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Theses of Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation

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**The organizing role of the Franciscans of Fülek in its community and
culture from the end of the 19 th century to 1945**

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I. The aims of the dissertation

Pope Leo XIII wrote about social teaching of the church in his encyclic (1891) *Rerum novarum* and he started to renew with it the Roman Catholic church at the end of the beginning of the 20th century. The pope's circular was the Christian answer, so it was a digest of social teaching of the church which brought the church and the culture into harmony. It dealt with two important tasks: The first task is the role of Catholics in policy and everyday life. The second one is religious renovation.

The first aim of the dissertation to show how the catholic renaissance realized in the territory of the Diocese of Rozsnyó founded in 1776 mainly in Fülek and its region.

The Franciscans of Fülek had a prominent role in the life of the Catholic population. Their pastoral activity had a great impact on society. In the late 19th century, the church lost a prominent role in shaping cultural policy. The State Institutions gradually took the church place. The dissertation shows how culture struggle was realized in Fülek and its surroundings.

The activity of the Franciscans is inseparable from the history of its town. Their role increased mainly in the town's cultural life from the beginning of the 20th century.

The industrialization of the town began in the early 20th century. I examined how affected the foundation of enamel factory and the appearance of the working class to the religion of the population. I will show how the Franciscans reacted to the events of WORLD WAR I, what role they played in the lives of the people of Fülek during the war.

After the Treaty of Trianon, the Upper Hungarians and the Catholic Church were separated. It was formed a new state. It's called Czechoslovakia. The Hungarian nation has become a minor nation. This degradation has not only spiritually affected for the Hungarians, but it was also destructive for cultural memories. Since 1920 Hungarian cultural memory and the identity of consciousness have found into the permitted category. The state of

Czechoslovakia started to destroy Hungarian monuments and to abolish Hungarian spirituality. Dissemination of the Hungarian press was banned in the country. The Czechoslovak Hungarian press and book publishing belonged to strong censorship in the early days. The Catholic Church was in an unquestionable situation during the monarchy, losing its prerogatives in the newly formed Czechoslovak state.

I tried to reveal within the framework of The Upper Hungarian Catholic Church, what role played the Hungarian Franciscans of Fülek in the creating and preserving the identity of consciousness, cultural life and cultural memory. Fülek was almost a Hungarian town in 1920, its population was around 3,200. After the Treaty of Peace, the cultural mission of the Franciscans played more important role in the town and that's why they did everything. They were affected not only for the town's cultural life by their activities, but also they played an important role in the preservation of the local Hungarian identity.

According to my research, I describe how the local Czechoslovak offices treated the Hungarian Franciscans and how they tried to obstruct their activities.

II. Methodological aspects and sources

Investigation of the Franciscans of Fülek and the settlement, the region relationship allows for at least three approaches:

1. Church history approach
2. social history approach
3. local history approach

In my dissertation, I focused primarily on social history and local history approaches. In my research, I focused primarily on the multifaceted impact of the Franciscans on Fülek's society. According to the chronological order, I divided my doctoral dissertation into three major units. The first unit is from the end of the 19th century, the Catholic renew lasts until 1918. The second unit covers the period from Trianon to the return of 1938.

The third unit covers the period 1938-1945. In my dissertation, I also examined the activities of other monasteries and compared them with Fülek's monastery.

Sources

During my work I tried to uncover the documents of the Slovak archives concerning Fülek. The backbone of my dissertation is HISTORIA DOMUS FILEKIENSIS in the Franciscan monastery of Fülek. It is part of the period from 1738 to 1945 and consists of documentation in the archives of the monastery.

An important source of my research is the two HISTORIA DOMUS in the archives of the Franciscans of Füllek, which provide unique data on the micro-history of the town and the local community. They are the most valuable documents in the archives of the parish and the monastery. These documents help to gain insight into the life of a given settlement, the community, the development of the town, its temporary decline.

The study of the documents helped to understand how global, that is, world-class historical traumas, as they affected a community life.

In the chronological order of HISTORIA DOMUS, not only the parish, the church and the catholic community history were identified, but also the micro-history of the given settlement.

III. Scientific results, Further development opportunities

a/ Since the founding of the monastery, the Franciscans in and around the town have not only done pastoral work, but have also been involved in education and health care. The Franciscan monastery has always been a central place in the life of the town. From the middle of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, the monastery played an important role, as travellers, officials and high-ranking military officials were accommodated here. The accommodation of high-ranking guests helped the Franciscans of Fülek to form a personal relationship system.

In Fülek, the monastery was the election centre of the town because the town hall was built in 1905. During the election, the Electoral Commission and the clergy arriving for the elections were accommodated in the monastery. HISTORIA DOMUS provides a unique picture of the elections in the monarchy and the role of the monks. During the monarchy, the Franciscans of Fülek supported The Independence Party. There was a conflict between the monarchy and the church because of the ordinance of marriage and baptism. Therefore, the Franciscans did not publicly support the independence Party in Fülek. After Trianon, the parties with Hungarian national identity were preferred.

b/ In Fülek, most people were Catholics, and mixed marriages were rare, so baptism and marriage laws barely affected parish. The Franciscans of Fülek tried to satisfy Pope Leo XIII's efforts to involve the widest possible social class in the life of the church.

c/ The „Canonica visitatio” takes us into the relationship of factory workers and the church. The writer of the visitatio mostly highlights the negative effect of workers on the people regularly visiting the church, whilst this is the only instance meant to be negative in this – otherwise – peaceful relationship. Based on these documents it can be said, that local workers were semi-active

devotionals, more less regularly visiting the church, thanks mainly to the ones coming from surrounding villages.

