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Beyond the late medieval economy of salvation: the material running of the Transylvanian mendicant convents

Hereditas Monasteriorum 3, 97-110

2013

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

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An agreement has been concluded in 1474 between the representatives of the Order of the Friars Preachers in Hungary and the city council of the free royal town of Sibiu (Hermannstadt, Nagyszében)¹. The agreement was reached after several decades of tension and conflicts that occurred between the friars and the parish curia in regard with the replacement of the Dominican friary inside the town's walls. As the convent has been reconstructed starting with mid-13th century it laid outside the urban fortifications². This location endangered not only the friars and their establishment, but also the proper defense of the town, as it was feared that with the increased Ottoman danger in the course of the 15th century, the conventual buildings could be used by the Turks when attacking the town³. Attempts to solve this situation are recorded by the surviving sources since the 1450' and they reveal with great accuracy that the friars' greatest supporters in their endeavor to relocate the convent were the representatives of the urban magistracy and the papacy. On the other hand, the parish curia repeatedly opposed to this plan in the timeframe between the 1445 and 1474 when finally it has been decided that the Dominican friars are allowed to build a new convent inside the walls of the Transylvanian town of Sibiu.

The troubled history of the convent of the Holy Cross briefly outlined above represents a good point of departure in the investigation of the material running of the mendicant friaries in late medieval Transylvania. A recent issue included on the research agenda, the investigation of the economy of the mendicant orders has benefited in the last decade, particularly in the historiographies of the Western countries, from increased attention leading to interesting results in regard with the reconciliation of

1 *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, vol. 7: 1474–1486. Nummer 3980–4687, ed. G. GÜNDISCH, Hermannstadt, 1991, no. 4022.

2 M. S. SALONTAI, *Mănăstiri dominicane din Transilvania*, Cluj-Napoca, 2002, pp. 209–211. The convent of the Holy Cross was severely destroyed in the course of the Tatar invasion of 1241, it's rebuilding being finalized by the 9. decade of the 13th century.

3 On 26 V 1444 an indulgence has been issued by the papacy on behalf of several Dominican and Franciscan friaries from Transylvania, among them the Holy Cross convent from Sibiu, because of the destructions provoked to these convents by the Turkish attacks. A year later, the urban government of Sibiu appealed to the Holy See requesting approval for the relocation of the Dominican friary inside the town's walls and insisting on the benefits of such replacement for the defense of the town. See *Urkundenbuch*, vol. 5: 1438–1457. Nr 2300–3098, ed. G. GÜNDISCH, Hermannstadt, 1975, nos. 2495 and 2523.

the ideal of voluntary poverty with the friars' engagement in economic activities⁴. In the last few years, the Central-European discussion of the economic life that developed inside the walls of the mendicant convents and its relationship and interplay with the outside economy has also started to take place⁵. Albeit being very much in its infancy, nuanced and interesting observations have already been formulated concerning the main features of the mendicants' economic activities in the medieval kingdom of Hungary⁶.

The analysis that follows intends thus to capitalize on these observations and bring further explanation on this topic by paying close attention to the way the economic life of the mendicant friaries in late medieval Transylvania has been reflected by the survived textual sources. Because of the spread of the Reformation the Transylvanian mendicant convents, their belongings, including their archives, were severely destroyed and as a result those interested not only in their economic life, but more generally in their history must identify other sources of information⁷. Therefore, it will be with the help of the sources produced mostly outside the mendicant realm, that the proposed investigation could be carried on. Charters issued by urban authorities, by papal and episcopal authorities, by lay people or ecclesiastics deciding to endow Dominican or Franciscan convents will be scrutinized in order to decipher what was like the economic life of the mendicant friaries in late medieval Transylvania.

4 Particularly relevant in this regard are the following collections of studies and monographs: N. BÉRIOU, J. CHIFFOLEAU (eds.), *Économie et religion. L'expérience des ordres mendiants (XIII^e–XV^e siècles)* (Collection d'histoire et d'archéologie médiévales, 21), Lyon, 2009; *Leconomia dei conventi dei Frati Minori e Predicatori fina alla metà del Trecento. Atti del XXXI Convegno internazionale, Assisi 9–11 ott. 2003* (Atti dei Convegni della Società internazionale di studi francescani e del Centro interuniversitario di studi francescani, Nuova serie, 14), Spoleto, 2004; M. LAMBERT, *Franciscan poverty. The doctrine of the absolute poverty of Christ and the Apostles in the Franciscan Order, 1210–1323*, St. Bonaventure NY, 1998²; L. K. LITTLE, *Religious poverty and the profit economy in medieval Europe*, London, 1978; M. MARTIN, *Les ordres mendiants en Bretagne (v. 1230–v. 1530). Pauvreté volontaire et prédication à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Institut armoricain de recherches historiques de Rennes, 19), Rennes, 1975.

