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**The Veszprém cathedral chapter in the Middle Ages.
Medieval estates of the Veszprém cathedral chapter**

Dissertation abstracts

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I.

Preliminaries

The aim of this paper is to summarise the data concerning the stock and the organisation of the demesne of the Veszprém cathedral chapter, as well as the lay and the clerical people working in the administration of the properties, and finally to make an attempt to determine the economic potential of the chapter. The basis of this work is the Registry of Properties built up of critically examined sources and consisting of those settlements, in which the Veszprém cathedral chapter owned whole and partial properties as long as its discontinuence in 1552. Upon these firmaments the Veszprém cathedral chapter is presented here as a landlord, i.e. the first half of the dissertation is about the general information of the certain properties of the body and the conclusions made by its help. In the second half of the paper This is followed by in the second part by the mentioned Registry of Properties.

Being one of the oldest Hungarian chapter, the Veszprém one dates back to before 1079. Despite the facts that the Veszprém episcopacy supported the Hungarian Vatican-researches among the firsts in the turn of the 19-20th centuries, and numerous studies were also published in historical topics by means of the diocese, grand summaries have been lacked concerning the history of both the episcopacy and the chapter so far. The recently recovering church history-writing and -reasearching found the diocese, e.g. both the episcopacy and the chapter in an unkind situation. Basic researches are missing: neither an exact list of former bishops, nor registers of episcopal and chapter properties have existed, not to mention the absence of a scientific publication in any form about the list of the prebendaries. Thus, my dissertation is partially destined to meet this need as the register of the chapter's properties are presented in the 8th Chapter. Taking advantage of such a list it was attempted to determine the economic potential of the chapter as a medieval landlord, and it was also available to reconstruct its medieval

demesne-administration. A later chapter-history, however, would require an archontology and prosopography of the prebendary body, which is going to be presented elsewhere.

II.

Methodology

Two pillars made it available to collect the properties of the chapter. The first is a forgery containing the properties of the Veszprém cathedral, i.e. the cathedral chapter, and it had been issued in 1082 under the name of King Saint Ladislaus I. Diplomatical research, however, pointed out that it was actually written between 1275 and 1327. An attempt is made hereby to constrict its issue date, whereby a contemporary state of the properties can be defined. Another wholesale summary of the chapter's demesnes derives from the late Middle Ages. This is the account book of the chapter, led from 1495 and 1534, which made it available to list the properties in these years. The interval between these two pillars can be bridged by documentary material which is held in the private archives of the chapter.

The Veszprém chapter is among those ecclesiastical bodies of which private archives have been preserved almost in an intact condition. Nevertheless, not all the 1800 pieces of medieval charters in the archive concern the chapter: a lesser part of the charters – 700 pieces – derived from the private archive of the episcopacy. Yet the remaining 1100 pieces contain information mainly about the land-ownership of the prebendaries and originated from legal actions concerning the estates. Consequently, a brief history of each property can be circumscribed.

There are some crutches for processing this amount of medieval charters. An archival elenchus-book, assembled around 1780, proved to be the primary help, which enlisted the documents in order of properties and assigned serial numbers to each. The *elenchus* contains a short latin summary for every document. Although these regests only record the fact of the judicials in cases of long legal actions and

do not enumerate all the transcribed documents and phases of the procedure, yet the *elenchus* provides help in orientation among the charters.

The digital version and its recent online publication of the Diplomatical Photo storage of the Hungarian National Archive [Diplomatikai Fényképtár] has provided another useful help. By revising its data concerning the charters of our archives, it gave the opportunity to prepare the list of publications – whole-text and summaries – of these documents. By doing so it has become clear that approx. 70% of the charters of the Veszprém cathedral chapter have been published in some form or are available in manuscript in the archive. The main part of the gap is concentrated on the late 15th and early 16th centuries, a period which is not unfamiliar for researchers due to the publication of the mentioned account book.

The spine of the history of the individual properties can be outlined by making use of charters in the archive of the chapter. Since my aim was not to – in many cases re- - write the history of these settlements, but to follow essential changes in possession, the Registry of Properties contains data of a similar kind. This is the basis of my dissertation. Making advantage of this registry has provided information to formulate tendencies deducted of odd phenomena concerning the change of demesnes, roles of the lay and clerical people working in the administration of the properties and finally to determine the types and volumes of chapter revenues.

III.

Results

According to the assembled Registry of Properties, the Veszprém cathedral chapter owned 113 whole or partial properties in the Middle Ages. Moreover, the Registry contains those settlements as well, that have so far been regarded as chapter-properties on the basis of thithe-lawsuits or other charters, but recent findings do not support this landownership.

