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**Indulgences and indulgence letters in the late medieval
Hungary**

Dissertation abstracts

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I. PRELIMINARIES

It is well known that the main concern of the medieval believers was to ensure their salvation. They did all in their power to gain eternal life. For example, some became members of a confraternity; some took the monastic habit on their deathbed; some endowed masses; some used religious practices to gain indulgences. Undoubtedly, among all these efforts, indulgences were the most popular and most often attacked. According to the Church's teaching, indulgence is the remission of temporary punishment for sins already confessed and forgiven. An indulgence, therefore, does not free a person from guilt. Nevertheless, the theory that a pardon absolves sins and remits punishments (*a pena et a culpa*) was spread by itinerant preachers during the 14th and 15th centuries and caused many debates.

In spite of the significant role of indulgences in the life of a medieval faithful, the history of pardons was neglected in Hungary, except for some substantial studies and articles. The main purpose of my dissertation, therefore, is to demonstrate the history of indulgences in Hungary in the Middle Ages. To that end, I collected the main theological and canonical questions and debates about the remission of penance, and I observed its impact on Hungarian theory and practice. Additionally, I searched the answer to these questions: What did indulgences mean in the life of medieval believers? Did the value of indulgences diminish during the centuries of the Middle Ages? Was the system of the remission of penance the main cause of the Reformation? The answers to these questions and the history of pardons are well searched and published in Europe; therefore, it is not without merit to use the results of the European historians.

II. METHODOLOGY

In the course of my research, I collected the data available in Hungary. It was clear from the beginning of my work that the completeness of data acquisition would make my task somewhat difficult. Nevertheless, I gathered almost two thousand and nine hundred data from the different sources, as archival sources from the National Archives of Hungary, published sources, published summaries, published *formularium*, and published old Hungarian codices. In order to make a conclusion I selected and tabulated the data. Among the two thousand and nine hundred data there are almost three hundred unpublished indulgence letters kept in the National Archives of Hungary and there are at least the same number of unpublished indulgences registered in Rome in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano.

During the collection of the primary sources, it was necessary to quest for the international literature on indulgences, which is much more complete. The conclusions of the international historians of the Middle Ages (e.g. German and English) were an efficient aid for understanding the complex system of indulgences and to elaborate the topic. The biggest difficulty was that the charters survived randomly in Hungary, therefore some unanswered question remained. The other difficulty was the complexity of the topic. Therefore, I had to choose a clear method to demonstrate the indulgences and I had to concentrate on the issues connected with medieval Hungary. The first main chapter of the dissertation includes the definition, origin, and categories of indulgences, and the main ecclesiastical and canonical questions about the remission of penance (e.g. the “*a pena et a culpa*” debate, or the Treasury of Merits). The second

chapter deals with the grants that were given for the visit of a religious place or for the help of the restoration of a church. This chapter clarifies the authorities who had the power to distribute these graces, and the sum and special categories of the indulgences. The third chapter consists of the devotional indulgences, which merely were granted for prayers. The fourth chapter consists of the review of plenary indulgence on the deathbed including with special types of this grace, i.e. the jubilee indulgences, the crusade campaigns, the St. Peter indulgence, and the pardon announced by the Council of Basel (1431-1449). The last chapter of the dissertation summarises the research and demonstrates briefly Luther's theses and criticism of indulgences, as well as the revision of the system in the Council of Trent (1543-1565), and the Catholic Church's explanation of the role of the remission of penance in the life of believers in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Despite the almost three thousand data, there was one more difficulty. Often the full text of the indulgence letters was not available or the text of the letters was succinct. This occasionally stood in the way of sufficient knowledge about the required subject. Nevertheless, we still have enough information to outline consequences and to make significant statements.