5 As shown by the collection of essays W. DŁUGOŃECKI, T. GAŁUSZKA, R. KUBICKI, A. ZAJCHOWSKA (eds.), *Inter oeconomiam coelestiam et terrenam. Mendiycanci a zagadnienia ekonomiczne* (Studia i Źródła Dominikańskiego Instytutu Historycznego w Krakowie, 9), Kraków, 2010.

6 M.-M. DE CEVINS, *Les frères mendiants et l'économie en Hongrie médiévale : état de la recherche*, "Études franciscaines", n.s., 3, 2010, 2, pp. 4–45 and EADEM, *Les travaux sur les ordres mendiants en Transylvanie médiévale au regard des tendances actuelles de la recherche européenne*, "Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai. Historia", 56, 2011, pp. 1–27; G. KISS, *A szerzetesi intézmények gazdálkodása*, [in:] T. FEDELES, G. SARBAK, J. SÜMEGI (eds.), *A pécsi egyházmegye története*, t. 1: *A középkor évszázadai (1009–1543)*, Pécs, 2009, pp. 465–484; B. ROMHÁNYI, *Domonkos kolostorok birtokai a későközépkorban*, "Századok", 144, 2010, 2, pp. 395–410; EADEM, *Kolostori gazdálkodás a középkori Magyarországon*, [in:] A. KUBINYI, J. LASZLOVSZKY, P. SZABÓ (eds.), *Gazdaság és gazdálkodás a középkori Magyarországon : gazdaságtörténet, anyagi kultúra, régészet*, Budapest, 2008, pp. 401–412.

7 For example, in her work on the Transylvanian Dominican friaries and nunneries, M. S. SALONTAI, *Mănăstiri dominicane*, pp. 58–60, observed that eight out of the fourteen Dominican houses that existed in medieval Transylvania did not survive up to our days. Archeological investigations were undertaken only at the Dominican convents from Vințu de Jos and Odorheiul-Secuiesc. At the same time, it has been observed that only Dominican friary from Alba-Iulia and the Dominican nunneries from Braşov and Sibiu allow for an in depth examination as they are the only ones preserved.

At the beginning of this analysis I was referring to the situation of the Dominicans in the town of Sibiu. It is now the time to return to their case, as details concerning this particular friary could help framing a more general discussion on the topic under investigation. Albeit briefly mentioned, the main actors that agreed upon the relocation of the Friars Preachers' convent inside the town's walls were the Order's representatives, including the prior of the province of Hungary and those of the urban magistrate⁸. It has also been pointed out that prior to this agreement, the parish priest repeatedly opposed to the project of rebuilding the Dominican friary. Yet, it seems that by the 1480' the parish curia came to terms on a matter it previously strongly opposed. How could this situation be explained?

There is a long history of the conflicts between the mendicants and the parish clergy particularly in regard with the administration of burials and of the sacrament of confession⁹. Such conflicts are recorded as early as the 14th century in the case of the Dominicans from Bistrița (Bistriz, Beszterce) and then in the course of the 15th century when the Friars Preachers from Cluj (Klausenburg, Kolozsvár) repeatedly entered into fierce conflicts with the parish priests¹⁰. Whilst such disputes brought to the fore the competition which existed between the friars and the parish in regard with attendance at the Sunday Mass and the administration of the sacrament of confession and the burials, it has also been observed that another hotly disputed issue concerned the "canonica portione"¹¹.

It could therefore be argued that the friars and the parish clergy competed in both domains: the cure of the soul and the incomes to be procured as a result. When the parish curia of Sibiu opposed to the replacement of the Dominican friary it devised in fact an interesting strategy to avoid an increased influence of the friars in the religious life of the town. There is however another highly important point which should be discussed. As convincingly demonstrated by previous research, the parochial

8 Among the friars enumerated by the charter one could mention "Johannes Episcopi prior provincial", Marcus "predicator generalis" and prior of the friary in Székesfehérvár, and Augustinus prior of the friary in Zagreb. See *Urkundenbuch*, vol. 7, no. 4022.

9 C. H. LAWRENCE, *Medieval monasticism. Forms of religious life in Western Europe in the middle ages*, New York, 1984, p. 261–264.

10 In 1341 it was by papal mediation that the conflicts between the friars and the parish were solved in Bistrița, a similar intervention being necessary in the case of the conflicts occurring in Cluj in the 1460', when members of the Dominican confraternity vigorously protested against the decisions made by the parish priest to oppose to burials in the Dominican cemetery, *Urkundenbuch*, vol. 1: 1191 bis 1342. Nummer 1 bis 582, ed. F. ZIMMERMANN, Hermannstadt, 1892, no. 568 and vol. 6: 1458–1473, ed. G. GÜNDISCH, Hermannstadt, 1981, no. 3461.