It is remarkable, that during the 1910's census Fülek district has shown his significance with 5th highest percentage of people working in the industry countrywise. Leaving out statistical details we can summarize, that compared to other villages in the district Fülek's main employer was not the mining industry, but manufacturing and railways. The high percentage of workers was beginning to cause a real challenge for the Franciscans to intercede between church and the people in 1910s.

d/ The Franciscans were mainly supported by local elite, both from morality and finance perspective. Their names can be often found in the *Historia Domuses*. After 1918, the elite being closer to industry rather than agriculture was still dominating the support of local Franciscans. A very good example of such support was factory director Vilmos Hulita.

e/ Later, in the early 1920s a growing conflict between Hungarian Franciscans and Czechoslovak bureaus arised. Hungarian speaking monks and priests were the first to get expelled from Czechoslovakia for any insignificant mistake done. The mainstream conflict was clearly nationality related. One of the outcomes of this aggressive, nationality based unjust exchange of Catholic monks was the fact, that municipalities with less than 20% of Hungarians, were deprived of hungarian holy masses. The complexity of problem only arised, when Fülek's Franciscans had to become members of newly formed Slovak church. They had to maintain obedience towards Slovak Franciscan order, Slovak Catholic church, on the other hand their mission was to keep and help growing the local Hungarian communities. This mission had to be reevaluated after the Trianon Dictate. They had to deal with deep depression of Hungarians after both Trianon and the World War. All efforts of Franciscans to heal the mental wunds were realized by Czech authorities, who deliberately tried to put down all related activities.

f/ The significance of Fülek's Franciscans did not base exclusively on religious activities, their *Historia Domus* shows us important historical facts from the cultural or political life of Fülek. Had not they been recorded in the

Historia Domus, for sure they would have disappeared shortly within a few decades, as the Hungarian national consciousness together with related physical evidences was systematically ruined by Czechoslovakian authorities after 1920. The aim of government was to extensively replace all the possible memories post factum. They declared the „official way” of evaluation of the history, the way of thinking of historical facts, events and people. They undisturbedly assisted the clearance of memories of great Hungarian achievements or cultural awareness. In such chaotic period Franciscans were a great help for locals, they helped to organize all sort of cultural events, thus clearly having main role in saving the identity of Hungarians.

g/ Fülekk's Franciscans due to their favourable geographical location were relatively out of scope of mentioned endeavor controlling primarily locations nearer to the capital, Pozsony. Fülekk's citizens also were mostly Hungarian. Despite numerous efforts of authorities to repress Hungarian culture they eventually did not succeed. One of the reasons why they did not, was a Slovak province prefect named Olsovsky Mansvét, who had always been sympathizing with Hungarians, and turned a blind eye to pro-hungarian activities made by Franciscans in Fülekk. It is said to be his merit, that most of the Hungarian Franciscans could survive those years in Czechoslovakia. He had never hidden his empathy for Hungarians, and always preferred to stay on their side in spite of his Slovak descent. He was even sentenced for panslavic views back in the time of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

h/ The Franciscan's attitude was then completely changed in 1927. The new local prefect named P.Kósa Szalvátor intended to withdraw all Hungarian culture-supporting objectives, and began to focus on renovation of the monastery. Based on clear evidences he was a divisive personality, who started to make a gap between monks and Hungarian locals. He never ever denied that he was going to privilege the interests of Czechoslovakia against interests of local Hungarian citizens. Therefore, from the late 1920s Franciscan's behaviour was growingly showing a rather negative impact on Fülekk's cultural life.

My aim in the dissertation was to point out Franciscan's worth in the life of the city, and more importantly to get them back to the historical memory of Füleki.

IV. Publications in this topic

Baucsek Csaba 2010: Ferencesek. In *Nógrád-Novohrad értékei, Tanulmányok a Neogradiensis Eurorégió kulturális, történelmi és természeti értékeiről*, Salgótarján, 55-57.

Baucsek Csaba 2010: Františkáni . In *Hodnoty Nógrád–Novohrad, Štúdie o kultúrnych, historických a prírodných hodnotách Euroregiónu Neogradiensis*, Salgótarján, 55-57.

Baucsek Csaba 2011: Az Igazságos háború tematikája az erkölcssteológiában In Pánczél Hegedűs János (szerk.): *Miles Christi Évkönyv, MMXI*, Budapest, 87-123.

Baucsek Csaba 2018: „*Vae victis*” – „*Jaj a legyőzötteknek*“. In *Katedra*, XXV/3, november, 7-8.

Conference papers

Baucsek Csaba 2010: Ferencesek. In *Nógrád-Novohrad értékei, Tanulmányok a Neogradiensis Eurorégió kulturális, történelmi és természeti értékeiről*, Salgótarján, 55-57.

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