

CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND OF THE BISHOPS OF ORADEA IN THE MIDDLE AGES UP TO THE YEAR 1526

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Abstract: *The present study aims at proving the fact that the bishops of the dioceses in Eastern Medieval Hungary were men of notable culture acquired in the great European universities of the time. The knowledge they mastered was of scholastic and humanist nature, two specific tendencies of that epoch. The fact that some of the prelates had undertaken academic studies was to be a catalyst of their social and ecclesiastic ascension, which culminated with the promotion to the bishopric. Up to 1526, there existed 11 bishops of Oradea with academic studies (mentioning that three bishops headed both Oradea and Alba Iulia episcopal. The attended universities were in the Italian Peninsula, especially Bologna and Padua. This situation accounts for the relative closeness to Rome, the religious centre of the Catholic world, as well as to the specialization in canon law of the Italian universities, the fame of these academic institutions, to the strong bounds between the Italian territory and the Hungarian one, especially during the times of Matthias Corvinus. It is important to consider that the academic studies of the ecclesiastical personalities counted as a major factor of their religious and secular ascension. Many of the bishops were notable humanists, contributing decisively to the outspread of the Renaissance ideas and spirit throughout Hungary and Transylvania. The activity of the academically educated bishops placed the ecclesiastic life of Hungary in the European pattern of the epoch.*

Keywords: Oradea, bishop, university, diocese, Humanism

Preliminaries

The present study aims at proving the fact that the bishops of Oradea from the medieval period were men of letters who acquired their academic background at the most important European universities of the time. The acquired competences were of scholastic and, later, of humanistic nature, two specific tendencies of the epoch. The fact that some of the prelates had undertaken academic studies was a catalyst of their social and ecclesiastic ascension, culminating with the elevation/promotion to the bishopric.

Gratian's Decree, the main resource of medieval canon law, presented the description of the ideal bishop of the XIIth century. According to this document, the hierarch had to have a faultless behaviour (*sine crimine*), to be serious, balanced, hospitable, capable of learning, to abstain from alcohol, to avoid involvement in scandals, not to show interest in material goods, but to be able to lead his own

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household. Equally, a bishop had to be moderate, an abstinent and pacifist spirit, generous and learned¹. Referring to the nomination of a bishop, in the Middle Ages there were two procedures in use: the election inside the cathedral chapter and direct nomination from Rome.

The Third Council of Lateran (1179) dominated by the figure of Pope Alexander III brought important specifications with reference to the prototype of the candidate to the bishopric. These council regulations can be summed up by the formula *aetatis maturitas et morum gravitas et scientia litterarum*. The minimal age was 30 and the candidate to bishopry had to be of legitimate birth². Among the terms, an important highlight is literacy which will gain new valence together with the development of the European university phenomenon. Beginning with the end of the XIIth century and especially in the XIIIth century, the Western Catholic bishops start attending the major European universities, their education being a determinant of their ecclesiastic career. Peter Lombard, bishop of Paris (1158-1160) studied at Bologna, Reims and Paris. His successor, Maurice de Sully (1160-1196) asserted himself as a keen theologian having studied at the University of Paris. The relationship between the professor and his student was a long-lasting one, persisting after the graduation. In this regard, one can mention Peter of Corbeil, Lothario, count of Segni's Theology professor at the University of Paris. The disciple, who later became Pope Innocent III did not forget his master and presented/rewarded him with the bishopric of Cambrai (1199) and later with the archbishopric of Sens (1200)³. The bishop of Chartres, Peter of de Mincy (1260-1276) was doctor *in utroque* of the University of Paris⁴. For the dioceses from the South of France a thorough university education was claimed for by the presence of the Cathar heretics. Thus, Peter of La Chapelle Taillefer, bishop of Carcassonne (1291-1298) and later bishop of Toulouse (1298-1305) had a profound juridical preparation at the University of Orléans⁵. The bishops' university training span from France to the Italian Peninsula, Iberian Peninsula, the British Isles, later to the whole Europe and eventually to Hungary.

In the Middle Ages, Oradea was an important political, economic and religious centre of the kingdom of Hungary. This fact was due to the strong connections between the town and King Ladislaus (1077-1095), one of the most important monarchs from the House of Arpad, who was buried, at an unspecified

¹ Jean Gaudemet, *Le Gouvernement de l'Eglise à l'Époque classique*, II^e partie *Le Gouvernement Local*, Paris, 1979, p. 46.

² Wilfried Hartmann, Kenney Pennington, *The History of Medieval Canon Law in the Classical Period 1140-1234. From Gratian to the Decretals of Pope Gregory IX*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, 2008, p. 335.