11 M.-M. DE CEVINS, *A plébániai papság és a koldulórendi barátok kapcsolatai a magyar városokban a késő-középkorban: Sopron példája*, "Soproni Szemle", 3, 1998, pp. 196–208 has brought attention to the conflicts between the parish and the friars by discussing them from the point of view of the ecclesiastical integration of the religious life of the laity. M. MAKÓ LUPESCU, *Egy konfliktus margójára: a világi papság és a domonkosok kapcsolatai a középkori Kolozsváron/Pe marginea unui conflict: relațiile dintre clerul secular și dominicani în Clujul medieval*, [in:] I. COSTEA, C. FLOREA, J. PAL, E. RÜSZ-FOGARASI (eds.), *Órașe și orașeni. Városok és városlakók*, Cluj-Napoca, 2006, pp. 404–417, undertook a similar analysis of the conflicts occurred at Cluj.

network of the Transylvanian towns was a feeble one, as in the greatest majority of the region's urban centers functioned a single parish church throughout most of the Middle Ages. Furthermore, it has been suggested that this particular ecclesiastical organization has prompted the establishment of several mendicant convents (Dominican and Franciscan alike) within each of the largest Transylvanian urban centers, such as those of Sibiu, Bistrița, Cluj and Brașov (Kronstadt, Brassó) where were attested at least two houses of the mendicants¹².

And thus the stage was set for competition as detailed research devoted to the donations and testaments directed at the mendicant friaries, as well as that scrutinizing the impact of the Dominicans and Franciscans on the religious life developed within parochial boundaries has also shown¹³. To this picture, the disputes concerning the revenues to be obtained from the administration of burials by the mendicants and the parish clergy should also be added. One is thus allowed to observe that the late medieval economy of salvation in Transylvanian towns was shaped not only by the system of pious donations and performance of commemorative prayers in return, but also by a direct interest of both the friars and the parish clergy in the profit that could be obtained from the performance of their duties.

It is precisely in this regard that the often quoted charter issued in 1474 is of outmost interest. The Dominicans were allowed to build a new convent inside the walls of Sibiu under certain conditions. Significantly enough, after mentioning that permission for the relocation of the Friars Preachers' convent is granted, the charter specifies that, according to a well-established tradition, any donation made by the citizens through testamentary clauses will have to be supervised by the city council¹⁴. The magistrate's control of the revenues to be received by the Dominicans was not something new within the religious landscape of the town of Sibiu. It was already at the beginning of the 14th century that the city council supported the parish in its efforts to be the sole administrators of the goods obtained by the church of the Virgin Mary by means of donations¹⁵.

12 M.-M. DE CEVINS, *L'Église dans les villes hongroises à la fin du Moyen Âge, vers 1320 – vers 1490* (Publications de l'Institut hongrois de Paris. Dissertationes, 1), Budapest, 2003, pp. 50–52.

13 M. MAKÓ LUPESCU, "Item lego...". *Gifts for the soul in late medieval Transylvania*, "Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU" 7, 2001, pp. 161–185 analyzed at length fifty testaments produced in Transylvania that concerned donations made to the mendicant establishments. She observed that by the late Middle Ages an increased number of testators chose to be buried with the mendicants and to request from the friars to pray for their and their relatives' salvation. M. CRĂCIUN, *Mendicant piety and the Saxon community of Transylvania, c. 1450–c. 1550*, [in:] M. CRĂCIUN, E. FULTON (eds.), *Communities of devotion. Religious orders and society in East Central Europe, 1450–1800*, Farnham, 2011, pp. 29–69 has argued that Marian and Christocentric beliefs strongly supported by the Dominicans and the Franciscans such as the Immaculate Conception, "Vir Dolorum", or Mary as Queen of Heaven found visual expression in a good number of panel paintings survived from Transylvanian parish churches.

14 *Urkundenbuch*, vol. 7, no. 4022.

15 According to the charter issued on 5 July 1321, the representative of the urban magistrate together with the priest of Sibiu argued that according to the royal privileges granted to their community, the parish church is the only administrator of the tithe and donations received from the citizens, *ibidem*, vol. 2: 1342 bis 1390. Nummer 583 bis 1259, ed. F. ZIMMERMANN, Hermannstadt, 1897, no 380.

This trend grew in the course of the 15th century as accurately demonstrated by the involvement of representatives of the urban government in the management of donations made to the parish church by King Sigismund of Luxemburg in 1424 and King Mathias Corvinus in 1474¹⁶. Further evidence in this regard is provided by those pious testamentary clauses directed towards the parish church but which administration is undertaken by the city council¹⁷. This situation was not something peculiar to Sibiu, as has already been observed, in the free royal towns of the kingdom of Hungary, the 15th century marked the time when the magistracy got actively involved in the supervision and administration of the parochial goods¹⁸.

It should further be emphasized that such tendency can be identified in the case of the mendicant friaries, as well. Whilst the involvement of the urban government in the economic life of the parish churches is easily comprehensible given the strong collaboration which existed between the city council and the local curia, a collaboration cemented by the election of the parish priest by the town's representatives, the supervision of the economic life of the friaries deserves to be dealt with in some detail. Evidence survived from late medieval Transylvanian towns suggests that the city councils became increasingly interested in the functioning not only of the parish churches, but also of other ecclesiastical institutions.