III. RESULTS

One of the most significant questions about the indulgences was whether the pardons remove the satisfaction due to God (*pena*) as well the guilt of sin (*culpa*). According to the teaching of the Church, the indulgences abolish only the satisfaction, but there were many

misunderstandings about this question during the centuries of the Middle Ages. To avoid these misunderstandings, some terms appeared in various texts of indulgence letters. For example, in the indulgence letters which were granted to religious places, there appeared the term “to one who is truly penitent and confesses” (*vere penitentibus et confessis*); and, in the texts of confession letters with plenary indulgence (in which the pope appointed the confessor to confer full remission at the hour of death), there emerged the term “contrite in heart and having confessed with the mouth” (*corde contritus et ore confessus*). In Hungary there is no sign of misunderstanding. Nevertheless, there are few indulgence letters which do not contain these terms, especially the letters issued by a bishop of Esztergom or his vicar. However, the large number of confessors which were applied during the gaining of indulgence attests the right explanation of pardons among the believers. Moreover, the text of the letters proves the same point. At the end of the plenary indulgence letters issued during a jubilee year or a crusade, there is presented the form of absolution (*forma absolutionis*). Temesvári Pelbárt, the most famous Hungarian preacher of the Middle Ages, also deals with pardons in some of his sermons. He is committed to the attitude of other theologians of his ages about indulgences and he claims that true contrition and confession are demanded as conditions of remission of penance.

The earliest indulgences are from the 11th century, although all their elements can be found in the earlier tradition. The first pardon for visiting a consecrated place was granted to the Hungarian Benedictine cloister of Szkalka in 1224 by the bishop of Nyitra. In the 13th century a few others concessions were conferred to significant Hungarian churches, i.e., Esztergom, Zággráb or Pannonhalma. The first confession letter with plenary

indulgence in *articulo mortis* was granted to King Károly (Charles) in 1319.

Pardons were received for different purposes in the Middle Ages. Nearly every purpose can be found in Hungary. The most abundant were the indulgences gained for visiting a religious place and the confession letter with plenary indulgence *in articulo mortis*. One thousand and seven hundred data from the two thousand nine hundred are this kind of indulgences. Among the religious places required to visit and occasionally offer alms on certain dates in the year, there are not only churches and chapels but also crosses or shrines. Occasionally, the pardon was requested to increase the attendance at a church, or was granted in order to raise the number of believers. The main purpose of these privileges was to encourage devotional and spiritual actions, including participation in a solemn mass celebration (and staying until the end of it), or in a procession to the house of sick believers with Eucharist. Many prayers said during the Mass or the Angelus at noon or Hail Marys and Our Fathers also offered the possibility to gain pardons. Indulgences gained for public works were also prevalent. To inspire the believers for helping in the maintenance or construction of a religious place, the popes or prelates often granted the privilege of remission of penance, especially in the 15th century when the Turkish attacks increased and numerous churches were destroyed. In Hungary there is no data for road or bridge pardons, but the papal legates assigned to Hungary were authorised to confer this benefit. The personal privileges were originally conferred by popes to the recipient who gained the right to appoint a confessor to absolve him and give him a plenary indulgence at the point of death. During crusade campaigns and jubilee years, the same grace was available with some other particular spiritual concessions. In Hungary, these were fundraising campaigns for the battles against the Turks.

The data of Hungarian indulgences certainly prove that the grants multiplied during the 15th and, especially, the 16th centuries. This was true regarding either the number and validity of concessions or the extent of remission. More and more pardons became available for more and more believers. However, the intention of believers to gain an indulgence was not decreased by this fact, as the scale of the enjoined penance was known only by God. Therefore, Temesvári Pelbárt recommended completing the penitence and sustaining the indulgence for Purgatory.

There are two significant theological questions about the indulgences which appeared in the theory and practice of the grant of pardons in Hungary, specifically regarding the Treasury of Merits and the pardons for the dead. In the 13th century, a concept evolved saying that the Church makes use of the inexhaustible treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints for the remission of temporary penalty. The right of the distribution from this treasure belonged to the Popes and bishops, who had the power of jurisdiction for the benefit of sinners. The enunciated teaching of the Church could be found in the *arenga* of some Hungarian indulgence letters and in the sermons of Temesvári Pelbárt. By the 15th century, a new theory spread about the recipient of indulgences: it was presumed that the pardons are effective also for the souls of the dead. The official statement of the Church was phrased in 1477 by Pope Sixtus IV, who declared that indulgences were valid for dead only as an intercession (*per modum suffragii*). The pardons for the dead became universally available on the occasion of the jubilee year in 1500, but this privilege does not appear in the nineteen remaining charters granted to Hungarian recipients. The same seems to be true of the indulgence campaign issued for the construction of the new St. Peter Basilica in Rome in the early third of the 16th century.

