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THE RELATION
OF THE HOLY SEE AND
HUNGARY IN THE JAGELLO AGE
with special regard to papacy
of Clemens VII (1523–1526)

Dissertation abstracts

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Piliscsaba 2014

“The archives of the Roman Holy See can be compared to the mines, where the deeper a miner reaches the richer and more valuable strikes he finds.”

/Vilmos Fraknói/

I.

Due to the scarcity of the Hungarian Medieval documents, which have survived the storms of history, the Hungarian historians have always put great emphasis on the study of foreign sources referring to Hungary with the researches at the Vatican Secret Archives having been in the forefront. Since the opening the Archivio Segreto Vaticano in 1881 the Hungarian historians have studied first of all the registers of bulls and the fonds of the Apostolic Camera, while the study of the briefs as the second type of the papal documents besides bulls, have remained neglected. Although Vilmos Fraknói published most of the briefs issued during the reign of Mathias I (Hunyadi), the sources of the Jagello Age have remained untouched. The starting point of my PhD thesis was this very realisation, so the study of the briefs issued between 1490 and 1526 became my main purpose.

Why are these briefs important? The practical demand of creating a new form of correspondence for the diplomatic letters and the confidential measures concerning the state administration instead of the slow, overstaffed Apostolic Chancery often consisting of unreliable persons rose in the chaotic period of the Avignon Papacy: this new form of correspondence is the brief. During the 15th century the demand for the work of domestic and private secretaries (*secretarius domesticus et intimus*) depending directly from the Pope further intensified so that the Pope could have direct insight into the content of the letters to be sent out. Initially,

issuing the brief was exclusively the duty of the secretaries, who worded and penned them according to the verbal instruction of the Pope. From the beginning of the 15th century the Holy See carried out its diplomatic correspondence almost exclusively in the form of brief.

Comparing to the clumsy administration of the Chancery and the Chamber the faster and cheaper expedition of the briefs resulted in the fact that from the middle of the 15th century more and more applicants turned to the Holy See for papal license in briefs instead of bulls.

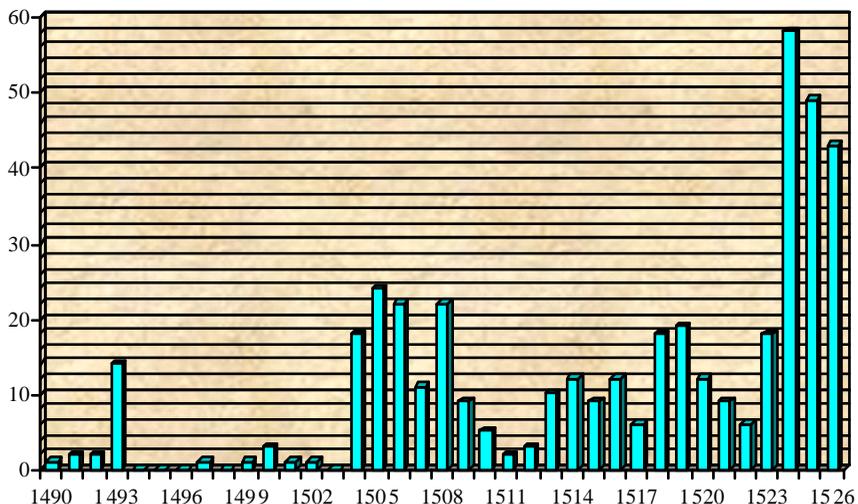
II.

In contrast to the compact series of the registers of supplications and bulls, the briefs issued before the organisational reforms of the Council of Trient can be found in scattered form in the Vatican Archives. Most of the briefs can be found in the archaic part of the archives, i.e. in the so called *Armadi*. Here, in addition to the registers of briefs and drafts, the legacies of secretaries contained briefs referring to Hungarian – first of all – diplomatic matters (Arm. XXXIX–XLIV). The Archives of the *Dataria Apostolica* contains the documents of those applicants who expected briefs for their applications (*Brevia Lateranensia*).