³ Jean Gaudemet, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

⁴ The sintagm doctor *in utroque* shows that the person bearing this title was a doctor both in civil and canon law.

⁵ Jean Guademet, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

date, in the town's cathedral. After the canonization of this king (1192), Oradea became an important centre for pilgrimage at European level.

The beginnings of this diocese can be located in the middle of the XIth century⁶. Thus, in a document which proves the founding of the collegial chapter St. Alban of Namur (1047), we find mentioned one *Leuduinus episcopus Bichariensis, genere Lothariensis*⁷. This title shows the fact that the episcopal residence was initially at Biharia, where there was a medieval fortress, too. In spite of all this, the historiographical tradition links the beginnings of this bishopric to the personality of Saint Ladislaus⁸. This affirmation was made in the statutes of the chapter written in the XIVth century: *ecclesie nostre Waradinesis fundator est beatissimus Ladislaus olim Ungarie rex*⁹. The Hungarian historian Kristó Gyula states that king Ladislaus transferred the episcopal see from Biharia (important centre, capital of a former duchy) to Oradea¹⁰. We also share this opinion.

The first bishop who was mentioned in an internal act was Sixtus, bishop of Bihor, as stated in an act from 1111, through which the Hungarian king Coloman the Learned reinforced a privilege for a monastery from Zobor (nowadays Slovakia¹¹).

From the point of view of the ecclesiastic geography, the territory of the Oradea bishopric was separated from the bishopric of Eger. We make this affirmation on the basis of the fact that the archdeaconry of Pâncota, lying at the outhmost extremity of the territory subdued from canonic point of view to the bishop of Oradea, continued to depend on Eger throughout the XIVth century.

According to the papal tithe records between 1332-1337, the bishopric of Oradea included six archdeaconries: Bihor, Bekes, Homorog, Călata, Zeghalm, Coleşer¹². In the Middle Ages, the bishopric of Oradea comprised extended areas

⁶ Kristó Gyula, *The Bishoprics of Saint Stephen, king of Hungary* in Violeta Barbu (edita) *In honorem Paul Cernovodeanu*, Bucharest, 1998, p. 63.

⁷ H. Bresslau, *Fundatio ecclesiae Sancti Albani Namucensis* in *Neues Archiv Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde*, VIII, 1883, p. 592.

⁸ About the beginnings of the bishopric of Oradea, see: Joannis de Thwrocz, *Chronica Hungarorum* in *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum*, ed. Jonannis Georgii Schwandtneri, Vindobonae, 1766, p. 165, 196; Bunyitay Vincze, *A váradi püspökség története alapításától a jelenkorig*. I A váradi püspökök a püspökség alapításától 1566. évig, Nagyvárad, 1883, p. 29-35 (from this point on *A váradi püspökség története* I); Bunyitay Vincze, *A váradi káptalan legrégibb Statutumai*, Nagyvárad, 1886, p. 10; *Cronica pictată de la Viena* in *Izvoarele istoriei românilor*, vol. XI, ed. Gheorghe Popa Lisseanu, Bucharest, 1937, p. 76, 83; Ștefan Pascu, *Voievodatul Transilvaniei*, vol. IV, Cluj-Napoca, 1989, p. 304; Ioan Aurel Pop, *Românii și Maghiarii în secolele IX-XIV. Geneza statului medieval în Transilvania*, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, p. 145; Liviu Borcea, *Bihorul medieval*, Oradea, 2005, *passim*; Simon de Keza, *Cronica Ungurilor* in *Izvoarele istoriei românilor*, vol. IV, traducere de G. Popa-Lisseanu, Bucharest, 2010, p. 71.

⁹ *Documenta Romaniae Historica, seria C Transilvania*, vol. XIV, Bucharest, 2002, p. 683.

¹⁰ Kristó Gyula, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

¹¹ *Documente privind istoria României, seria C Transilvania*, veacul: XI, XII, XIII, vol. I (1075-1250), Bucharest, 1951, p. 2 (from this point on DIR C, XI, XII, XIII, I)

¹² The archdeaconry of Bihor included areas from around the towns of Oradea, Săcueni, Marghita, as well as parts of the present-day county Hajdú-Bihar (Hungary); the archdeaconry of Bekes

from the East of Hungary which at present are not included in the Romanian territory. From a canonic point of view, the bishop of Oradea was the suffragan of the archbishop of Kalocsa, together with the bishops of Transylvania, Cenad, Zagreb, Bács, Bosnia and Sirmium.