However, there are sermons which confirm the presence of the pardons for dead in Hungary, as Temesvári Pelbárt and an anonymous preacher also comment the signification of these vicarious indulgences.

Regarding the pardons granted to religious places, only the Popes had the power to offer a plenary indulgence; the bishops, archbishops, cardinals or other prelates were authorised to remit only a limited part of the penance. The most considerable privilege was the plenary indulgence, which was infrequently offered to Hungarian churches by Popes. However, from the second half of the 15th century, there were some significant Hungarian churches that gained this privilege. A plenary indulgence was petitioned from Pope Eugene IV in 1433 to the Franciscan cloister of Segesd, and the church of Székesfehérvár, but these were not offered. The first of this kind of pardon was gained in 1460 for the Cathedral of Csanád. Henceforth, during the end of the 15th century and the beginning of 16th century, this biggest privilege became accessible in six further significant Hungarian churches or chapels, as in Esztergom, Veszprém, Zágráb, Kassa, Szent Erzsébet and Franciscan cloister of Caprina. The common element in these privileges is that the petitioner was the member of the upper echelons of the society, and it was available only on one or two days of the year. The Turkish threat was another relevant characteristic, since some of these places were devastated by them, and a half or third of the proceeds had to be conceded to the battles against the Ottoman Empire.

A specific kind of privilege was the indulgences granted on the model of (*ad instar*) a famous church's benefit, e.g. Portiuncula, St. Peter, St. Mark, etc. Regarding Hungary, the most significant grantor was Pope Boniface IX from 1396 to 1402, and the most commonly transferred indulgences were those of the Portiuncula, the St. Mark and the Aachen.

However, Esztergom's pardon became also a model, since in 1402 the Pope offered his privilege to the St. Georg church of Zseliz. At the end of the year 1402 all *ad instar* indulgences were revoked by Pope Boniface IX. However, the privileges granted on the model of others did not disappear, since the pardons offered on the model of the Roman stations (*ad instar stationis*) and the jubilee (*ad instar iubilei*) evolved from the 15th century, in Hungary as well.

Originally the popes granted forty or one hundred days of remission. However, by the middle of the 14th century, the practice of granting one or two years of remissions spread. From the 15th century, five, seven, ten or more years were offered. The proliferation of indulgences is undeniable. However, papal control was never lacking, as is confirmed by many data also from Hungary. There are numerous petitions which were not granted in accordance with the desire of the petitioner. For example, in 1349, a plenary indulgence was requested from Pope Clement VI by the queen consort Elisabeth to the cloister church of Óbuda, but the Pope offered only seven years of grace. Other evidence of the existence of papal control can be found in the Apostolic Chancery's regulations ordered by the papal curia. These regulations regarding indulgences concerned the period of validity, the amount of grace and the circumstances of the grant. The increase in the number of days on which a pardon could be gained is obvious from the middle of the 14th century; however, from the second half of the 15th century, an indulgence was accessible on only five or six feast days. Therefore, though the amount of the remission of penance more and more increased, a believer could gain fewer indulgence during a year. Previously, the greater number of indulgenced days motivated the believers to participate in the Mass frequently, but the slight opportunity to gain a

remission of penance required more awareness and inspired the private and profound devotion.