The *Archivum Arcis* of the Castle of the Holy Angel keeps first of all the original testimonials of the returned envoys of the Holy See.

Beside my research in the Vatican the papal publications kept in the archives of the Carpathian Basin (*National Archives of Hungary, Archives of Diplomats, Photographic Collection of pre-1526 Documents*) also had to be studied, so that the briefs could be identified and selected from them.

The archives of Venice, London and Paris also keep some briefs of Hungarian reference.



Time scale of the papal briefs of Hungarian reference

In the course of the research I realised that the briefs were of crucial importance to study the relations between Hungary and the Holy See in the Jagello Age and that their publication should unpostponably follow that of the reports of the nuncios and the letters written to the Pope from Hungary. Since the frameworks of a Ph.D. thesis does not allow for the comprehensive publication of the more than 450 briefs having been issued between 1490 and 1526, I have focused on their determining section: the 150 sources that were issued in about three years: from the inauguration of Clemens VII to the Battle of Mohács.

Based on the papal briefs and supplemented them with the letters of Hungarian reference sent to the Holy See, the files of the Papal consistories, the reports of nuncios' and other envoys' reports, the Hungarian documental sources as well as the recent international and Hungarian literature I have reviewed this crucial period in the light of new points of view.

III.

The backbone of my thesis consists of the critical edition of the briefs issued between the inauguration of Pope Clemens VII and the Battle of Mohács. More than half of the sources have been unpublished, but even the latest published examples saw print already more than a hundred years ago.

The briefs that I have revealed and published have offered a possibility to review the mentioned three years of relations of the Kingdom of Hungary and the Holy See in the light of the available sources and the recent literature. More than a hundred and ten years have passed since Vilmos Fraknói published his basic monograph about the relations of Hungary and the Holy See and the contributions dedicated to this issue since then, have all been based on his work. The result of my research could be grouped into three topics:

1. I have outlined the participants of the relations between the two states in the possibly wildest spectre touching also their role in the connections.
2. I have reviewed the efforts of the Pope in the interest of Hungary at the different Christian courts.

3. I have summarised the role the diplomacy of the Holy See played in the domestic policy of Hungary.

The manifoldedness of the relations between Hungary and the Holy See was a result of the diverse role of the Pope himself. The Holy Father, as the ruler of the Papal State, was an active participator of not only the Italian but also the whole European policy and held diplomatic connections with the courts of other countries. A lot of ecclesiastical and secular individuals turned to the Pope as the head of the Holy Church so that he did justice or favour. Since the courts of the Curia were forums of higher instances, a lot of people went to Rome in legal matters. Besides, Rome was also one of the most widely visited places of pilgrimage.

The highest ranking envoys that the Pope could send to a certain country were the legates, who usually were persons of outstanding abilities, experienced diplomats and mainly cardinals. In May 1523 Pope Adrian VI sent the learned Dominican cardinal, Tommaso de Vio to Hungary, who were staying in Buda for almost a year. A new legate, Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggio was appointed in January 1524 and arrived at the Hungarian court at the end of the year after having stayed in Nürnberg and Vienna. He remained in Buda for about half a year. In addition to the diplomatic representation the legates supervised the money of the papal financial aid that was deposited in the Fugger Factory of Buda and acted as judges in lawsuits concerning the Holy See. During his stay in Buda, Campeggio lead the discussions preparing the union of the Czech Catholics and Utraquists, tried to mediate in the canonisation of John of Capistrano towards the Pope and managed to persuade the Archbishop of Esztergom: László Szalkai to have himself consecrated to a priest.

While the legates stayed at their destination for a specific mission and for shorter periods of time, the standing representation was the duty of the apostolic nuncios. The office of the standing envoy's duty of the Holy Father in Buda was fulfilled for more than three years by Giovanni Antonio Burgio who arrived in Hungary together with Legate Vio in the summer of 1523.