It is highly probable that Saint Ladislaus, the king considered to be the founder, designated his own candidate to the office of bishop, according to the patronage right¹³. During the XIIth century this situation changed, the bishop being chosen inside the cathedral chapter. Thus, in 1156 Michael is mentioned as chosen bishop of Oradea¹⁴. In the XIVth century, the way the bishops were elected changed again, the final decision pertaining to the pope.

The bishops of Oradea with university education up to 1526

Some historians believe that bishop Lodomerius of Oradea (1268-1279) acquired his university education at Bologna¹⁵. Two persons named Lodomerius were registered at this Italian university in the XIIIth century, but it is not possible to make an accurate identification with the bishop of Oradea, who later became archbishop of Esztergom¹⁶. From our point of view this debate remains open. We believe that the line of hierarchs from Oradea who benefited from higher education opens with bishop **Benedict II** (1291-1296), who was also the provost of the church St. Thomas of Esztergom¹⁷. He was a remarkable cultural personality of the time, having accomplished his education with a doctor's degree at the University of Padua¹⁸. After returning to Hungary, Benedict kept in touch with Bartholomeo da Brescia, one of his professors from the Italian university who was one of the greatest specialists in canon law in Europe¹⁹. Referring to Benedict during the period when he

included areas from the homonymous county (Hungary); the archdeaconry of Homorog extended around the present-day towns of Salonta and Beiuș; the archdeaconry of Călata included the valley of the Crișul Repede River from Oradea to Huedin; the archdeaconry of Zeghalm was named after the town Szeghalom from the present-day county of Békés, also including part of the county of Hajdú-Bihar; the archdeaconry of Coleșer was named after the homonymous village, vanished in time, located West of Salonta, where there is a homonymous river, tributary stream to Crișul Alb River and included areas from the valleys of the Crișul Alb and Crișul Negru Rivers cf. *Documente privind istoria României, seria C Transilvania*, veacul XIV, vol. III (1331-1340), Bucharest, 1954, p. 42-56.

¹³ Liviu Borcea, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

¹⁴ Liviu Borcea, *op. cit.*, p. 72; DIR C, XI, XII, XIII, I, p. 3.

¹⁵ Tudor Sălăgean, *Transilvania în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIII-lea. Afirmarea regimului congregațional*, Cluj-Napoca, 2007, p. 139.

¹⁶ Nora Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom. Jews, Muslim and Pagans in Medieval Hungary c. 1000-c. 1300*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, p. 180.

¹⁷ Jakubinyi György, *Romániai katolikus, Erdélyi protestáns és izraelita vallási archontológia*, Kolozsvár, 2010, p. 90.

¹⁸ Jakó Zsigmond, *Philobiblon transilvan*, Bucharest, 1977, p. 40.

¹⁹ *Monumenta Ecclesiae Strigoniensis*, tomus secundus (1273-1321), Strigonii, 1882, p. 419-420 (from this point on MES II).

occupied the provostship at Esztergom, the archbishop Lodomerius characterized him as *Discretus vir, magister B. Doctor decretorum, prepositus ecclesie nostre, socius noster charissimus*²⁰. Bishop Benedict was the owner of an important manuscript written on parchment, of Italian origin, containing works by Aristotle, Priscianus, Honorius Augustodunensis, concepts of letters signed by the bishop, calculations of tithes and expenses, and also two sermons about Saint Ladislaus²¹. This valuable manuscript can be found at the National Library in Vienna.

According to the historians Tonk Sándor and Veress Endre, the bishop of Oradea **Andrew Báthori** (1329-1345) studied at the University of Bologna before he was given the bishopric, being mentioned in 1292 as *Andreas cantor Varadiensis*²².

Another bishop of Oradea who attended university was **Emeric Czudar** (1374-1377)²³. He had an entire collection of church offices: archdeacon of Satu Mare (1366), canon of Cenad, Eger and Pécs, bishop of Oradea (1374-1377), bishop of Eger (1377-1384), bishop of Imola (1386) and eventually bishop of Transylvania (1386-1389)²⁴. Emeric Czudar benefited from university education, which was relatively rare in the Hungarian society of his time: he was mentioned on 18 January 1371 as *magistrum in artibus*²⁵ in a papal document issued by the chancellery of Gregory XI, degree obtained at the University of Prague²⁶. It is certain that Czudar also studied canon law in an Italian, unmentioned university²⁷. In the nomination document as provost of Székesfehérvár, the following remark can be read about him: *qui ut asseritur in iure canonico studet*²⁸. Following his studies in Bohemia and Italy, Emeric became familiar with the canon law, but also with all round education notions, acquired at the Faculty of Liberal Arts of the Charles University of Prague.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 421.