The authority to offer an indulgence is derived from the “power of the keys” conveyed by Christ to St. Peter and his successors, therefore, an indulgence can be issued by the popes and by those who possess the power of jurisdiction, i.e., the diocesan territorial authority, as bishops or archbishops. According to the decree of the Lateran Council IV (1215), a bishop and an archbishop could offer a maximum of forty days of remission and one year on occasion of the consecration of churches. Cardinals were authorised to grant one hundred days of remission of penance; patriarchs could offer forty days; and, as regards papal legates, although their authorizations varied, they usually granted lower amounts of indulgences than they were empowered to. The prelates in Hungary did not exceed their claims, with a few exceptions, such as Cardinals Bálint and Demeter (14th century), who combined their statuses as bishop, cardinal, and former papal legate. For the validity of an indulgence given by a bishop of another diocese, the ratification of the local bishop was needed, as it is proved by the Hungarian charters, of which only a few lack ratification. Is it possible that on these charters the ratification was performed only by a seal.

To increase the value of an indulgence, the recipients combined the amounts of different privileges. However, in their regulations, the Popes struggled to control the summation and cumulation of indulgences. Regarding collective indulgences, the text of the charters confirms the adding, and occasionally the sum was written on the back or on the *plica* of the charter. For instance, in 1503, ten curial cardinals granted an indulgence to the St. Michael chapel of Besztercebánya for five feasts, and on the *plica*

of the letter is the amount of remission, i.e. one thousand days. However, the presence of addition proves the significance of the amount of pardons in the life of medieval recipients.

A special category of the indulgences was the pardons granted merely for praying, without any demand of money in exchange for privilege. Examples of this grace can be found in many printed codices preserved in Hungary from the end of 15th century and the first half of 16th century. However, the amount of indulgence linked to these prayers is frequently so numerous that their validity is more than dubious. The indulgence connected with some prayers appear in different codices with different amounts. For example, the seven intercessions demanding mercy of God appear with 24,000 years, 32,000 years or 28,000 years and 36 days. Occasionally, a prayer with indulgence known in Hungary emerges also in German or English codices with different amounts of the privilege. For example, the prayer for purification of sins by the Holy Body and Blood of Christ, appear with 2000 years, 20,000 days or 12,000 years. These amounts are undoubtedly spurious, as is the case with the pardons connected with other prayers. Nevertheless, the mere existence of these proves that many indulgences – maybe most– were offered for a devotional action alone, and that fundraising was not the main nor only purpose of the grant of indulgences.

The personal privileges evolved in the beginning of the 14th century and increased from the 15th century. These were originally the authorisations of the recipient to appoint a confessor on his own choice to absolve sins – frequently certain categories of sins reserved for absolution

only by a bishop or the pope himself – and to give a plenary indulgence at the point of death. Moreover, from the second half of 15th century, this privilege could be gained not only on one's deathbed but also once in the lifetime, as in case of threat of death (*semel in vita et in mortis articulo*). It was especially rare to gain this privilege on each occasion of confession (*totiens-quotiens*); however, this grace was conceded by Pope Sixtus IV to King Matthias in 1474. To obtain this indulgence, a fast completed on Fridays for one or three years was required from the second half of the 14th century. The grant of this privilege was in the power of the Popes only. However from the end of the 15th century the *penitentiarius maior* (Cardinal Penitentiary) was entitled to issue confession letters with plenary indulgences. This is shown by Hungarian data also, for example, by the charter offered by Julian Cardinal Penitentiary to the Benedictine abbot of Garamszentbenedek in 1497. Some of the papal legates or nuncios were also authorised to grant plenary indulgences, for example, Giovanni d'Aragona *legatus de latere* or Lorenzo Roverella *nuncius*, who were sent to Hungary in the middle of the 15th century. At the beginning of the 14th century only rulers, barons or prelates could receive this grace, but, from the middle of this century nobles, burghers, peasants or priests became recipients also. In Hungary, the believers of the upper echelons of society achieved this privilege more frequently during the Middle Ages.