As it has already been mentioned, two pillars form the basis of assembling the Registry. The earlier of these, the one issued under the name of King Saint Ladislaus I in 1082 was regarded as being composed between 1275 and 1327. This interval has been narrowed down to 1317 and 1327 on the basis of the certain properties that occur in the charter. Political events of the age – the relationship between King Charles I and the clergy on the one hand, and the onset of the monarch's policy of recapturing former royal properties on the other hand– imply two years: 1318 and 1324 as the possible date of the composition.

Early properties of the chapter derived from the bishop, as well as donations and purchase broadened their number until the mid-13th century. At the end of the 13th century, however, the increasing role of the monarch can be highlighted in the process. During this last, turbulent period of the century kings Ladislaus IV and Andreas III, together with female members of the dynasty – dowager queen Elisabeth, queen Isabella, Fenenna and Agnes – made donations for the prebendaries. As far as the donations around 1276, the ravage of Veszprém is concerned – although the following benefactions were issued by different members of the royal family, – the underlying role of the prebendaries and their intervening provost should be taken into consideration as well.

In order to issue the forgery of 1082, which was actually assembled between 1317 and 1327, another important event was necessary. This was either the act or the process of the separation of the earlier undivided episcopal and chapter properties. According to scientific literature this happened in the 13th century throughout the country. Yet, on the basis of new data and findings, this took place in more steps instead of one single action. The first step can be dated between 1296 and 1298, when estates in Zala and Veszprém counties were divided. Properties in Somogy county, by occurring in the forgery charter issued between 1317 and 1327, imply another divisional event somewhere in the 14th century, following 1317.

The 14th century brought less change in possession. The few donations and purchases as well as the increasing number of economically motivated property

exchange resulted in a more moderate flare of possession. This implied concentration of properties or, in other words, consolidation of properties. As far as the second part of the 15th century is concerned donations of altars became frequent together with legal actions in connection with vine-lands. Thus, the picture drawn by the help of the sources is not a static, rather a dynamic, continuously changing one, which is somewhat decreasing in number, but developing in economic potential, i.e. in value of the properties expressed in forints.

Out of the chapter's 45 properties at the end of the Middle Ages 2% situated in Fejér, another 2% in Tolna, 13% in Somogy, 35% in Veszprém and 44% in Zala counties. Concentration of properties is more spectacular by the fact that the main body of the estates laid in the 30 km vicinity of the seat of the chapter, Veszprém. Nevertheless, only Nagyberény was a remarkable *oppidum*, a local centre among the properties taking into account the so called centrality factor of András Kubinyi. (Further important settlements were shared with other owners: Veszprém with the bishop, other market places with different lay landlords.) The bulk of the chapter properties was of little significance, i.e. villages.

Properties were administered in a structured method. Contemporary, 15–16th century phrasing used instead of the concept of *dominium* another phrase: *decanatus* to describe the greater units of properties. (It is only a problem for modern scholars: for the chapter these greater bodies must have been regarded as *dominiums*.) The Veszprém or the first (*primus*) *decanatus* was the most important, and two other ones incorporated the properties around Merenye and Nagyberény. Nagygyimót existed separately, *extra decanatum*. The dean headed the Veszprém *decanatus*, whereas two *magistri possessionum* did so with that of Merenye and Nagyberény. These latter governors were sometimes regarded also as deans, exactly because of the name *decanatus*. No *magister possessionum*, however, was appointed in the Veszprém *decanatus*, where an official (*officialis*) supported his work, whose seeded position is indicated by his unique election at the general assembly of the chapter.

The Veszprém chapter had more deans until 1395 according to the assembled nominal roll of the deans. After this year only one person held such position, and the day of the general assembly, where deans were elected, was in connection with some movable feast, eg. Easter or Pentecost, This did not coincide with data to the account book, where such assemblies were held on 13th July, feast of St. Margaret of Antioch.

Officialati, headed by officials (*officialis*) were smaller units in area than *decanati*. While the territory of *decanatus* and *officialatus* coincide in cases of Nagyberény and Merenye, the *decanatus* Veszprém consisted of more smaller *officialati*. Officials were always lay people, whereas other economic clerks were prebendaries.

Administration of properties by the end of the Middle Ages, the period of the account book, became bureaucratic as certain rules or principles predominated the tenancy of economic positions. Such principle should have been the one by which archdeacons did not fulfil the position of *magistri possessionum* in their districts.