²¹ Jakó Zsigmond, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

²² Veress Endre, *Olasz egyetemeken járt Magyarországi tanulók anyakönyve és iratai 1221-1864*, Budapest, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1941, p. 19; Tonk Sándor, *Erdélyiek egyetemjárása a középkorban*, Bukarest, 1979, p. 201.

²³ Konrad Eubel, *Hierarchia Catholica Medii Aevi sive Sumorum Pontificum, S.R.E. Cardinalium Ecclesiarum Antistitum Series Ab Anno 1198 Usque Ad Annum 1431 Perducta E Documentis Tabularii Praesertim Vaticani Collecta, Digesta, Edita Per Conradum Eubel, Monasterii Sumptibus et Typis Librariae Regensbergianae*, 1913, p. 515; Jakubinyi György, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

²⁴ Jakubinyi György, *op. cit.*, p. 25, 91.

²⁵ *Monumenta Romana Episcopatus Vesprimiensis*, tomus II 1276-1415, Budapest, 1899, p. 204-205 (from this point on MREV II).

²⁶ Tóth Péter, *A csanádi székeskáptalan kanonokjainak egyetemjárása a későközépkorban* in "Magyar Egyháztörténeti Vázlatok. Essays in church history in Hungary", 2007/1-2, Budapest, p. 44, 50.

²⁷ Veress Endre, *op. cit.*, p. 397; Fedeles Tamás, *Pécsi kanonokok egyetemlátogatása a későközépkorban (1354-1526)* in "Magyar Egyháztörténeti Vázlatok Regnum Essays in Church History in Hungary", 2005/1-2, Budapest, p. 68.

²⁸ MREV II, p. 205.

Emeric's university career was certainly one of the major factors which influenced his ascension in the Hungarian ecclesiastic hierarchy²⁹.

The first bishop of Oradea from the XVth century with academic degree was the Italian **Giovanni Melanesi da Prato** who held the bishopric of Oradea for a very short time (1426). He was a familiar of the previous hierarch of Oradea, Andrea Scolari, also known as *The Florentine*. Giovanni Melanesi da Prato was a Doctor of Law of the University of Padua, one of the most famous ones on the Italian Peninsula³⁰. His academic preparation in law is also certified on the occasion of his participation at the Council of Konstanz (1414-1418), where he is mentioned among the representatives of the various universities as *a scholar in the canon law*. It is highly probable that he represented his university at this important clerical meeting. Unfortunately, there is very little information about this bishop. It is certain that he was appointed in the office of Oradea in 1426, replacing his fellow countryman Andrea Scolari. He pastored the church less than a year because he was relieved of his position (*depositus*)³¹.

The bishop **Dionysius Kusalyi** (1427-1432)³² came to Oradea from the dignity of bishop of Bosnia and in 1405 he owned a canonry inside the cathedral chapter of Oradea. He was originary from Coșeu (the county Solnocul Interior - present-day Sălaj county). He was a student at the University of Vienna (1404) when he was mentioned as provost of Sibiu (*prepositus Cibiniensis*), as well as in 1414 when he is attested as *custos et canonicus ecclesie Tr.*³³ This impressive ecclesiastic career is due, most certainly, to his family's connections at the Hungarian royal court where his father, George, was a treasurer (*magister tavernicorum-tárnokmester*) from 1398 to 1401.

The most important titular of the bishopric of Oradea in the Middle Ages was, doubtlessly, **John Vitéz of Zredna** (1445-1465)³⁴. He was a humanist of European standards, known in the intellectual circles of the time. He started his studies at the University of Vienna where he was registered in 1434³⁵, then later he

²⁹ For details about the life and activity of Emeric Czudar see Răzvan Mihai Neagu, *Cariere politică și ecleziastică a unui important episcop al Transilvaniei din secolul al XIV-lea: Emeric Czudar* in "Marisia. Studii și materiale de Istorie", XXXII-XXXIII, 2013, p. 9-15.

³⁰ Prajda, Katalin, *Rapporti tra la Repubblica Fiorentina e il Regno d'Ungheria a livello di diplomazia, migrazione umana, reti mercantili e mediazione culturale nell'età del regime oligarchico (1382-1434), che corrisponde al regno di Sigismondo di Lussemburgo (1387-1437)*, Florence, 2011, p. 53.

³¹ *A váradi püspökség története* I, p. 245.

³² Engel Pál, *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1301-1457* [CD-ROM], Budapest, 2001, (from this point on *Magyarország világi archontológiája*).