From the middle of the 15th century the plenary remission of the penalty was accessible in Hungary during the jubilee years, since the benefits of the jubilee indulgences were gained not only in Rome, but in some Hungarian churches. During the holy year in 1350, the demand evolved to gain the advantages of the *jubileum* without a pilgrimage to

Rome. Among the first supplicants was queen consort Elisabeth, mother of King Louis, who requested this privilege to believers who processed to the cloister of Óbuda in 1349. This time her demand was declined by the pope; however, in 1351, she gained the privilege desired. In 1450, a large mass visited the churches of Rome to obtain the advantages of the holy year. John Hunyadi, Hungarian governor at this time, applied to Pope Nicholas V for obtain the graces of the *jubileum* in the cathedral of Várad. The reason of the papal concession was the battles of the governor against the Turks. The same privilege was gained by Nicolaus Újlaky, Voivode of Transylvania, and his family in 1452. Hungary was the first realm where every inhabitant could obtain the jubilee indulgence without a pilgrimage to Rome, since John Hunyadi demanded this favour from the pope in April 1450. Pope Pius II granted the advantages of *jubileum* to the members of the upper echelons of the society, on condition that they visit the cathedral of Várad or Székesfehérvár. However, a few months later he conceded the jubilee indulgence's graces to all inhabitants of Hungary if they process to one of the cathedrals of the realm. The proceeds of the indulgence were entirely conceded to the King of Hungary for battles against the Turks. Henceforth, the advantages of *jubileum* could be gained in an appointed church of Hungary, and regarding the proceeds, the jubilee indulgences became fundraising campaigns against the Turks.

The holy year of 1475 was announced by Pope Paul II in his bull *Ineffabili providentia* issued in 1470. Henceforth, there remain charters in Hungary issued for recipients of the graces of *jubileum*. The preaching of the holy year in Hungary took place in 1480 by the papal legate Giovanni d'Aragona, who entirely cooperated with King Matthias for the success of the indulgence campaign. The appointed churches to obtain the indulgence

were certainly Székesfehérvár, Pozsony, Kassa, Bába, Csázma, Várada, Kolozsvár and Szeben. In addition, apparently other churches were also chosen, for example, in the western part of the realm. This indulgence campaign was successful, since King Matthias was able to attack the Ottoman Empire in 1480 with the help of the proceeds.

The holy year in 1500 was the last jubilee, which attracted a multitude of faithful to Rome. At the end of the year 1500 Cardinal Pietro Isvalies was entrusted with the preaching of the *jubileum* in Hungary, Bohemia, Poland, Lithuania and Prussia, and he gained more faculties than his predecessor. His activities in Hungary are well documented with nineteen indulgence letters issued in Bába, Kassa, Bártfa, Eperjes, Lelesz, some charters about the organisation of jubilee, and the data about the proceeds, (120,000 florins). Nevertheless, the political purpose of this jubilee failed, due to the military conditions and the passivity of the other European realms.

The last jubilee of the Middle Ages was organised in 1525. However, by this time, the attack of Martin Luther against the pardons had already spread. Therefore, the first signs of opposition against the pardons evolved in Hungary. Some abuses happened this time in Hungary, for example, the indulgences were preached beyond the appointed places. Accordingly, the Pope allowed believers to gain the privileges in every place, where the conditions were fulfilled.

Therefore, in relation to the jubilee indulgences, the Popes bended every effort to organise a campaign against the Turks and collect sufficient money for helping Hungarian kings; however, their endeavour ended mainly in failure. Regarding the believer's intentions and the development of devotion, the jubilees forwarded the aim of the faithful to ensure their

salvation and improved private piety by the graces obtained also through prayer.

Formerly, a believer could gain the full remission of his penance only by taking the cross and setting off to the Holy Land to fight. This emphasised the significance of crusade indulgences. However, at the Lateran Council IV, Pope Innocent III proclaimed the benefits of the crusade indulgence available to all who aid the crusaders. So, from the first half of the 12th century, all enemies of the faith, as heretics, schismatics or infidels, became the aim of crusade campaigns. The geographical situation of Hungary provided many opportunities to fight against the enemies of the faith. During the reign of the Árpád dynasty, the focus of crusades preached in Hungary were, firstly, the heretics of the Balkan, e.g. the Bogomil in Bosnia, and, secondly, the Tartars from the middle of the 13th century.

