyses the archetypes of becoming a prebendary, showing examples, with special respect to inside and outside support. Becoming a prebendary has a strong relation to going to university. During the course of the analysis it turned out that the number of canons with a university degree was lower compared to other chapters. Most probably, having only one prebend in Szepes could not secure a canon to make ends meet during his university studies. Being an average Szepes prebendary did not yield enough income for university studies, so some noble background, meaning noble origin or the background of a rich civilian family, always came in handy. Being only a few, the respect and prestige of a canon having a university degree was relatively high, and it also largely promoted their career. They mostly preferred the University in Vienna. Only very few of them went to the University of Krakow or one in Italy. This is probably because they belonged to one language community.

The next part of the chapter is about the career possibilities thorough serving the king. Over the 13<sup>th</sup> century, most of the canons in Szepes served at the king's or the queen's chancery. From the 14<sup>th</sup> century on, they serve the king and thus gain more income.

The familiar relations discussed here were not only characteristic of the whole of Hungary in the medieval age but also of the canons serving at different places. There certainly were several highly influential landlords who helped this or that one to get stallum, by using their connections in the background. Where this supporter was the ruler himself, is seen as outside connection. This group also includes serving the bishop, familiar archbishop, provostal or landlord connections. Undoubtedly, several of the Szepes prebendaries previously served the archbishop of Esztergom.

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<sup>4</sup> The inhabitation of the Szepes region, on the border of the Polish and the Hungarian kingdom, began in the 13th century. The first local group of people in the North was the Polish as these territories used to belong to Poland until the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The Polish king, Lokietek Ulászló, who fought the Czech (king II. Vencel) for power and for the unification of Poland assigned the whole of Felső- Szepes to his ally Károly Róbert in 1305. As consequence the process of resettling increased and it was two noble families, on the grounds of privileges gained Robert the first, the Berzevici and the Görgey, who ruled these settlements. It was the time when the Berzevici family built the castle of Nedec.

In this place I was trying to unveil what ecclesiastical post was given to the certain members before and after becoming a canon in the Szepes chapter. Even in this case the inside or outside support might have a role. One kind of outside support can be when someone serves the church somewhere other than the Szepes chapter and as a reward he becomes a member. Inside support here is the „homo capitularis, or homo noster” type of help, where someone is singled out because of his talent and is promoted in this way to become a member.

### **Tasks and Duties of Canons:**

By the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century canons live alone and their income, through testaments and other bestowals made by bishops, become so significant that they rise to become the middle layer of the ecclesiastical society. Their income covers their tuition-fees and also the collection of books. So the learned clergymen make deliberate efforts to get hold of these growing number of well-paying canon posts.

In the 14<sup>th</sup> century the prebendaries seem to be forgetting the original aims and the liturgy is played down. It means that the provosts often had to force the canons back on the right track, make them do their jobs and make them stay in one place only by using force or putting threats in prospect.

In fact, as the communal way of life was disappearing canons started to downgrade their duties and tasks to their vice-officers, which practically meant the lower grading clergymen within the chapter. Unfortunately this phenomenon was widespread all over Europe. The canons in loco participated in the liturgical events of the Szepes cathedral chapter meaning the church in Szepes under the “patrocinium” of St. Martin’s. In the Esztergom diocese the canons were obliged to participate in the convent services and the vesperae. The Szepes collegiate chapter was indeed formed within the Esztergom diocese so one part of the canons were also allowed to have Esztergom beneficiaries besides the Szepes prebends. It is obvious then that the findings of the 1397 Esztergom Minutes of the Parish Inspection are all applicable to the Szepes chapter.

In the Szepes chapter the process of the receding of the canons from the daily chanting and putting their vice-officers on duty instead was finished by the end of the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. All the 16 canons received their prebends and incomes but most of them simply did not live in the town where the chapter was seated. Most of them served as a parson within the Szepes region. They only congregated on highly special occasions such as the election of a new provost. Even in 1286 the ones physically in the chapter took measures against those not turning up. With the liturgy having to go on continuously the habit of the absent canons being represented first by their personal deputies at the services and chants came into practice, meaning the alter-servers and the prebendaries lead by the succentor. Prayers were lead by the sublector. But for the beneficiaries the most important thing definitely was to get the benefices that are due for turning up at these common events. At

other events it was their deputies to take part.

Hitherto published studies scrutinizing the personal composition had the following method of ranking: where the sources did not mark the ecclesiastical ranks of the person monitored, he was then categorized as archdeacon even if it was obvious that he was an incumbent but practically did not take part in any daily activity.