³³ Tonk Sándor, *op. cit.*, p. 190; Tüskés Anna, *Magyarországi diákok a Bécsi egyetemen 1365 és 1526 között (Students from Hungary at the University of Vienna between 1365-1526)*, Budapest, 2008, p. 75.

³⁴ *Magyarország világi archontológiája*.

³⁵ Tüskés Anna, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

studied in Italy at the Universities of Bologna (1463-1466) and Padua (1467-1468), acquiring the title of doctor of canon law (*decretorum doctor*)³⁶. During his Italian studies, John Vitéz became acquainted with the principles of humanism and came into contact with well-known humanists such as the Italian Pier Paolo Vergerio, the Greek Filippo Podocataro, the Polish Gregory of Sanok, the great German natural historian Johannes Regiomontanus and especially with Enea Silvio Piccolomini (Pope Pius II)³⁷. This great churchman was a formidable personality of the Hungarian cultural and ecclesiastic history of the XVth century. He had a fulminatory ecclesiastic career, culminating with the nomination as archbishop of Esztergom and primate of Hungary (1465-1472).

John Vitéz of Zredna played a main role in promoting the humanist ideas in Transylvania and Hungary. He was the descendant of an important Croatian family, close to John Hunyadi, as his father was the latter's secretary. In 1433 he was appointed as chancellor, and from 1437 he was protonotary. His first major ecclesiastic office was that of curator of the cathedral chapter of Zagreb (1441-1445)³⁸. The closeness to the Hunyadi family offered Vitéz the possibility of political-ecclesiastic ascension. In 1442 we find him in the position of provost of the cathedral chapter of Oradea. In 1445, with John Hunyadi's support, he became bishop of Oradea, tutor of the future king Matthias Corvinus, and in 1453 secret chancellor³⁹. If in the ecclesiastic field he was consequent and a dedicated and learned hierarch, in politics he distanced himself from his protector, John Hunyadi, and later he was an opponent of the governor's elder son, Ladislaus Hunyadi⁴⁰. The great humanist rethought his position and became an important person at the court of Matthias Corvinus. During this period, John Vitéz of Zredna fulfilled several diplomatic missions: at the court of George of Poděbrady, the king of Bohemia and at Frederic III's imperial court. At the end of the 1460's, Vitéz changed again his political options, becoming an enemy of king Matthias Corvinus and participating in a plot against him⁴¹. The conspiracy was annihilated and John Vitéz benefited from the clemency of the king, but he lost all his functions and privileges. He died in 1472 at Esztergom.

Throughout his impressive career, John Vitéz of Zredna was a keen supporter of culture, Oradea thus becoming one of the centres of dissemination of the

³⁶ Veress Endre, *op. cit.*, p. 14-15, 46; Tonk Sándor, *op. cit.*, p. 259; Fábán Edit, *Várad Reneszánsz püspökei és reneszánsz emlékeik* in "Hajdú-Bihar Megyei Levéltár Évkönyve", XXX, 2004-2005, p. 7.

³⁷ Jakó Zsigmond, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

³⁸ Fügedi Erik, *A XV. századi magyar püspökök* in "Történelmi Szemle", 1965, VIII, évfolyam 4. szám, p. 491.

³⁹ Vasile Marculeț, Ioan Marculeț, *Umanisti și cercuri umaniste din Transilvania în secolele XV-XVI* in "Patrimonium Apulense", X-XI, 2011, p. 63.

⁴⁰ Engel Pál, *Regatul Sfântului Ștefan. Istoria Ungariei medievale 895-1526*, Cluj-Napoca, 2006, p. 315-316.

⁴¹ Elena Mannová (coord.), *Scurtă istorie a Slovaciei*, Bucharest, 2011, p. 112.