Tithes (*decimae*) were an important factor of revenues for the chapter as an ecclesiastic landlord. The chapter got right to this originally episcopal revenue in three ways. The first of these was the early 13th century practice, by which the bishops furnish one fourth (*quarta*) of the their tithes to the prebendaries. This, however, actually meant the half of the *quarta* (one eights), being the other half allocated to rural priests. The bishop, moreover, may have allocated the whole tithe of certain settlements, typically of those, where the chapter was the landlord. In other words where the chapter enjoyed the ninth, it also enjoyed the tithe as well. The third way to get tithes was the decision of the bishop by which whole tithe-districts (*cultelli*) were conceded to the prebendaries.

Cultelli were exploited, apart from the one around Veszprém, by leasing them out. By doing so, not less than 15% of the annual revenues was registered. Consequently, due administration of the lease-holds was inevitable for the smooth working of the chapter. Leaseholders, according to the account book, were local

serfs together with dignitaries and other lesser prebendaries of the chapter, as well as bourgeois of distinct royal towns such as Buda or superior dignities of the kingdom. These individuals provides data for the network of affiliations of the chapter.

The financial conditions of the prebendaries can be circumscribed by the help of the account book. The wealth showed the following pattern for the chosen two years:

Types of revenues	1497	1524
Mills	1266 <i>capetia</i>	5388 <i>capetia</i>
in forints	215 Ft	916 Ft
Tithe-lease	700 Ft	790 Ft
Crops	3003,5 <i>capetia</i>	2499 <i>capetia</i>
in forints	766 Ft	637 Ft
Wine	10975 <i>cubulus</i>	11233 <i>cubulus</i>
in forints	1097,5 Ft	1123,3 Ft
Cash	900 Ft	min. 900 Ft
Taxa extraordinaria	?	?
Total	3678 Ft	4366 Ft

The main difference between the two years is the uprise of mill-revenues. The chapter deliberately made efforts to restore abandoned or ruinous mills. Other ascents or descents of lesser extant may be attributed to different yields of harvest. Therefore, with cautious estimation, the chapter annually registered an income of 5000 forints, which amount naturally did not match the 10–12.000 forints of the bishop.

This amount means 139 forints per capita for the Veszprém chapter, that consisted of 36 members from the mid-15th century onwards. Prebendaries, however, did not receive equal proportions but were rewarded according to certain tariffs. The most profitable benefice was that of the grand provost (*prepositus maior*) with an average value of 250 forints. The values of other prebends were

less, but even the simplest prebend meant 40 forints at least, but in average 50 forints for its holder.

Revenues entitled a convenient life for the prebendaries, all the more, because prebends on most cases were *sine cura*, without the obligation of pastorate. The prebends were free to use their income according to the prebendaries' personality and education. It is presumable that all of them owned separate houses in the seat of the body, in Veszprém. By analogies the ambitious ones could collect books and financed young students' education. The wealthier could raise altars or chapels for the glory of God and their own salvation, or could go on pilgrimages. Chapters provided, besides other institutions, reinforcement for the national „legist intellectuals”. This economic historic investigation provides the background for getting to know the living conditions of the prebendaries. Consequently, prosopographical investigation of the membership of the chapter would explore how the prebendaries utilised the wealth of the chapter.

IV.

List of publications concerning the subject matter of the dissertation

- A veszprémi káptalan bevételei és gazdasági ereje a 15–16. század fordulóján. [*Revenues and economic potential of the Veszprém chapter at the turn of the 15–16th centuries*] In: Kilián László – Rainer Pál (szerk.): Veszprém reneszánsza. Veszprém, 2008. 37–66.
- A veszprémi káptalan Zalamerenye-környéki birtokai a török előtt. Káptalani birtokkezelés a középkorban. [*Properties of the Veszprém chapter around Zalamerenye before the Turks. Property-administration of the chapter in the middle ages*] In: Hermann István – Karlinszky Balázs (szerk.): Megyetörténet. Egyház- és igazgatástörténeti tanulmányok a veszprémi püspökség 1009. évi adománylevele tiszteletére. Veszprém, 2010. (A Veszprém Megyei Levéltár Kiadványai 22. A veszprémi egyházmegye múltjából 22.) 33–56.
- A Monumentáktól az annátáig. Veszprémi egyházmegyes pap-történészek vatikáni kutatásai. [*From the Monumenta to the Annatae. Veszprém dioecesan priest-historians's research in the Vatican*] In: Tusor Péter (szerk.): Magyarország és a római Szentszék. Források és távlatok. Budapest–Róma, 2012. (Collectanea Vaticana Hungariae I/8.) 157–177.
- A középkori veszprémi székeskáptalan a történeti irodalomban. [*The Veszprém cathedral chapter in scientific literature*] In: Hermann István – Karlinszky Balázs – Varga Tibor (szerk.): Corde aperto – tanulmányok Kredics László nyolcvanadik születésnapjára. Veszprém, 2012. 137–158.
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