THE WORK OF THE CONVENT OF PANNONHALMA AS A PLACE OF AUTHENTICATION (LAT. *LOCUS CREDIBILIS*) 1321–1500

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I. SCHOLARLY PRELIMINARIES

Papers dealing with the history of the Hungarian network of authentic institutions unique in all of Europe, the so-called places of authentication (loca credibilia) have appeared fairly frequently in recent years. The standard work on the subject determining scholarship ever since is the essay by Ferenc Eckhart written in German almost a century ago. Eckhart encouraged many to approach the topic from several views. Beyond his work, ie. summarising our knowledge about the work of such bodies in general, on several reasons it is essentially necessary to study the functioning of these institutions one by one. This work, however, can be considered valid only if it is based upon most of the still available charters and files issued by the given place of authentication in the period of examination.

We may get the most complete view studiing those places of authentication of which not only the charters issued by them to the clients, but other documents of the authentic work for their own usage, protocols, drafts, and even their public archives (archivum loci credibilis) are preserved. Considering the mass and type of material and its method outstanding is the study by Bernát Kumorovitz describing the work of the Prémonstratensian convent of Lelesz. Its most impressive feature is that instead of the fall of the medieval Hungarian Kingdom, 1526 he chose the end of the period of examination adjusting to the history and charter-issuing practice of the convent.

Similarly, it was not the political history, but coincidentally to that the catastrophe at Mohács and the advance of the Turkish, which meant the end of functioning of the medieval place of authentication that determined the periodisation of Ferenc Szakály's study on the work of the place of authentication at Szekszárd. Due to the destruction and dispersion of the public

archive of the convent, unlikely to Kumorovitz's method, he could follow only the way of systematically collecting the charters by the convent from the different family and common archives that (at least partly) avoided the destruction of early modern times. This was equivalent to the reconstrucion of a theoretic public archives on the basis of the principle of provenance, resulted by the peculiar situation of medieval Hungarian archival resources and consequently the small number of the convent's documents survived. This database served as the basis of the elaboration and the same method has been followed by practically all recent works studying the work of several places of authentication – most of them only until the reform of the system of the institution in 1351, or the revision of authentic seals in 1353, however.

II. OBJECT OF THE STUDY

Our target is to observe the characteristics of authentic work in the case of the Benedictine convent in Pannonhalma, an institution whose protocols not, but late medieval issues and drafts are preserved numerously in its own public archives, and whose charters – as to my complete collection of data – count 800 pieces till 1500, and another 200 until the (otherwise to the topic irrevelant) year of 1526. This number cannot be measured to that of the more significant chapters or convents, therefore not impossible to survey entirely, and not too small, so that one may conclude to relevant statements concerning the functioning of the institution.

My examination needed certain chronological determination. During the collection of the full medieval material it turned out, that – beyond the exposition of individual cases, the content of certain charters or the description of their internal or external characteristics – we should write about the authentic

work or draw relevant-to-be conclusions about it only if the number of the documents involved is significantly more than 1. Thus the trap of repeating the statements of secondary resources, namely: "in the case of the given place of authentication everything went the same as in other places" can be avoided, and we can produce new and independent results based on numerous self-collected data which may well be consonant to the conclusions of other studies based on independent and resource-based research. In my study, therefore, I did not deal thoroughly with the Arpadian Age, from which only 13 texts or mentionings of charters preserved.

Due to the need for an increased volume of issues the year 1353, overestimated by scholarship of the last 10-15 years offered itself as a "post quem". Though it brought for Pannonhalma a well-visible increase of issues, it raised rather new questions examining the sources. As the boom in authentic work and its quantitative development were carried out during the period described by Imre Szentpétery as the "age of mass-issued charters" I began my examination with the 1320's, which period seems to be important also from the country-wide view and when the work in Pannonhalma became regular. The end of the period is the year when Máté of Tolna became head of the convent, 1500. It well may be a watershed from several points of view. Considering monastic life, then finished the era of commendators that had lasted for several decades and coincidentally the direct royal protectorate that had lasted since 1470 with small gaps also ended. On the other hand – from the point of view of the place of authentication – the volume of authentic issues will have increased significantly in the following years, changing not only in quantity, but also showing development in their quality.

Thus I study the period between 1321 and 1500, owing special importance to the era from the death of Sigismund of Luxemburg to the death of Mathias Corvinus, a period more than a half century. The reason for this is that due to the

activity of King Sigismund intervening in the system of authentic institutions with several statutes, from many points of view this period shows a more homogeneous picture than the earlier, and this was even confirmed and partly refined by the practice under King Albrecht, Ulászló I (Wladislaw I) and Ladislas V, and especially by the legislation of Mathias Corvinus. Therefore the charters published in the Appendix contain the charters of the convent from 1438-1490, introducing alternative solutions for problems arising during the publication of charters of places of authentication and giving a sample from the now under-preparation next volume of the charters of the convent of Pannon-halma and its method of edition.