Based on the 13<sup>th</sup> century list of canons it can clearly be stated only about 6 canons up to 1301 that they were both working as consecrated priests and also as incumbents of some parish churches in the Szepes region. Their order also appears with their name. Two of them were canons as sacerdos (priests) while four of them were head-presbyters. Apart from them I have only found one person who served also as a parson, so he was ranking as an archdeacon. Furthermore there were also two clergymen at this time working in the chapter as canons.

By the 14<sup>th</sup> century almost all of the provosts of Szepes worked either for the royal chancery or for the Archbishop's Office in Esztergom. They were likely to be higher ranking priests in the hierarchy. At the same time during the course of the century it is clear that there were at least two provosts who were not completely sure to have been consecrated.

By the 14<sup>th</sup> century the number of canons acting as parsons had significantly increased. They were probably higher ranking in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The fact, however, needs to be highlighted that the foreign prebendaries were probably just attracted by the benefits and did no actual work within the chapter.

### **Cathedral School or Chapter School:**

In Szepeshely we are aware of the fact that a chapter school run from 1323 onwards. The establishment of this school might be in connection with the bishop's authority. It was lead by the all-time lector and the provost reserved himself the right of visitation. The existence and the importance of this school is vindicated by the dignity of the sublector and succensor. In 1323 the charter written about the act of provost election was not signed by all the canons. Only four of them signed it with their own hands. The names of the others were listed by the scholastic, the leader of the school. We only have more exact data of the Szepes School from the period of János Stock, as a school master position was established at that time.

## **The Staff of Public Authenticity:**

The complete notarial activity of public authenticity of this place is still to be analysed and scrutinized. In this thesis I can only undertake to look into the composition of the people working for this place.

The Szepes chapter already started to work as a place for public authenticity in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The real work was all lead by the lector whose title was „datum per manus” during the 14<sup>th</sup> century and „acta sunt haec et facta permanus” in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. This was why the reading canon became the second dignitary, that is, the deputy of the provost when the provost himself was away from the chapter. Thus in Szepes the reading canon is often a vicar as well. In the beginning a lector was not at all supposed to have a university degree but by the 15<sup>th</sup> century it was a common requirement.

The notary of the chapter who was the reading canon at the beginning received two thirds of the price of the open or closed letters, and one third of the price of patents. The rest of the money went to the other members of the chapter. If the notary was not the lector himself he could keep no more than just one third of the fee.<sup>5</sup> Notary experts only appeared in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. They had already studied compiling charters at the universities. The actual compiling of the charters always happened in the presence of several of the canons, whose names were put down. The activity of the notary was later laid down in § VIII. of the law. It said that in any lawsuit the chapter is to send a canon.

The Szepes chapter is one of the biggest landowners in the area. We can find a lot of data backing it from several authors, like Csánki, Ortvai or Rupp. The land went beyond the borders of Szepes and also included pieces of land in Liptó or Sáros, let alone the vineyards in Zemplén. All the income of the lands go to the body of the chapter. The sharing of the income was the job of the dean by strict rules. An exception was the lands owned by the prebendaries themselves. All the money that came from the serfs paid as tithe, or hill tax or catedraticum went to the chapter to make life bearable. The chapter also had a lot of cattle and other animals as well.

The decadence of the Hungarian state system did not harshly affect the chapter but it was more threatened and weakened by the expanding reformation.

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<sup>5</sup> HRADSZKY, 1901. 274.

## **Mentality:**

The best way we can come to know the way of thinking of the canons in Szepes is to look at their last wills. These papers tell all about what real estates and goods they really had, what goods they liked to buy, what their relation to other people was, like other canons or just talking of the people working around them.

So according to the testaments left behind, most of the canons were really solicitous about the chapter itself and being charitable and benevolent was quite common, which we could say was quite expected of them as canons as well. One of the common acts was the establishment and upkeep of chapels to support religious life in general.

## **Buildings:**

At the beginning, there was hardly any edifice in the single street of the chapter. First it was provost Muthmer who left a significant sum to build a palace for the provost. Later also provost János left a huge sum in his testament in 1348 to go on with the building of the palace. The church itself was not standing alone in the beginning but it was probably attached to the chapter house, just like in other places where the church was also built together with the house where the monks lived. One of the main supporters of the building of the provost church was provost György Pálóczi who left a really significant sum behind. This money was put in use during the period of provost János Stock. Then it was provost Gáspár Bak who had to go on raising money for the further building. In 1488 János Szapolyai enlarged the church by adding a gothic chapel to it, which was actually finished by his wife in 1493. Apart from the mansion of the canons and the palace of the provost there was hardly anything else right after the establishment. By the period of provost Jakab we have knowledge of 4 houses of the canons. Several chapels were also built, like the Corpus Christi chapel in the graveyard, or the Glorious Virgin chapel, later the St. Valentine and St. Andrew chapels and the Ossarium. The rector of the chapter school lived in a separate building, just as the choristers and the church guards lived separately.