humanism in Hungary. Within the humanist circle of Oradea, imbued with new life and vitality by the bishop, active members under his protection were: Gregory of Sanok, Filip Podocataro, Nicolaus Machinensis, Marzio Galeotti and Gaspare Tribracco. John Vitéz set up an astronomical observatory and an important Episcopal library in Oradea, with books mostly coming from Florence, later transferred to Esztergom and serving as the basis of king Matthias Corvinus' future *Corviniana* Library in Buda⁴². One of the defining aspects of the bishop's activity at Oradea was that of being a book collector. He probably started this passion during his Italian university education, where he came into contact with the Renaissance and the humanism, which had a deep influence on him and marked his entire career and activity. He was the customer of a well-known Florentine bookseller, Vespasiano da Bisticci, who considered the bishop of Oradea one of his most important clients⁴³. The books from the library of Oradea were studied by personalities as Matthias Corvinus and Janus Pannonius. Among the volumes to be found in the Episcopal library of Oradea under John Vitéz of Zredna we mention: Tertullianus – *Apologeticus*; Plinius the Young – *Epistolae*; Plautus – *Comoediae*; Georgius Trapezuntinus – *Comparatio Platonis et Aristotelis*; Titus Livius – *Historiae ab urbe condita*; Cicero – *Orationes, Opera Philosophica, Liber de fato; Liber sermonum S. Leonis papae*; Johannes Regiomontanus – *Tabulae directionum et profectionum Johanni archiepiscopo Strigoniensi dedicatae*; Tacitus – *Annalium libri XI-XVII. Historiarum libri I-IV*; Quintus Serenus Sammoniacus – *Praecepta de medicina*; Benedictus Crispus Mediolanensis – *Liber medicinalis*; Johannes Scholasticus/Climachus – *Spiritualis gradation seu Scala Paradisi*; Quintus Curtius Rufus – *De gestis Alexandri Magni libri III-X*; Klaudios Ptolemaios – *Geographiae libri VIII in latinum traducti*; Georgius Peuerbach – *Tabulae Waradienses*; Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini – *Historia de Ratisponensi dieta*⁴⁴. The books in this library stand as witnesses to the intellectual preoccupations of the time. One can notice the tendency towards universal knowledge, a typical motif of the Renaissance and of the humanism. In his library there were works of history, medicine, theology, geography, mathematics, etc. The authors from John Vitéz of Zredna's collection were representatives of the classical Greek-Roman culture, of the Christian literature, but there were also contemporary. The bibliophilistic activity of the bishop of Oradea propelled the copying of books at Oradea within the chapter school⁴⁵. The importance that Vitéz gave to the academic education was obvious also from the fact that he supported his associates in pursuing higher education. An example is Petrus Váradi who studied at Bologna (1465) and later

⁴² Vasile Marculeț, Ioan Marculeț, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

⁴³ Jakó Zsigmond, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 410-412, footnote 98.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 51.

became archbishop of Kalocsa (1481-1501)⁴⁶. After the death of John Vitéz of Zredna, his valuable library was scattered. Part of the book fund became the basis of the *Corviniana* Library of the king Matthias Corvinus, and another part was taken to Esztergom. The latter collection of books got scattered, through various circumstances, to libraries in Salzburg, Paris, Vienna and Munich⁴⁷. Together with the Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus, John Vitéz of Zredna laid the foundations of a university at Bratislava (*Universitas Istropolitana*).

A meteoric presence in the bishopric see of Oradea was the one of the Polish **Nicholas Stolz** (1470)⁴⁸. He was originary from Silesia and studied at the University of Bologna (1471), well-known for its juridical studies. The interesting fact is that his internship in Bologna took place after the appointment as bishop of Oradea, and, as a result, he is recorded in the register of the Italian university as *Nicolaus Stolz de Slantz de Silezia ecclesiae Varadiensis episcopus*⁴⁹.

Between 1476-1490, towards the end of King Matthias Corvinus's reign, the bishopric of Oradea was occupied by the Czech **John Filipec of Pruisz**⁵⁰. He came from an Utraquist family from the Kingdom of Bohemia (Moravia). He started his career within the diocese of Olomuc, where he met King Matthias Corvinus who brought him to Hungary. Soon, he became one of the king's confidants and his favourite diplomat⁵¹. Although he had not been ordained, with dispensation from the Pope Sixtus IV, John Filipec of Pruisz was named bishop of Oradea, at the insistence of King Matthias Corvinus who wanted to gratify his confidant with an ecclesiastic dignity. His consecration took place on 27 May 1477. Filipec studied at the Charles University of Prague⁵². He was a scholar who continued at Oradea John Vitéz of Zredna's humanist work, being at the same time a confidant of King Matthias Corvinus, for whom he accomplished several diplomatic missions at Rome, Urbino, Ferrara, Milan, Naples, Venice, Paris and Vienna. In 1484, the bishop of Oradea became grand chancellor of the kingdom, but also administrator of the diocese of Olomuc. After the death of Matthias Corvinus (1490), his patron, John Filipec gave up the bishopric of Oradea and returned to his native land, where in 1491 he founded the Franciscan convent of Uherské Hradiště. A year later he joined the Franciscans, and between 1492-1500 he lived in the convent from Javor. John Filipec of Pruisz died in 1509 at Uherské Hradiště. In his many diplomatic missions for the Hungarian king, the bishop of Oradea bought several books for the Episcopal library in Oradea. Nowadays only

⁴⁶ Tonk Sándor, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

⁴⁷ Jakó Zsigmond, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁴⁸ Fügedi Erik, *op. cit.*, p. 490.