The operations of Nuncio Burgio were basically determined by the instructions he received from Rome. His primary duty was the diplomatic correspondence and the information provision, so he regularly sent reports (*dispacci*) to Jacopo Sadoletto, who was responsible for contacting with the envoys. Burgio handed the letters of the Holy See while commenting them according to the instructions of the Curia. He also maintained contacts with the papal envoys staying at the neighbouring courts (especially with Nuncio Girolamo Rorario having been sent to the Austrian Arch-Duke, Ferdinand) and interfered at the Holy See in the interest of Hungarian applicants.

Burgio's reports have not ceased to strongly influence and shape the general picture of Hungary before the Battle of Mohács. It was András Kubinyi, who first observed that Burgio, the papal diplomat of Sicily, was often misinformed by János Bornemissza, the biggest intriguer of the time, so this study also contributes to the study of the reliability of the picture having been provided by the papal nuncio.

The Pope might have sent his deputies to arrange any specific matters. He sent two deputies to distribute the supplies having been sent to support the Croatian-Dalmatian frontier: Thomas Niger, the Bishop of Trau in 1524 and Leonardo Crescio in 1525-1536. While the latter is known only as a familiar of the Pope, Thomas Niger was an old, experienced diplomat of the Holy See.

The relations between the Kingdom of Hungary and the Holy See from Hungarian side showed a very colourful picture: Hungary was represented in the Vatican mainly by Italians who could find their ways easier in the maze of the curia offices.

As the Paragraph 65 of Decree 1514 of Vladislaus II strongly restricted the Hungarian prelates' travels to Rome, they could not be appointed to be papal deputies. As a counterpart of the papal legates representing the Pope in the country of destination, the Hungarian king was represented in Rome at the highest level by the cardinal protector. During my research I managed to reconstruct the medieval antecedents of the important role of this office in the early modern age. One of the most important duties of the protector was the administration of the matters concerning the benefices; he would supervise the ecclesiastic lawsuits and carried out deputy's appointments. After possible antecedents of the 15th century (Gabriele Rangoni, John of Aragon, Rodrigo Borgia, Giambattista Orsini) the first person having been called "the cardinal protector of Hungary", was Cardinal Pietro Isvalies, a former legate to Hungary and an administrator of the Episcopate of Veszprém.

After Isvalies the same Giulio de Medici Cardinal Vice-Chancellor, a nephew of Pope Leo X became the protector, who ascended the papal throne under the name Clemens VII in 1523. As for his operations as protector we mainly have data of offering benefices and he ran the earliest known canonical investigation of Hungarian reference.

My researches have revealed that after the election of Cardinal Medici to Pope, Giovanni Salviati became the cardinal protector of Hungary. Since in the years 1520 and 1521 he reported about the Hungarian provision at the consistories several times in parallel with his relative, Cardinal Protector Giulio de Medici, it can be supposed that he represented the Hungarian

interests as a Vice-Protector that time. Salviati also informed the Pope about the inheritance matter of János Lászai confessor father based in Rome, followed the developments of the fights on the Croatian frontier against the Turks, the matter of the union of the Czech Catholics and Utraquists as well as the developments of the discussions between Poland and the Teutonic Knights. To maintain continuous information flow he also ran regular correspondence with Nuncio Burgio.

It was the Florentine Francesco Marsuppini who served the longest in Rome on behalf of the Kingdom of Hungary. He was a familiar and secretary of Cardinal Tamás Bakócz already in 1511. Later, except for some periods of intermission he officially stayed in Rome for more than two decades. His main duty was to deliver the letters from Hungary to the Curia and report about them before the Consistory. Besides, he provided information to the Buda court and Nuncio Burgio. He was remunerated partly by regular provisions in cash and partly – following the contemporary practice – by benefices.