## **Revenues:**

In addition to lands, prebends, that is, *alafas*<sup>6</sup> were also formed which meant settlements, whose parsons were also the canons of the chapter and were also obliged to support the seat of the chapter. This resulted in the matters of the settlement being taken care of by a deputy parson but the tenth went to the canon. Even from the very establishment the Szepes chapter was given the tenth of Szepes in a way that the king compensated the archbishop of Esztergom with the tenth of the taxes paid in Szepes. So, according to the charter issued by IV. László, all the tenth garnered in Szepes County went to the provost. The provost, however, let the canons have the tenth in return for which they were to pay the provost so called seat money (*census cathedraticus*) to prove their obedience on St. Andrew's day, every year.

## **Career Made from the Chapter, that is, Prospects of Advancement**

The canons in the Szepes chapter had several advancement prospects. The biggest challenge was to become a prelate. Another way was to become a bishop or even an archbishop even if the title was only given *ad personam*. Another important factor was the palpable and significant financial and prestigious differences between the different mitres and primacies. These differences often meant a difference in the hierarchy as well, just as in the contest of gaining higher and higher positions.

During the monitored period, two of the 247 members gained the title of the archbishop of Esztergom and nine became bishops. With regard to the number of canons it means that 3 % of the canons managed to build an ecclesiastical and also political career as a prelate.

However, the canons of the 13<sup>th</sup> century upon becoming prebendaries did not leave the place and stayed in one chapter. There could be several explanations to this. Most of the canons came from this Saxon area, which was the place where they were born. Their privileges and incomes were secured which means that they belonged to a closed community. The privileged status of the Saxon parsonages was an inevitable part of the Saxon autonomy. Belonging to the community was much stronger than the urge to gain further benefits. The representatives of the parsons at this time were also the members of the chapter which meant that the interests were fully and efficiently protected. The corporation of the 24 Saxon parsonages was also a force that had influence. Over this period only the provosts made advancement (Benedek II., Lukács, Bertalan, Jakab). The provosts bearing any dignitaries can

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<sup>6</sup> An extra income of a canon.

mostly be found in the king's or the queen's chancery.

During the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the phenomenon of advancement becomes more common as opportunities flourish. In an attempt to show the powers of the king as much as possible the apt people were often transferred from one prebendary into another.

Studying the advancement of the canons of Szepes it was found that they more tended to accumulate benefits, that is, besides keeping the Szepes stallum they also tried to get into other chapters or gain further benefits. The explanation is probably simple as the body of the canons in the Szepes chapter, apart from the few higher rankers, was basically founded by the local parsons. Getting ahead by leaving the Szepes stallum was more characteristic of the foreigners, like polish, who gave up the Szepes stallum only to get a better, a more gainful one.

### **The Opportunity to Become a Mitre, an Attempt Made in 1348**

Over the course of the medieval age we know of several attempts to raise a collegiate chapter established by the king to a mitre. So in the closing chapter of my thesis I would like to highlight the problem of these attempts. Having obtained the rank of a mitre would not only have raised the prestige of the chapter but would also have made it independent of the archbishop of Esztergom. This break-away would have caused a serious plummet in prestige and a tremendous loss of money for the Primacy. III. András and Nagy Lajos however, did not take it into account and wished to remunerate the services of the provost of Szepes. This attempt was, however, unsuccessful because of several reasons. Firstly, Csanád Telegdi, the archbishop of Esztergom did not really get on well with the provost of Szepes because of a lawsuit of Tárcafü. Secondly, the abbey of Garamszentbenedek who was commissioned to inspect this case, did a favour to the archbishop and put the case to sleep so well that the king, almost always at war, could not really deal with the case although the provost of Szepes was under the personal patronage of both the king and the queen.

### **Summary and Findings:**

In studying the personal composition of the chapter my working method required the extension of the monitored time stretch to be able to draw the appropriate conclusions. This clearly enabled me to scrutinize a wider spectrum. Applying this method the personal composition of the chapter is 247. Thus one third of the 247 showed only where they originated from. This means that the statements made are rough so they only show tendencies.

Further studies into this field will definitely enlarge our range of the knowledge.