For example, the tax registers survived from Braşov refer to payments made on a regular basis to the clerical personnel serving in the various churches of the town¹⁹. Moreover, a charter issued by the city council of Bistriţa in 1454 at the request of the local Dominican friars, among whom was present the vicar of the Transylvanian Friars Preachers and prior of the town's friary, carefully details all the valuables that belonged to this convent. The charter provides plenty of information about the immovable properties, goods and other incomes that were donated to the Holy Cross friary. The most numerous immovable properties are represented by vineyards and meadows, the location of all of these being specified with accuracy. Furthermore, one is able to find out about the revenues obtained by the friars in cash, as a result of previous agreements concluded with citizens of the town²⁰.

The case of Bistriţa is similar in many ways to that of Sibiu. Based on the analysis developed thus far it can be observed that the economic activities the friars were

16 *Ibidem*, vol. 4, 1416–1437. Nummer 1786–2299, ed. G. GÜNDISCH, Hermannstadt, 1937, no. 1956 ; vol. 7, no. 4005.

17 G. GÜNDISCH, *Herrmannstädter Messerstiftungen im 15. Jahrhundert*, "Siebenbürgische Vierteljahrschrift", 64, 1941, pp. 28–37.

18 M.-M. DE CEVINS, *L'Église*, pp. 126–127 has shown that whilst in the course of the fourteenth century the administration of the goods by the parish was overseen by the municipal authority, particularly in what concerns important economic matters (such as the selling of plots or houses in towns), by the end of the fifteenth century the urban leadership controlled entirely the management of the parochial patrimony, the so-called "vitrici" being the ones delegated by the city council to deal with this issue.

19 *Rechnungen aus dem Archiv der Stadt Kronstadt*, vol. 1: *Rechnungen aus 1503–1526* (Quellen zur Geschichte Kronstadts in Siebenbürgen, 1), Kronstadt, 1886, pp. 213, 229, 535.

20 *Urkundenbuch*, vol. 5, no. 2914.

engaged in within the town's walls were increasingly monitored and perhaps even controlled by the urban magistrate²¹. It is important to emphasize that our sources testify about the emergence of such control in the last decades of the 15th century and the very beginning of the following one. To this chronology, I would like to add another observation which I think could be worth of attention. In the case of Sibiu, the magistrate's supervision of the goods donated to the Dominicans by the citizens is revealed by the charter issued in 1474, precisely at the time control of the parochial goods was also taken in firm hand by the urban government²².

A similar development is to be found in Bistrița. There, the magistrate regulated in 1504 the functioning of the parish church, not only in regard with the divine services the clergy would have to perform, but also in what concerns the pious donations. The document imposed on the citizens that when making their testaments, they will have to endow first the parish church of St. Nicholas and only afterwards should direct their generosity to other churches of the town²³. This article seems to have been adhered to as demonstrated by several testaments issued after 1504²⁴. Interestingly enough, a document issued in 1511 and confirmed in 1516 in the Episcopal town of Alba-Iulia (Gyulafehérvár, Weissenburg) in the presence of Anthony prior of the Dominicans in Bistrița and of the vicar of the Transylvanian Bishop, enumerated the privileges the friars enjoyed, including their right to receive donations and to administer the burials according to the papal decisions regulating this issue²⁵.

This might suggest that the Friars Preachers wished to reconfirm their position within the late medieval economy of salvation which principles were regulated by the city council in 1504. At least, such a development is revealed by the prompt reaction of the friars regarding the status of donations that were to be made in the town, as well as the last wills, such as those issued in 1513 and 1524 which request the magistrate's

21 One of the most relevant examples in this regard with that of Cluj where the Observant Franciscans were assisted in their accounting by two individuals delegated to this purpose by the city council (*Oklevéltár Kolozsvár története első kötetéhez*, ed. E. JAKAB, Buda, 1870, no. 173 and for a discussion of similar examples in the kingdom of Hungary, see M.-M. DE CEVINS, *L'Église*, pp. 131–132).

22 One can identify several phases according to which this control emerged, the agreements reached in 1432 and 1457 between the city council and the local curia in regard with the divine services to be performed in the parish church of the Virgin Mary represented one such, whereas another one can be considered that connected with the management by the urban leadership of the royal donations from 1424 and 1474 made to the parish church. See *Urkundenbuch*, vol. 4, no. 2147; vol. 5, nos. 3062, 3063, 3066, 3069, and G. GÜNDISCH, *Herrmannstädter Messstiftungen*, pp. 28–30 for the discussion of the way the privileges enjoyed by the town of Sibiu led to the control of the parish goods by the city council.

23 F. TEUTSCH, *Geschichte der evangelische Kirche in Siebenbürgen*, vol. 1: (1150–1699), Hermannstadt, 1921, pp. 149–150.

24 Such as the testament of Ursula, sister of Fabian Eiben who issued her last will in 1505 or that of Caspar Mensator who drafted his testament in 1510 (F. MÜLLER, *Deutsche Sprachdenkmäler aus Siebenbürgen. Aus schriftlichen Quellen des 12.–16. Jahrhunderts*, Hermannstadt, 1864, no. 78 and National Archives of Romania, Cluj branch, Collection of medieval town of Bistrița, Fund 44, no. 563).