The envoy of the Hungarian king, who spent years in Rome, was István Brodarics, Provost of Pécs, who represented the interests of both the Hungarian court and Poland, since the Polish deputy Bishop Ciołek plocki had died. Brodarics appeared at the Consistory several times, where he held oratories before the Pope when commenting the letters sent from Hungary. Sometimes he read out the letter before the body of the cardinals and once he translated the speech of the deputy of the Croatian Ban János Torquatus delivered in Croatian into Latin.

Besides the Hungarian and the Polish kings he also corresponded with Arch-Duke Ferdinand, and when the Holy Father sent the Cardinal Protector of Hungary: Salviati to Parma, he was also informed about the Hungarian news by way of Brodarics staying in Rome.

When Brodarics was away from office, he was substituted by his secretary Imre Kálnai. The Hungarian legation in Rome employed a special commissioner for running the everyday businesses at the different offices of the Curia, namely Egidio Zefiri, who came from the Amelia Diocese in Umbria. Similarly, an experienced person, Pietro Antonio Berri from Parma became the secretary of the Hungarian legation, who had been the scribe of Cardinal Vio during his legate mission to Hungary.

In addition to the Hungarian deputies in Rome there were several envoys with ad hoc assignments, who were partly the couriers of the Hungarian court, partly pilgrims who were commissioned with dispatching letters to Rome (i.e. István Brodarics' brother Mátyás, the late Péter Beriszló's cousin, János and István Aczél commander in the castle of Pozsony).

The main coordinators of the money transfers between Hungary and the Holy See both in Rome and Hungary were the powerful Fuggers whose overall European connection network was also an important channel of the information flow. Most of the dues payable for the different benefices arrived at Rome through the Fuggers and their factors often delivered even the bulls. The papal financial aids deposited at the Fuggers served not only the purpose of the defence, but also the costs of the papal "legation" in Buda were partly covered by them.

While at the turn of the 15th and 16th century the number of the Hungarian pilgrims to Rome was demonstratively high, it decreased radically in the years before the Battle of Mohács. However, in spite of the Turkish threat, the war in Northern-Italy and the plague hitting Rome, there were some who ventured to travel even in these years, i.e. István Aczél commander in the castle of Pozsony, László Kanizsai Chamberlain, András Trepka Royal Marshal. The Hungarian confessor fathers provided for the

spiritual care of the Hungarian pilgrims in Rome, but during the Holy Year a Croatian confessor also served at St. Peter Basilica, namely Andreas Vrecsevics.

The ecclesiastical travelled to Rome not only on pilgrimage, but also to find justice, and there were others, who wanted to study. The most famous Hungarian student of the time in Rome was Tamás Nádasdy, the future-be Palatine, who escorted Cardinal Vio during his legate mission to Hungary as his interpreter in the summer of 1523. Again others were attracted to Rome by its vivid, humanist spiritual life: Girolamo Balbi moved here in 1524 and Georg von Logau gained recognition with his poetry amongst the learned men of the Eternal City and he received two testimonials from Pope Clemens VII upon leaving for home.

As a result of the new sources the number of the participators in the relations of the two states has grown considerably and the nature and quality of the relations have also become more refined. In the years before Mohács the representation of Hungary in Rome can be considered continuous and full. However, this interest representation did not operate in the today's institutional forms, but it was based on the informal channels of an intricate network of personal connections.

Since the middle of the 15th century a key element of the foreign policy of the Papal State was the fight against the biggest enemy of Christianity: the Ottoman Empire. The Holy See offered assistance to the Hungarian Kingdom in its fight against the Turks not only by financial support, but the main motif of the Pope in shaping the connection system of the European countries was the consolation of the different courts with each other to create a single front against the Turks.