In the reign of Charles I, the crusade indulgences were declared against the Tartars, and the practice of setting a financial contribution to gain the same advantages commonly spread. From the beginning of the reign of King Louis I, the main aim of the Avignonese popes was the repulse the Turks. Therefore, papal bulls were issued on behalf of the battles against them. In addition, the desire of King Louis to augment his realm, especially towards Serbia, was supported by the crusades permitted by Pope Clement VI, since the pope had high expectations for the Hungarian king. Specifically, the pope required the help of the king in North Italy against the enemies of papacy. Still, Louis I had no intention to fight in Italy; however, he could extend his dominance in Serbia.

During the reign of Sigismund and Matthias, the crusades were proclaimed against the Ottoman Empire. Since the Turks captured Bosnia

and Serbia, the Turkish raid became a daily threat. According to the Hungarian data, a special category of crusade indulgence evolved in the middle of the 15th century, i.e., plenary indulgences for soldiers, who intend to fight against the Turks. In 1433, King Sigismund travelled to Rome for his coronation, and many supplications were submitted to the Papal Curia by the members of his entourage. Among these supplications were several examples of plenary indulgences granted to soldiers. Thus, another special privilege appeared in the middle of the 15th century, when some of the Military Orders gained the authorisation to grant a plenary indulgence to all those who support their fights against the enemy. According to ten remaining charters, in the first half of the 15th century, several Hungarian believers contributed one percent of their wealth to the Hospitallers for their battles against the Turks.

In the middle of the 15th century, several crusade campaigns rendered help to the Hungarian kings for their battles against the Ottoman Empire, e.g., in 1448, 1456 and 1460. The proceeds of the jubilee years were used for the same purpose. However, from the early 1470s, King Matthias was fully occupied fighting for the Bohemian crown; therefore, he attacked Bohemia on the pretext of a crusade campaign against the Hussites. Lorenzo Roverella was appointed as a commissioner and collector of this campaign, proclaimed in 1468 by Pope Paul II. On the occasion of the jubilee year in 1475, a crusade indulgence was available in Hungary. There are ten surviving documents issued by Bishop Gabriel and his commissioners to Hungarian believers, which confirm this crusade campaign against the Turks. However, significant military action against the Ottoman Empire did not occur in these years.

The last indulgence campaign against the Turks was proclaimed in

1513 by Pope Leo X. The appointed papal legate was Cardinal Bakóc Tamás, Archbishop of Esztergom, who successfully preached the indulgence with the help of Hungarian Franciscans. Many faithful took the cross. Meanwhile, the sultan and King Ulászló (Vladislaus) agreed a truce. Therefore, the recruitment was stopped, and the campaign was banned. Nevertheless, the discontent of the armed cruciferous boiled over, and the famous peasant revolt was unleashed. Thus, this campaign turned into tragedy.

The privilege to remit the full of the penance was linked to the papal power. However, once in the Middle Ages, a general council proclaimed this grace, i.e., the Council of Basel in 1436. The indulgence was enunciated to fund the Greek delegation to the council. The preaching of indulgence went on in Hungary as well, by Végi Péter (Peter), canon of Várad. Four remaining charters prove his activity in Várad and Kalló. According to two supplications made to Pope Martin V, this indulgence was available in Újlak also. According to these supplications, the proceeds from the privilege was at least 324 florins, which betoken hundreds of recipients. However, the purpose of this indulgence was not achieved; therefore, the income from Újlak could be applied for reconstruction of the local church.