25 Fund 44, Collection of medieval town of Bistrița, National Archives of Romania, Cluj branch, no. 536.

consent for bequests made to the Dominican and Franciscan convent respectively²⁶. Based on the examples discussed previously, it can therefore be observed that at the end of the Middle Ages, the magistrate of the Transylvanian towns got involved not only in the administration of the parochial goods, but also of those that the friaries received as a result of the citizens' benevolence.

At this point, a step further should be taken in what concerns the way the city council was involved in the procurement of revenues by the friaries. In the year 1455, while in Braşov, John of Hunedoara ("Hunyadi") decided that a certain amount from the so-called "Martinszins" should be given to Sts. Peter and Paul Dominican friary. It is important to stress the importance of this donation, particularly because it represents in fact an obligation the ruler imposed on the town that part of the civic funds being donated to the Friars Preachers on a yearly basis²⁷. The "Martinszins" represented the tax to be paid by the Transylvanian free royal towns to the royal house each year on the feast of St. Martin, the 11th of November. Furthermore, the charter was issued on the 8th of November, thus few days before the payment of the royal tax was due. It should be remembered that in the 1450' and 1460' the Observant movement took firm roots within the Dominican convent of Braşov. On his part, John of Hunedoara was a great supporter of the Observant ideas, a support which is also disclosed by the charter of 1455 that specifies that the donation should be used for the reformation of Sts. Peter and Paul convent²⁸.

Rulers' support of the mendicant convents in Transylvania was not something restricted to the Dominicans of Braşov. Similar undertakings are recorded by the survived sources in regard with the Dominicans and Franciscans of Cluj and the Dominicans of Sighişoara. Of significance for this analysis is that these endowments concern salt to be given to the friars, certain amounts of money from the incomes of Transylvanian salt mines being donated yearly to them or even landed properties. Furthermore, each of these donations was made to an observant friary, either Dominican or Franciscan²⁹. To be sure however, none of them consisted of gift in cash as it was the case of Braşov. This might derive from the economic profile of the town, the largest

26 In 1513 the testament of Johannes Heen a citizen of Bistriţa who decided to be buried in the Holy Cross friary has been confirmed by the city council, whereas in 1524, at the request of the Franciscan prior, the same executive organ confirmed the donation made by Ursula to the Friars Minor (*ibidem*, nos. 478 and 702).

27 *Urkundenbuch*, vol. 5, no. 2992.

28 In 1444 Pope Eugene IV issued the bull *Prospicientes ex apice* according to which the reformation of the Dominican houses from Hungary, particularly those from Transylvania considered to have been in poor condition was initiated. The work was entrusted to Jacob Riecher whose activity led to the implementation of the Observant ideas in the friaries of Sibiu, Cluj, Braşov and Bistriţa. See A. HARSÁNYI, *A Domonkosrend Magyarországon a reformáció előtt*, Debrecen, 1938, pp. 35–39; M. S. SALONTAI, *Mănăstiri dominicane*, pp. 125–127 and *Urkundenbuch*, vol. 5, no. 2992.

29 In 1455, while in Cluj John of Hunedoara decided that each year on the feast of St. George salt worth 50 golden florins being donated to the Dominicans of the town, in 1490 and 1494 the royalty decided that parts from the incomes of the salt mine in Turda should be given to the Observant Franciscans in Cluj, *Oklevéltár*, nos. 114, 180, 188 and *Urkundenbuch*, vol. 5, no. 2955.

and most important commercial center in southern Transylvania and indeed in the entire kingdom³⁰. A further explanation can be connected with John of Hunedoara's presence in Braşov at the time the payment of the royal tax was on the magistrate's agenda, a time that also coincided with the implementation of the Observant ideals in the Dominican convent of the town.

There is also something more beyond this simultaneity and alleged coincidence. The restoration of religious life in the friaries also required a re-enforcement of the ideal of poverty, an attempt which could have led to the design of an ingenious strategy of ensuring a stable income for the friars. This was represented at Braşov by those ten silver marks John of Hunedoara decided that should be received by the Dominicans from the urban government. That such a strategy was indeed in place is further evidenced by the charter issued in 1461 according to which at the request of the provincial of the Dominicans in the kingdom and of the vicar of the Transylvanian Friars Preachers, who also filled the office of the prior of the convent in Braşov, King Mathias reconfirmed the endowment made by his father in 1455³¹. The involvement of the highest officials of the Dominicans in the kingdom in managing this donation needs no further explanation. However, it should be highlighted that the contribution made from the royal tax to the benefit of the friary from Braşov was an initiative the rulers' endorsed as discussed above and was part of more general support they provided to the Observant Dominicans³².