⁴⁹ Tonk Sándor, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

⁵⁰ Fügedi Erik, *op. cit.*, p. 488.

⁵¹ Jakó Zsigmond, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁵² Jakó Zsigmond, *op. cit.*, p. 55; Fábián Edit, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

two books are known to have belonged to him: a pontifical kept at Esztergom and an *incunabulum* containing two medical works of Avicenna, kept at Dresden⁵³. The bishop of Oradea laid the foundation of the first printing house in Moravia, at Brno (1486). His name is strongly connected to the first printing in 1488 of Johannes de Thurocz's works, *Cronica Hungarorum*, and of the poem *Carmen Miserabile* by Rogerius, an important document about the Tatar invasion.

In the period we analysed, the last three bishops of Oradea who benefitted from university education were **Dominic Kálmáncsehi** (1495-1501), **George Szatmáry** (1501-1505) and **Sigismund Thurzó** (1506-1512). All three were humanists, and scholars with a vast culture and knowledge. Dominic Kálmáncsehi studied at the University of Vienna, being registered there in 1450⁵⁴. The hierarch had a stupendous ecclesiastic career: he was a canon at Székesfehérvár (1459-1462), minor provost of the collegiate chapter Saint Nicholas in the same town (1462-1474), and later provost, until 1495 when he was appointed bishop of Oradea⁵⁵. Just like the other humanist bishops, Dominic was a confidant of King Matthias Corvinus for whom he accomplished a series of diplomatic missions at the court of the voivode of Moldavia, Stephen the Great or at the imperial court of Frederic III. Bishop Kálmáncsehi was fond of books, and four volumes are known to have certainly been part of his library: a breviary kept at the Széchényi Library in Budapest, a liturgical book kept in the vault of the cathedral of Zagreb, a missal together with a breviary preserved at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York and a prayer book, the *Lichtenstein Codex*, kept at the National Library in Paris⁵⁶. Dominic was an important humanist scholar of Hungary.

George Szatmáry (1457-1524) held the bishopric of Oradea between 1501-1505, being one of the humanist bishops of the medieval Hungary. He was born at Kassa (now Košice, Slovakia) and he studied at the universities of Bologna and Kraków. At these universities, he became familiar with the Renaissance ideology, and when he returned to Hungary he had an impressive ecclesiastic and political career. He was bishop of Veszprém (1499-1501), of Oradea (1501-1505), of Pécs (1505-1521), his career culminating by the nomination in the dignity of archbishop of Esztergom (1522-1524), the most important ecclesiastic position in Hungary⁵⁷. Among the people who made up his entourage, there were humanists of Romanian origin, such as Nicolaus Olahus and Filip More of Ciula or Sigismund Thurzó, the one who succeeded him as bishop of Oradea. George Szatmáry kept in contact with great humanists from Italy whom he had most probably met during his studies at Bologna. He exchanged letters with Aldus Manutius, one of the greatest printers of

⁵³ Jakó Zsigmond, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

⁵⁴ Tüskés Anna, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

⁵⁵ Fügedi Erik, *op. cit.*, p. 488.

⁵⁶ Jakó Zsigmond, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

⁵⁷ Fügedi Erik, *op. cit.*, p. 490; Jakubinyi György, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

the time and he looked to the printing in Italy of Janus Pannonius's poems, an important humanist poet from Hungary. The bishop of Oradea owned a breviary with illuminations made in Italy by Boccardino Vecchio⁵⁸.

Sigismund Thurzó accomplished his education in the humanist spirit at the University of Padua⁵⁹ and he had a real collection of ecclesiastic offices and dignities: archdeacon of Arad (1496), canon and lecturer at Esztergom (1500-1502), provost at Székesfehérvár (1501-1503), bishop of Nitra (1503-1504), bishop of Transylvania (1504-1505), bishop of Oradea (1506-1512)⁶⁰. He travelled in several diplomatic missions, to France and Italy (in 1500 the French court, in 1502 to Venice, in 1507 to Rome). Thurzó became bishop of Oradea, being transferred here from the dignity of bishop of Transylvania. He rebuilt in Renaissance style the bishopric residence from Oradea and exchanged letters with the famous printer and humanist from Venice, Aldus Manutius, who, at his order, printed in 1502 and 1513 the work of Cicero, *Epistolae familiares*⁶¹. Thurzó was the patron of the great humanist of Romanian descent, Nicolaus Olahus, who in his work *Hungaria* remarked at Oradea *the greatness of the buildings that the bishop Sigismund Thurzó, my former patron, erected*⁶². From his library, only 14 volumes, juridical works, are known which had been made present or settled upon the canon Johannes Henckel⁶³.