III. RESOURCES OF RESEARCH, METHOD OF ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The basis of the dissertation is a series of charters by the place of authentication of the convent of Pannonhalma. Using the charters analysed in their full text I could search answers to such questions, which were unapproachable for studies using only collections supplying extracts. For instance I was able to study some obscured questions in terminology, as the extracts written in Hungarian rarely show the original latin terms for citation and contending (citatio – evocatio). They also lack the description of formal parts of the charters: the expressions seeming to be redundant concerning a shorter period from a pont of view of longer period might reveal changes in the practice of courts or the chancellery of the places of authentication.

The resource database of the dissertation. however, indicates things beyond the work of the convent of Pannonhalma. First of all, I would like to show in the work of publishing charters issued during the authentic work in practical usage the theory, that has been stressed in scholarship for long, namely

that the claimant had to prove his suit in front of the court by the consonant reports (lat. relatio) of two places of authentication and the responsible county authority. Thus I tended to collect the parallel reports, which – due to word-by-word equivalences – helped to correct the texts of stained of damaged charters of Pannonhalma. Secondly, in several cases references in some texts and backpage notes could be connected to charters preserved in full text, thus the whole series of lawsuit could be reconstructed.

After trying to collect as completely as possible the charters that may be connected to the work of the place of authentication of Pannonhalma I systematized them following the method of earlier scholarship and grouped them after their content. After separating the fassiones and reports (relationes), however, the formation of smaller groups could only be based on the charters of Pannonhalma, as earlier studies are in lack of a clear terminology. Beside the analysis of the different types of charters and their most important internal and external characteristics the role of the clients of the authentic institution, the so-called "royal men" (homines regii) and the delegates of the convent (testimonium) is also examined. Connected to this latter, separate chapter deal with the range of the place(s) of authentication.

Beyond some new statements the study may give the greatest aid by composing new, forwarding questions. The royal orders (mandatum) with annual validity addressed to church institutions, that were hitherto mentioned only in general by the scholarship, could be determined chronologically. Their disappearance in the middle of the 15th century and the legislative background could be explained only in the mirror of resources analysed, which suggest the increasing importance of the role of the central courts.

The preparation of the study was accompanied all the time by the question of control. As no other late medieval place of authentication was studied before in this depth and only a few charters are available in extenso from the period,

my answers can only be valid concerning the convent of Pannonhalma. As a later mission, therefore, another place of authentication – a more important one (a chapter) and in the same region, if possible – and the available resources concerning its work should be chosen to be elaborated with the same method.

IV. EARLIER PUBLICATIONS ON THE TOPIC

– A pannonhalmi konvent hiteleshelyének 14. századi oklevélátírásai. In: Mons Sacer 996–1996. Pannonhalma 1000 éve I. Pannonhalma, 1996. 463–470.

– A pannonhalmi konvent kiadatlan okleveleiből (1257–1387). Válogatta és kiadásra előkészítette: Csóka Gáspár OSB – Szovák Kornél – Dreska Gábor. In: Mons Sacer I. 439–457.

– A pannonhalmi konvent hiteleshelyének működése a középkorban. In: Egyház és művelődés. Pannonhalma 996–1996. Budapest, 1997. 57–67.

– A pannonhalmi konvent hiteleshelyének működése a Zsigmond-korban. (A pannonhalmi konvent hiteleshelyének 1387 és 1437 között készült kiadványai a Pannonhalmi Bencés Főapátsági Levéltárban). Levéltári Közlemények (68) 1997. 3–61.

– Baráti határviták a XV. században. Turul (72) 1999/3–4. 66–71.

– Collectio Diplomatica Benedictina. A Pannonhalmi Bencés Főapátsági Levéltár középkori oklevelei. Szerkesztette és a szöveget gondozta: Dreska Gábor. Nagykanizsa – Pannonhalma, 2001. (Szöveges adatbázis)

– A pannonhalmi konvent hiteleshelyi működésének oklevéltára I. (1244–1398). (A Győri Egyházmegyei Levéltár Kiadványai 6.) Győr, 2007.

– A pannonhalmi konvent hiteleshelyének kiadványai 1321–1500. In: 825 éves a hiteleshelyi írásbeliség. Szerk.: Bilkei Irén – Fedeles Tamás. (Tanulmányok a Pécsi Egyházmegye Történetéből V. Pécs, 2007. (Sajtó alatt)