It is again with the help of the information provided by survived tax registers that one can follow the way the Dominican friars of Sts. Peter and Paul were sustained by means of urban revenues. Thus, the amount to be paid to the Dominicans from the royal tax collected in Braşov is a frequent occurrence in the registers compiled at the beginning of the 16th century³³. Furthermore, one is able to find out from this particular type of sources that, apart from this income, the Dominicans were also benefiting from civic funds when restoration of their buildings was needed. Given the location of the mendicant convents generally placed at the margins of the urban territory and nearby the town's walls, based on available evidence it can be observed that there was a strong collaboration between the friars and the city councils regarding the renovation and maintenance of urban fortifications³⁴.

30 M. PHILIPPI, *Cives civitatis Brassoviensis. Untersuchungen über die soziale Struktur des Bürgertums von Braşov im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert*, "Revue Roumaine d'Histoire", 15, 1976, pp. 11–28 and K. G. GÜNDISCH, *Das Patriziat Siebenbürgischer Städte im Mittelalter* (Studia Transylvanica, 18), Köln-Wien, 1993, pp. 182–187 and 252–259.

31 Again, it is surely not accidental that the Friars Preachers' appeal to King Mathias in order to endorse the donation made by his father was dated 25th November, thus several days after the payment of the royal tax was made in Braşov (*Urkundenbuch*, vol. 6, no. 3268).

32 According to a charter issued on 10th December, Johannes Lemmel "comes" of Sibiu together with the judge of Braşov were responsible for handing on to the Dominicans the endowment made by John of Hunedoara. See F *Urkundenbuch*, vol. 5, no. 2996.

33 *Rechnungen*, pp. 170, 234, 535, 580.

34 I. BALDESCU, *Transilvania medievală. Topografie și norme juridice ale cetăților Sibiu, Bistrița, Braşov, Cluj, Bucureşti*, 2012, pp. 265–266.

Previous and detailed research undertaken in regard with the economic life of the Dominicans in Hungary has reached significant observations that highlight the extent to which the friars managed the landed properties acquired, as well as their increased interest in monetary economy³⁵. That there was indeed a trend towards sustenance of the friaries by financial means is also demonstrated by the donations and testamentary clauses. Their close scrutiny has revealed that by the very end of the Middle Ages, when the friars were requested to perform commemoratives Masses, the gifts received tended to be mostly money directed towards the accomplishment of particular type of prayers³⁶.

This specialization of the friars in the late medieval economy of salvation has been matched by a similar one in urban economy. The evidence suggests that within the friary's walls skills in different crafts were acquired. A highly relevant example in this regard is provided by an inventory of the Dominican friary from Cluj compiled at the beginning of the 16th century and published in the course of the 19th century³⁷. There are many similarities between this document and the one produced for the Dominicans of Sighișoara, as both of them detail the donations received by the friars and the responsibilities they have to fulfill as a result of these endowments³⁸. Whilst attention has already been drawn to the potential of such documents for the investigation of the economic life of the friaries³⁹, I would like to focus my attention on a particular chapter of Cluj inventory that offers information uncovered by the Sighișoara one.

The fourth section of the document produced within the Dominican milieu of Cluj gives information about "instrumentis utensilibusque pertinentibus ad usum et ad labores fratrum". Given the numerous works that needed to be undertaken for building and renovating the friary, all necessary paraphernalia that allowed completing such enterprises were enumerated by this inventory. One is thus informed that equipment necessary for masonry, wood carving, making windows, cooking and for

35 B. ROMHÁNYI, *Domonkos kolostorok*, pp. 398–401 has discussed several examples, such as those of the friars from Cluj and Sighișoara who at the turn of the 15th to 16th century were more interested, even only interested in some cases to receive as donations only those landed properties that could be easily sold.

36 M. MAKÓ LUPESCU, "Item lego", pp. 180–185.

37 J. ESZTERHÁZY, *A kolozsvári Boldog-Azonymól címzett domonkosok, jelenleg ferencziek egyházának történeti és építészeti leírása*, "Magyar Sion", 4, 1866, pp. 561–585. The inventory is structured in five main parts ("In quorum primo hereditates possessionesque annotabuntur; In secundo Misse perpetuo durature exprimentur; In tercio clenodia et paramenta sacristie signabuntur; Demum in quarto numerum librorum ordinabimus; Et in quinto aliarum rerum preter predicta annotabimus pluralitatem"). It is the part devoted to the properties that belonged to the Dominicans of Cluj that is the most elaborated one, as details are given not only in regard with who donated a certain property, but also concerning the location of that property, what was on that property or what the friars built there (such as mills, bridge, or fisheries), or how they administered together with the Dominicans of Bistrița the fishpond in "Kewthelen".

38 K. FABRITIUS, *Zwei Funde in der ehemaligen Dominikanerkirche zu Schässburg*, "Archiv des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde", 5, 1861, 1, pp. 1–40.

