Eötvös Loránd University
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PhD Thesis

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The Exempla of the Codex Érdy

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I. The Main Issues of the Dissertation

The dissertation's main goal is the examination of the Codex Érdy's exempla (a codex written around 1526 by the so called Anonymous Carthusian).There are two basic questions that needed to be clarified before the description of the codex's exempla.

1) Which are the direct sources of these exempla? The unique characteristics of the Anonyous Carthusian' exempla can only be understood if the Hungarian variant's source is known.
2) For whom was the Codex Érdy destined? An important peculiarity of the exempla is that when they are inserted in a sermon they are adapted to the actual public. In the case of the Codex Érdy this aspect can be examined if we know who was the target of the Hungarian text.

For the understanding of the codex's exemplum handling methods we needed to determine the sources as extensively as possible (at least in the case of the exempla) and to establish the target public. In addition to these basic questions the dissertation undertook the following tasks:

3) We have to find an exemplum definition that fits our material using the result of the Hungarian and the international research.
4) The position of the Codex Érdy's exempla is to be defined in their immediate context: in the corpus of the old Hungarian linguistic records.
5) Having confronted the Hungarian stories with their source we have to state the characteristics of the Anonymous Carthusians's way of using exempla.

II. Answers and Suggestions

The dissertation consists of two chapters: 1. *The Presentation of the Codex Érdy with the Approach of the Information History;* 2. *The exempla of the Codex Érdy and Their Context*. In these chapters the dissertation offers the following answers and suggestions.

1) The Sources of the Codex Érdy
The thesis approaches the question of the Codex Érdy's sources from two directions: firstly, it contains a table of the sources with specific data taken from the special literature completed with information regarding the measure of the similarity; secondly, presents two tables that help to inspect the libraries of the Carthusian Order in order to reconstruct the library of the Anonymous Carthusian.

Furthermore, the dissertation pays a special attentions to one of the Codex Érdy's most important sources, to the auxiliary books of Pelbartus de Themeswar. The Hungarian author and his fellow member, Osvát Laskai are extraordinary characters of the Old Hungary's literature. It is a perplexing fact that their works were published during their lifetime by distant western European printing houses: it was rather uncommon in Hungary at that period. The thesis states that we should look the works of these two authors form a different angle and insert them into the line of the pre-Reformational Hungarian concerned printed books. It is confirmed from many aspects that they were written and printed (especially at the beginning) for the Hungarian reading public: it is supported by the texts themselves (see the prologues, the Hungarian saints and Hungarian words of the works), by the usage and diffusion of the works (see Pelbartus de Themeswar's translated sermons in the old Hungarian linguistic records) and by the literary environment in which they were created (see the breviaries and missals of Esztergom, the breviary and missal of the Paulines or the

Legendae Sanctorum regni hungariae etc.). This point of view throws a new light upon the issue of the pre-Reformational printing practice in Hungary.

2) The Target Public of the Codex Érdy

The target public of the Codex Érdy is rather mixed according to the prologue of the Anonymous Carthusian: it addresses the lay brothers and sisters, the nuns and the youth at the same time who belong to different religious orders. The research hasn't paid enough attention to this complex and unusually extended public. The dissertation—starting from the codex's position in the information history—offers a reinterpretation of this matter: many data gets explained if we assume that the Codex Érdy was meant to get printed. Besides its mixed and wide target public it is supported by the fact that the text opens the door to more means of reading (private reading vs. public reading); that the codex doesn't fit in well in the line of the old Hungarian linguistic records; and the author marks out big objects for his work: he presents his work to the public as a kind of a Bible-substitute that should be a weapon against the spreading Lutheran heresy. The work's appropriateness for printing is also supported by international parallels.

The Anonymous Carthusian could have reached his goals settled in his Latin prologue only if his work would have been able to get printed. The Anonymous Carthusian's work reveals itself as an important stage of a transition even without the printed form—a transition which starts from the extreme of the contemplation-translations' and Bible-fragments' corpus found in the old Hungarian linguistic records and ends with the extreme of the printed sermons and Bible-translations written in Hungarian, printed in grate numbers and used by many readers.