In 1526 the Pope sent letters calling for assistance repeatedly to the German, French, English and Portuguese courts. On 1st Mach 1526 the

Pope sent Capino de Capi to Francis I King of France to urge him to assist Hungary against the Turkish threat, but the nuncio rather entered into discussion to create the League of Cognac against Emperor Charles V. Due mainly to the tense political atmosphere in Europe these letters of Clemens VII calling for assistance hardly had any results.

In its fight against the Turks the Holy See attributed a prominent role to Poland which had tensions with almost all of its neighbours. The Hungarian king Louis II received important role in negotiating peace between Poland and the Teutonic Knights, and the papal legates and nuncios also took part actively in these negotiations.

His Holiness also interfered several times with shaping the internal political power relations of Hungary in order to rule out political figures causing internal hardships and support figures that were loyal to the Holy See beyond doubt. Although István Verbőci enjoyed the full support of the Pope, his promotion to the office of palatine can not be attributed to any direct papal interference.

However, in case of the Chancellor's office his Holiness exerted serious pressure. He promoted István Brodarics, the Hungarian king's envoy to Rome to the office, instead of László Szalkai Archbishop of Esztergom, who was presented in unfavourable light in Nuncio Burgio's reports to Rome who had received this denouncing information from János Bornemissza. At the same time, the diplomacy of the Holy See got into difficult situation, since the Pope would have needed the services of Szalkai in the matter of returning the Czech Utraquists to the Catholic Church which issue had gained importance because of the unification of the radical Picard sect with the Lutherans. So, Clemens VII had promised the biretta to Szalkai in case of the success of the confessional union, but later he made it dependent upon Szalkai's resign from his Chancellor's office.

Paradoxically, the promised biretta was simultaneously a means of motivation and recompense.

In conclusion, the effect of the diplomacy of the Holy See to the Hungarian domestic policy cannot be considered beneficial. The confessional union failed, due partly to the tense domestic political situation in Bohemia and partly to the unrelenting attitude of Lagate Campeggio and the weakened political influence of Szalkai, who, as a consequence of Nuncio Burgio's denouncing reports and the papal strive to change the composition of the cardinals' body, was not appointed to be a cardinal. On the other hand, István Brodarics, who was weightless in the internal matters, received one of the most important positions of the country: the Chancellor's office.

Since the end of the 15th century, when the Hungarian kings could not fully fulfill their duty of defending the southern frontiers, the dominant political actors of Croatia and Dalmatia – that were under the protection of the Hungarian Crown – the Frangepáns, Péter Beriszló and János Torquatus (Karloviics) intensified their own diplomatic activities. After the fall of Nándorfehérvár (Belgrád), Knin and Scardona, Klissza became one of the most important fortresses, so even Pope Clemens VII considered its support as a priority. Following the example of his predecessor Adrian VI, he supported the forts in dire strait with money, corn and war materials. In order to evade misuse he commissioned his own men: Bishop Thomas Niger and Leonardo Cresco with the distribution of the aids. This measure seemed also justified by the fact that the captains of Zengg: Péter Krusics and Gergely Orlovics, who were always in need of money, tried to better their situation with violent actions in many cases; i.e. they sold the corn having been sent by Pope Adrian VI for their own purse, occupied a Turkish

commercial ship in Zara having been under Venetian control and confiscated several benefices of the Bishop of Zengg.

An intensive relationship was created between the Pope and the Frangepán Family the members of which asked for protection from His Holiness and the Holy See in their difficult situation.

The Papal State offered assistance to the Hungarian Kingdom in its fight against the Turks not only by financial and diplomatic means, but also with its spiritual power. An example of this was that in the Holy Year of 1525, when – because of the Roman plague and the standing Turkish threat – only a very small number of pilgrims could visit the Holy City, the Pope was generous to offer indulgence licenses, thus the subjects of Bernát Frangepán, the soldiers of Kristóf Frangepán with a white cross on their chests and the inhabitants of Klissza received indulgence by visiting the nominated churches in the Holy Year.

IV.

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