The attack of Martin Luther against the pardons was induced by the indulgence campaign issued for the construction of the new St. Peter basilica in Rome. The deposition of the new basilica's foundation-stone took place in 1506 and, at the beginning of the next year, Pope Julius II promulgated a plenary indulgence for all those who processed to Rome and gave a grant for the construction. At the end of the year 1507 a new papal

bull was issued which made the plenary indulgence available without a pilgrimage to Rome. The Franciscan observant general vicar Girolamo Tornielli was appointed as a commissioner and collector of pardons in the Franciscan Provincia Cismontana. There are four survived pardon letters and a Franciscan formularium which help us to review the events of this pardon in Hungary. In a letter issued at the very end of 1507, Tornielli entrusted the Hungarian vicar Laskai Osvát to arrange the preaching of the pardon, to appoint his commissioners, to choose the churches for obtaining the benefits of pardon and to take care of the proceeds raised for the construction. The proceeds of the sale of indulgence were divided into three parts, of which two parts were conceded to the Hungarian king Ulászló (Vladislaus) II for his campaign against the Turks, and the remaining third part was donated for the construction of St. Peter basilica. When Tornielli died, Francisco Zeno was appointed as commissioner who also sent a letter to Laskai in which he delegated his concessions. In 1512 Pope Julius II issued a bull directly to the Hungarian Franciscans with instructions regarding the campaign, especially the proceeds. According to a record in the Apostolic Camera, the proceeds from Hungary between 1507 and 1510 were 6743 ducats.

In 1513 the new Pope, Leo X, promulgated a plenary indulgence again on behalf of the construction of the new basilica. Due to the crusade against the Turks, the St. Peter indulgence was not preached in Hungary at that time. But, as the crusade failed, the St. Peter pardon became obtainable again from 1517. According to a few surviving documents, half or one-third of the proceeds were conceded to the Franciscans for the restoration of their churches. But there was no debate or abuse around the St. Peter indulgence campaign in Hungary, neither during the reign of Julius II nor Leo X.

The expansion of the institution of indulgences during the centuries of the Middle Ages is noticeable in Hungary, as is the proliferation of the privileges of pardons also. Obviously, more and more pardons, with increasing amounts, became accessible for a faithful from the middle of the 13th century. This fact could be interpreted as the laxity of the system or the depreciation of the indulgences. However, it could also be construed as the generosity of the Church towards believers. Since the extent of satisfaction due to God was unknown, faithful Christians sought after indulgences regardless of how many years and days of remission they had gained before. Therefore, one can say that devotion was their motivation, in light of the fact that an indulgence could be obtained without a reward of money, but not without a devotional action such as prayer, presence at Mass or fasting.

It is important to notice that Luther's main criticism of indulgences was due to the observed laxity in the Church. He disapproved of any kind of remission of penalty since it led to an easy Christian life, and it took away suffering; therefore, it was the enemy of the cross. The Catholic statement was phrased at the Council of Trent in 1563, when, in the decree on indulgences, this privilege of the Church received confirmation. However, the decree also affirmed the moderation of the grant of indulgences, prohibited the activity of indulgence mongers in the future, abolished the fundraising in return for the acquisition of pardons, and ordered the correction and avoidance of abuses. Therefore, despite Luther's criticism, the institute of indulgences remained as part of the religious life of believers.

IV. LIST OF PUBLICATIONS CONCERNING THE SUBJECT MATTER OF
THE DISSERTATION

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In: Örökség és küldetés. Bencések Magyarországon 2. Rendtörténeti konferenciák. 7/2. Szerk. Illés Pál Attila-Juhász-Laczik Albin. Budapest 2012. 1151-1168.

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Szerk. Horváth István. Eger 2018. 31-45. Olasz nyelven: *György Domokos – Katalin Renáta Erős SSND*: Ercole Pio e le indulgenze di Eger. Verbum. Analecta Neolatina. 16. (2015/1-2) Szerk. György Domokos. Budapest-Piliscsaba 2015. 43-56.

Erős Katalin Renáta SSND: A Szapolyai Krisztus Teste temetőkápolna búcsúlevele. Egy kora újkori oklevélhamisítás. Turul 91. (2018/2) 41-51.

Erős Katalin Renáta SSND: Eucharisztiasztelet a középkorban – a búcsú kiváltságok tanúsága. In: Eucharisztia és Úrvacsora a magyarországi vallási kultúrában. (Szegedi Vallási és Néprajzi Könyvtár. 57. MTA-SZTE Vallási Kultúrakutató Csoport. A Valláskutatás Könyvei. 43.) Szeged 2019. 9-22.