39 B. ROMHÁNYI, *Egy régi-új forrás az erdélyi domonkosok történetéhez*, "Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungariae", 2004, pp. 236–247.

handling the wine was at the friars' disposal⁴⁰. It can be observed that the Dominicans of Cluj were enabled to keep up the functioning of their friary in what concerns both its daily needs and regular maintenance. Furthermore, as has already been observed, the friars did not confine themselves to the preservation of their convent, but also engaged in the restoration of the fortified walls from the eastern part of the town, next to their buildings⁴¹. This was the result of the allowance granted by the city council and such examples of collaboration between the urban leadership and the Dominican friaries in the preservation or even contribution to the building work carried in towns can be found at Braşov, as well⁴².

Another interesting aspect which deserves to be dealt with to some extent is represented by the modalities within which Dominican friaries played an active role in the urban economy. Previous research has emphasized the importance "conversi" had within this context. Their number which at Braşov and Sibiu reached the half of the total number of those residing in the Dominican friaries, their names mentioning the arts they were skilled in, as well as the existence of a "magister conversorum" attested in 1529 in the convent of Sighişoara, undoubtedly prove the organization and the use of the lay brothers affiliated with the friaries in the economic enterprises⁴³. It has further been suggested that the functioning of several workshops within the friary of Cluj where were active tailors, shoemakers and masons, as well as the confraternities of the journeymen of shoemakers and furriers founded with the Dominicans of Braşov demonstrate the Friars Preachers' attempts to integrate their convents into the economy of exchange and craftsmanship that dominated urban economic life⁴⁴.

It is precisely within this framework that the example of the confraternities of the journeymen of the shoemakers and furriers established in the Dominican friary of Braşov in 1463 and 1468 respectively is worth discussing. I have tried to argue elsewhere that the foundation of these devotional associations offered an alternative route to the social integration of the journeymen⁴⁵. They represented an unprivileged group,

40 J. ESZTERHÁZI, *A kolozsvári*, p. 584.

41 I. BĂLDESCU, *Transilvania medievală*, pp. 309–311.

42 According to the tax registers, it seems that this collaboration consisted particularly in materials the friars supplied for the construction or restoration of buildings and the urban fortification as revealed by entries made in the year 1521: "pro vecturis laterum 1450 a fratribus ordinis praedicatorum circa sanctum Johannem vectis"; "fratribus ordinis praedicatorum pro praefatis 7200 lateribus"; "fratribus ordinis praedicatorum pro duodecim millibus et 500 lateribus" (*Rechnungen*, pp. 313–315).

43 M.-M. DE CEVINS, *L'Église*, p. 55; M. S. SALONTAI, *Mănăstiri dominicane*, pp. 154–155, when discussing the importance of the *conversi* for the economic activities undertaken by the Dominican friaries she drew attention to the way their names is spelled: "Fr. Johannes Sartor, Fr. Petrus portarius et Suttor, Fr Urbanus Lapidica". Furthermore, B. ROMHÁNYI, *Egy régi-új forrás*, particularly pp. 240–241, argued that the lay brothers associated to the Friars Preachers were those involved in craftsmanship and their work was first and foremost connected to the friaries' needs.

44 M. S. SALONTAI, *Mănăstiri dominicane*, pp. 134–136 and p. 153.

45 C. FLOREA, *The Third Path: Charity and Devotion in Late Medieval Transylvanian Towns*, [in:] M. CRĂCIUN, E. FULTON (eds.), *Communities of Devotion*, pp. 106–112.

as their chances of employment depended entirely on the market's fluctuations. As the survived guild regulations from Braşov accurately prove, professional and religious network built inside a specific guild provided wellbeing and welfare only to the masters and their apprentices⁴⁶. This meant an exclusion of the journeymen who on their turn could identify in the Dominican friary of Braşov an environment which would enable them to preserve their honorability and thus ease their integration in town.

As it has previously been discussed, the Friars Preachers became popular in Braşov in mid-15th century, after the reformation of their convent as further proven by the donations received and a papal indulgence granted to them⁴⁷. Furthermore, this was the time that cooperation with the urban leadership has been forged and indeed the establishment of the devotional associations of the journeymen additionally demonstrates this. For example, the statute of the confraternity of the journeymen of the shoemakers mentions that the association has been founded only after approval from the parish priest and the magistracy has been obtained⁴⁸. The survived regulations disclose increased attention devoted to the religious and social conduct which has most likely been influenced by the Observant Dominicans of the town, as for example it was strictly enforced that the journeymen should wear only one type of cloth. Thus, it is not much of surprise that, as mentioned above, the tax registers reflect well the economic activities undertaken by the Dominican friary of Braşov. Instrumental in this regard must have been the friars' openness towards the integration of less privileged groups, more particularly professional groups, and their good collaboration with the urban leadership.

But what conclusions could be formulated as a result of the analysis undertaken thus far? On the one hand, the close scrutiny and nuanced understanding of the religious dynamic of the Transylvanian towns have accurately proven the key role played by the city councils in this regard. The urban leadership became in the course of the 15th century the main actor in the administration and supervision of the parish patrimony. Interestingly enough, a similar trend can be deciphered in regard with the mendicant, particularly Dominican friaries. However, an important nuance should be added here. The town's representatives got involved in the economic life of the mendicants when donations were made by the citizens or when the status of estates from the urban territory tended to be changed as result of their endowment to the friaries or of their trading by the friars.