The codex's position in the information history could be summarized as follows: the work was created in a period in which the question of the Bible written in the mother language and the question of printing books were intensifying; the informational revolution of the handwriting and the printing in Hungary happened at the same time, namely the flourishing of the codex literature in the cloisters coincided with the first Hungarian related prints.

3) The Definition of the Exemplum

The thesis takes the so called GAHOM-group's exemplum definition for its basis. One of the most important characteristics of this definition is that it interprets the exemplum as a rhetorical function: the exemplum is a mode of persuasion based on various types of narratives for the purpose of teaching a lesson. In spite of this fact there are certain differences between the methods of the GAHOM-group's researchers and the approach offered by this thesis. The Hungarian material—as it contains far less texts than the French material—offers the possibility to observe the usage of the mediaeval exempla in a higher resolution. There are so many collections of exemplum available for the French researchers that for them it is considered a secondary task to collect the exempla inserted in the sermons.

On the other hand the Hungarian exempla are mostly found in composite codices and are often inserted in specialised contexts; moreover there is only one codex that can be considered a collection of exemplum, the so called *Példák könyve*. In the case of the stories that are present in composite codices and are already accommodated to a certain text it is really hard to define what we call an exemplum. Basically any story can occur in text in the function of exemplum if it is suitable to be used as a proof for something. It can be a miraculum, a part of a legend or an entire legend. Besides it can be asserted that the functional definition of the exemplum already contradicts itself in the case of the collections of exempla: the exempla found in them actually are not exemplum in a rhetorical sense because in that context their goal is not the conviction of someone but to give material to convince.

Regarding the peculiarities of the Hungarian material the dissertation comes forward with the following suggestion: we should put aside the functional definition when we establish the Hungarian corpus, and we should examine not the exempla but the stories that can assume the role of exemplum. Practically it means the examination of the entirety of the mediaeval narrative

material written in Hungarian.

4) The Exempla in the Old Hungarian Linguistic Records

We started to build a database called the Database of Old Hungarian Exempla (Régi Magyar Exemplumadatbázis) in order to understand the Codex Érdy's exempla in its context. At the moment the database contains 152 exempla which means approximately a 30–40% preparedness. The database makes it easy to compare the exempla in the old Hungarian linguistic records: it is served by the keywords linked to the exempla, the data of the catalogues and the information provided about the Hungarian parallels.

At this time the Database of the Old Hungarian Exempla doesn't have the ambition to process the entirety of the Hungarian mediaeval narrative material, neither the dissertation has among its goals to analyse all the narrative parts of the Codex Érdy. But we do declare that our material of exempla must be examined from this point of view. The definition of the typical exemplum is precarious in its every detail: several borderline cases prove that the outlines of the corpus are very uncertain.

5) The Exempla used by the Anonymous Carthusian

Having compared the codex's exempla with their sources we have stated the followings.

a) Stylistic differences between the Codex Érdy's exempla and their sources are frequent. In this context generally we can assume that the Hungarian text is closer to the spoken language than the original Latin one.

b) Factual differences are typical and they are related with the Anonymous Carthusian's personal knowledge: occasionally he inserts new characters or new objects into the Hungarian variant of the exemplum.

c) In some cases we can notice the reinterpretation of the exemplum: sometimes the Anonymous Carthusian puts them into a new context or alters the structure of the sermon.

III. The Supplements of the Dissertation

The first chapter of the dissertation is linked with three supplements. 1. supplement: *Table of Sources Used by the Codex Érdy;* 2. supplement: *The Books of the Hungarian Carthusian Cloisters;* 3. supplement: *The Books of the Carthusian Monastery of Seitz until the Year 1600.*

The table of sources—enriched with citations from the special literature—is found at the end of the dissertation in printed form; the two tables of the books are downloadable from the research group's homepage in xlsx-format: http://sermones.elte.hu/?az=380_karth_000

The second chapter is linked with a large supplement with the title: *The Texts of the Exempla already Present in the Database of Old Hungarian Exempla.* It contains the following information about the 152 uploaded exempla: their identification number; the exemplum's position within the codex; the summary of the exemplum; the transcription of the text. Further information can be found at the homepage: http://sermones.elte.hu/exemplumadatbazis/