The mainline of the thesis describes career types within the chapter. One type is definitely the group of those who made very similar careers due to the benefits. Analysing the careers of canons we came to the conclusion that apart from the special standing of the Saxon background and the exemption the chapter is basically the same as any other chapters, like the ones in Pozsony, Győr, Fehérvár, Buda, Várad, Pécs. Regarding their provostal rights it is perhaps most similar to the Pozsony chapter.

The backbone of the chapter was formed by the simple Saxon canons coming from the region, enjoying their prebends for a relatively long time. During the analysis of their career we scrutinized their origin, their way of gaining their prebendaries, their mobility, advancement and their university studies. Comparing the appreciable data, nearly half of the canons came from the neighbouring settlements, while more than half of them came from other parts of the country or from abroad to bear dignitary positions. Canons arriving from the proximate settlements could enjoy their prebendaries for longer time, while those who arrived from somewhere else spent only 3-6 years in Szepes. They were responsible for carrying out the public authenticity duties. They got their prebends owing to local relationships. In their case we cannot really talk about mobility, and they did not accumulate benefits. These benefits secured their basic living which also means that it was quite incidental whether they attended a university or not.

Another huge group of canons was the Polish group. They appeared in the largest number in the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> in the chapter's body. This phenomenon was mostly characteristic when the personal union was formed between the Hungarian kingdom and the Polish kingdom in which I. Lajos and his Polish relatives combined the two states.. Polish canons used their benefits for gaining further benefits and to build a career (legation, diplomatic missions, and court services) get a university degree and obtain noble and dignitary titles. They show a far more dynamic picture. For them it was an opportunity for advancement. Prebendaries are very considerable in their case. However, this was only a thin layer of all the members of the chapter.

The dignitaries again show a different picture. At the beginning even the pillar canons came from the region, while in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century the ones coming from outside the Szepes region will more tend to bear dignitary titles.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century all the provosts came from somewhere else to the chapter. Only one of them was local Provost Jakab, who formerly was the reading canon in the chapter. They were often the employees of the king's or queen's chancery. This dignity came as a reward for their services in the royal court. Out of the 9 provosts of the monitored period only 3 of them stayed longer in the position of the provost. They practically finished their lives here. Over the course of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, however, these dignities were more likely to be filled with the representatives of the archbishop of Esztergom or the nominees of the ruler. Getting them in these beneficiary positions was often a reward of personal patronage. Of of them was of Szepes origin and the other belonged to the close family of the king. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century it was

mostly the ones supported by Zsigmond and Mátyás who were put in these positions, while in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Szapolyai's nominees were the winners.

Out of the 25 monitored persons 9 made it to become a bishop and two of them the archbishop of Esztergom. Their advancement was rather active. As it was seen some of them got their position just for what they did in the royal court, some of them even without being consecrated. Three of them became consecrated only after gaining the dignity. They could make a living more easily, because with the duties of the bishop they could earn extra revenues. They also could attend to universities. Even more of them could be found in some of the noted Mid-European universities in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

As for erudition, among the Szepes canons the most popular universities were that of Krakow, Padova, Bologna and Vienna. As the Saxons' mother tongue was German anyway, they preferred to send their pupils to German speaking universities, like in Vienna. During the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century the Szepes region sent 27 pupils altogether. It is a surprising piece of data as the Saxons in Transylvania gave 27 per cent of the teachers and 20 per cent of the students at the Vienna University.

The distance was also an important factor. 8-9 students went to Vienna from Kassa, almost as many as from the Csanád or Pozsega region. To Krakow they sent less than 5 canons to study. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century more and more of them were trying to buy books, as with the introduction of printing the prices of the books decreased while their availability increased. Two of the canons, János Henckel and his uncle György Leuschedit were outstandingly fond of books. This enabled the establishment of the chapter's library. The erudition of the residents was facilitated, because the neighbouring Saxon parsons created such fraternity with the establishment of the library which did not only protect their interests but it also allowed common erudition. Canons could also enjoy the advantages of the library because some of them were parsons as well. The establishment was also fostered first with the consolidation of humanism and then with the influence of reformation.

It became obvious from some canon's last will that those who had better circumstances undertook patronage. Furthermore, those dignitaries of the chapter who achieved the rank of a pontifical supported the erudition, culture development and renovation with grants.

One of the most important attempts of the scrutinised era was the elevation of the chapter to the rank of a mitre. This attempt in the 14<sup>th</sup> century had a number of high-ranking supporters; however, it failed partly due to the resistance of the bishop of Esztergom and the deliberate delay of the Vatican. A clearly positive proceeds of this attempt was however, that later another attempt was made and through the reorganisation of the territorial borders of the dioceses the Szepes chapter finally became a mitre in 1776.