Final considerations

In conclusion, at Oradea in the period we analysed (up to 1526) there were 11 bishops with university education. 8 of them studied at one university, 2 at two universities, 1 at three universities. The bishops of Oradea favoured the Italian universities, 9 of them studying at Bologna or Padua. Three bishops of Oradea attended the University of Vienna, and 2 of them the Charles University of Prague. Only one bishop studied at the University of Kraków. As for the bishop students' origins, we notice the predominance of the autochthonous element, 8 bishops were of Hungarian origin (subject of the King of Hungary), and there was one of Italian, one of Czech and one of Polish origin. Through the activity of the studied bishops, who accomplished their education at European universities, Oradea became, especially in the XVth century, one of the focal points of spreading of humanism in Hungary. On the other hand, Oradea had a very well supplied Episcopal library and a true humanist circle. If we compare the number of the bishops of Oradea with university education with the situation in the dioceses of Transylvania and of

⁵⁸ Jakó Zsigmond, *op. cit.*, p. 58-59.

⁵⁹ Jakubinyi György, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁶⁰ Fügedi Erik, *op. cit.*, p. 490.

⁶¹ Jakó Zsigmond, *op. cit.*, p. 59-60.

⁶² *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, ed. Maria Holban, vol. I, Bucharest, 1968, p. 495.

⁶³ Jakó Zsigmond, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

Cenad, we get a very similar number: there were 12 student bishops in Transylvania. In the case of the bishops of Alba Iulia, too, the most frequented universities were the Italian ones, as 6 students studied at Bologna, Padua or Ferrara. We wish to mention though that three bishops, namely Emeric Czudar, Dominic Kálmáncsehi and Sigismund Thurzó held the bishopric at Alba Iulia as well as at Oradea. If we extend the comparison and also consider the diocese of Cenad, where there were 7 bishops with university education during the period we analysed, the ratio favours the diocese of Oradea. The bishops from the diocese of Cenad also preferred the Italian universities (Bologna and Padua). Thus, a constant can be established as to the fact that the great majority of the bishops from the dioceses situated in the Medieval Eastern Hungary (Transylvania, Oradea and Cenad) studied in the Italian cultural environment. A possible explanation is the relative closeness to Rome, the place of the Holy See, the specialization in the domain of canon law of the Italian universities, their prestige, the powerful relationships between the Italian and Hungarian space started during the reign of the Anjou kings and consolidated by the King Matthias Corvinus. From the point of view of the academic degrees obtained, we mention that 3 of the bishops of Oradea were doctors (Benedict II, Giovanni Melanesi da Prato and John Vitéz of Zredna), while Emeric Czudar was *magister in artibus*. We consider that the ecclesiastic personalities' academic education became a major factor of the religious and laic ascension. One can see that many of the bishops were remarkable humanists, and essentially contributed to the spreading of the Renaissance ideas and spirit in Hungary and Transylvania. The activity of the bishops with university education joined up the Hungarian ecclesiastic life with the European trend of the epoch.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE BISHOPS OF ORADEA, WHO HAD UNIVERSITY EDUCATION UNTIL 1526

No.	Name of the bishop	University attended	Years of service	Academic degree
1	Benedict II	Padua	Oradea (1291-1296)	doctor
2	Andrew Báthori	Bologna	Oradea (1329-1345)	
3	Emeric Czudar	Praga Italian university	Oradea (1374-1377) Transylvania (1386-1389)	<i>Magister in artibus</i>
4	Giovanni Melanesi da Prato	Padua	Oradea (1426)	Doctor of law
5	Dionysius Kusali	Vienna	Oradea (1427-1432)	
6	John Vitéz of Zredna	Vienna Bologna Padua	Oradea (1445-1465) Esztergom (1465-1472)	<i>decretorum doctor</i>
7	Nicholas Stolz	Bologna	Oradea (1470)	
8	John Filipec of Pruisz	Praga	Oradea (1476-1490)	
9	Dominic Kálmáncsehi	Vienna	Oradea (1495-1501) Transylvania (1501-1502)	
10	George Szatmáry	Bologna Kraków	Veszprém (1499-1501) Oradea (1501-1505) Pécs (1505-1521) Archbishop of Esztergom (1522-1524)	
11	Sigismund Thurzó	Padua	Transylvania (1504-1506) Oradea (1506-1512)	