46 See for example the regulations drawn for the guilds of the furriers and the goldsmiths respectively *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Kronstadt*, eds. G. NUSSBÄCHER, E. MARIN, vol. 9, Kronstadt, 1999, nos. 2 and 40.

47 In 1463, Peter "Graef", who has been mentioned several times between 1436 and 1463 as member of the city council and judge of the town donated ten silver marks to the Friars Preachers, whereas a year later *venerabiles et providi viri* Simon Clomp and Christian Rod have also endowed the friary of Sts. Peter and Paul. See *Urkundenbuch*, vol. 6, nos. 3325 and 3344.

48 *Quellen*, no. 12.

When going a step further from this complex picture that is drawn by the intricacies of the web relationships developed among the urban government, the parish curia and the friaries, it can be argued that the friars were not only regarded as valuable intercessors of one's attempt to salvation. Similar importance seems to have been attached to the friaries' expertise in crafts, an expertise that was employed and paid for by the magistrate when the need arose. Therefore, it can be observed that the material running of the Dominican friaries was at the intersection of the medieval economy of salvation and urban economic life.

To be sure, these conclusions speak almost exclusively about the potential the survived Transylvanian source material could have in furthering the research on mendicant economic activity. As detailed and often mentioned throughout this analysis, the majority of the sources used deal with the houses of the Friars Preachers and to a much lesser extent to those belonging to the Friars Minor. This derives from the survival rate of our sources confirming thus what existing scholarship has already drew attention to, namely the existence of a higher number of charters pertaining to the Dominicans as compared with the other mendicant orders. At the same time, one is prompted to argue that precisely because of this state of the Transylvanian textual sources, not only more, but also nuanced observations could be proposed concerning the functioning of the Dominican friaries in towns.

The tax registers, the charters issued by the city councils, the donations and the last wills, the guild regulations were sources that furthered our understanding of urban religious life. They were not sources produced by the friars. They were produced for the friars or helped illuminating the history of the friaries. When enquired about the extent to which the friars got engaged in economic activities, the answers these sources offer are limited to the urban territory, to the citizens inhabiting it and to some extent to the way the friars reacted to the initiatives undertaken by the urban leadership in the economic domain. It is thus that this study could have only attempted at outlining main directions that could lead to an in depth examination of the mendicant economy.

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Hereditas Monasteriorum
vol. 3, 2013, s. 97–110

Późnośredniowieczna ekonomia zbawienia: zarząd gospodarką w siedmiogrodzkich klasztorach mendykanckich

Streszczenie

Praca ma na celu pokazanie, w jaki sposób zarząd gospodarką w późnośredniowiecznych klasztorach mendykanckich położonych w Siedmiogrodzie został sprzężony z gospodarką miejską. W końcu średniowiecza mendykanci zaczęli odgrywać coraz większą rolę w ekonomii zbawienia. Taka sytuacja często prowadziła do konfliktów między klasztorami a kościołami parafialnymi. Główne siedmiogrodzkie ośrodki miejskie w XIII–XVI w. były przeważnie jednoparafialne, a ich życie religijne cementowała wspólpraca władz parafialnych z miejskimi. Ponieważ te ostatnie zdołały przejąć nadzór nad majątkiem parafii, warto sprawdzić, na ile udało im się to także w wypadku klasztorów mendykanckich. Badanie najważniejszych klasztorów dominikanów w Siedmiogrodzie wykazało, w jaki sposób władze miejskie usiłowały przejąć kontrolę nad dochodami mendykantów z darowizn i zapisów testamentowych oraz wykorzystać ich do różnorodnej działalności w ramach gospodarki miejskiej.

Słowa kluczowe

zakony żebracze, mendykanci, gospodarka klasztorów mendykanckich, dochody klasztorów mendykanckich, dominikanie, Siedmiogród średniowieczny, testamenty, nadania

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Hereditas Monasteriorum
vol. 3, 2013, p. 97–110

Beyond the late medieval economy of salvation: the material running of the Transylvanian mendicant convents

Summary

The study aims at discussing the modalities with which the material running of the mendicant friaries of late medieval Transylvania was integrated into urban economic life. In the last centuries of the Middle Ages, the friars started to play an increasingly important role in the economy of salvation, a situation which often led to conflicts that occurred between the mendicants and the parish church. The main Transylvanian urban centers were largely monoparochial in the timeframe between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries and their religious life was cemented by the collaboration between the parish and the city councils. Whilst the urban leadership managed to take in firm hands the administration of the parochial patrimony, it would be worth investigating to what extent such a development could be identified in the case of the mendicant friaries. The analysis of the most important Dominican houses in Transylvania allowed for identification of the attempts made by the urban magistrate in order to control the friaries' incomes resulted from donations and testamentary clauses, as well as to employ the friars in various activities related to urban economy.

Keywords

mendicant orders, friars, economy of mendicant convents, income of mendicant convents, Dominicans, medieval Transylvania, testaments, donations