Terézia HORVÁTH:

The Provosts of the Chapter of Vaszvar During the Reign of King Matthias Corvinus

Up until now, little attention has been paid to the personnel of the Chapter of Vaszvar by the medievalists. Since it is not a cathedral chapter, but a collegiate one, therefore it was not noted among the more significant chapters, therefore, due to the particularly rich source material, the comprehensive adaptation of the chapter’s personnel is a complementary task. In the present paper, I attempt to introduce the life and career of the provosts of the Chapter of Vaszvar under the reign of King Matthias I (1458–1490). In the second half of the 15th century there were six provosts in this chapter, however we are only familiar with four persons’ name among them. The study demonstrates the career of the remaining two provosts (Thomas of Kutas and Ladislas of Kemend) of the chapter, since their lives are rather well documented. As a canon of Vaszvar, Thomas of Kutas visited an Italian university, where he obtained the decretorum doctor grade. Later he held various stallums in the chapters of Győr and Esztergom. Ladislas of Kemend was the governor of abbeys on the commission of the pope, and he also had a position in the court of the Archbishop of Esztergom and later represented King Vladislaus II at the Papal Court in Rome. Due to their carrier experiences, I firmly believe that the provosts of Vaszvar – in case of receiving the proper education and being in possession of the necessary talents – could fill in any important clerical or diplomatic positions outside the chapter as well.

Keywords: church history, chapter, collegiate chapter, middle clergy

Introduction

The precise date and circumstances of the foundation of Vaszvar’s Chapter is unknown. The medieval and early modern tradition – similarly to other church institutes – acknowledges King Stephen I to be the establisher.1 According to the current standpoint of historiography, it is more likely that the chapter was founded under the reign of King Ladislaus I, and, based on a source from the 14th century, it could also be supposed that the institute was

found from the Chapter of Győr.\(^2\) Regarding the number of the chapter’s personnel, it belongs to the smaller colleges. The chapter included columnar canons (canonici columnares), namely a provost, a cantor and a custodian canon (custos), but minor canons were present too. The dean, who was responsible for economic duties was chosen from this faction. As it is stated in the sources, the minor canons were the most numerous during the 14\(^{th}\) century, when their sum was a total of 12 persons.\(^3\) At the same time, it is intriguing that there was no stallum organized for the lector in Vasvár.\(^4\) Around the end of the 14\(^{th}\) century, the substitutes of the honorary canons (the subcantor, sub-custodian, and notary) appeared in the sources intermittently,\(^5\) however the occupation of these positions had never become a common practice: none of the charters from the Matthias era contains relevant details on the issue. In accordance with the general trends, the collegiate Chapter of Vasvár practiced the functions of the ‘places of authentication’ (loca credibilia) from the first half of the thirteenth century.\(^6\)

The fifteenth century history of the chapter was particularly full with hardships. Since Vasvár laid at the Western frontier, it suffered from the effects of the Civil War era occurring in the 1440’s, and from the subsequent Western military campaigns as well.\(^7\) The most important source on the history of the institute from the Matthias era is a statue, which was issued by the provost in 1483, aiming to regulate the inner life of the college. The document at first introduces and defines the liturgical obligations of the canons, and then continues with the regulations regarding the everyday life of the community, and it also provides guidance on the handling of conflicts between the members of the body.\(^8\)

**Historiography**

Up until now, the historiography devoted only marginal attention to the medieval history of this Western frontier institute; the topic of the prebend has attracted the attention of only three scholars yet. Ignác Desics was the first to conduct a research on the personnel of the Chapter of Vasvár, and consequently, in 1929, he published a roster on the canons in the second volume of a series, called the *Szombathelyi egyházmegye története* (The

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\(^{4}\) The disclosure of the possible reasons behind this phenomenon, and the investigation of who completed the duties of the lector (the issuing of authenticated documents, etc.) should be the undertaking of future researches. DESICS 1929. p. 302; SILL 1976. p. 28; IVÁNYI 1992. p. 27, 30, 72.

\(^{5}\) IVÁNYI 1992. p. 28, 72.

\(^{6}\) The first charter, which remained to us was issued in 1228. MNL OL DF 206899. DESICS 1929. p. 301–302; SILL 1976; IVÁNYI 1992. p. 29.

\(^{7}\) IVÁNYI 1992. p. 69–70.

history of the Diocese of Szombathely), edited by Gyula Géfin.\textsuperscript{9} In the completion of his work, the author primarily used the source publications, which were available at his time. He occasionally complemented his data with the benefices, which the canons of Vasvár occupied in other institutes. This roster was somewhat extended in the appendix of: \textit{A középkori Vaszvár (The Medieval Vasvár)}, written by Béla Iványi. The book was completed in 1957, but due to political reasons, it was only published in 1992.\textsuperscript{10} Besides these two scholars, Péter Kóta dedicated a few studies for the Chapter of Vasvár\textsuperscript{11}, however, none of them disclosed the question of the personnel in depths. The relatively fair availability of sources is mostly the result of digitalisation; the previously unprecedented growth in numbers allows the comprehensive processing of the medieval history of the prebend. This process can be organically linked to new researches on the institutional history of the Hungarian chapters, which has been occurring, and is reloaded with dynamism since the early 2000s.\textsuperscript{12}

Sources

From the observed period, between 1458 and 1490, altogether 535 charters remained to us. Out of them, only 234 contained data on the canons of the Chapter of Vasvár. These documents – based on their types – recorded information on the honorary and minor canons as well. Until the end of the examined era – although in a constantly decreasing number – we find rosters of the dignitaries in the closing section of charters, which were issued on declarations (\textit{fassiones}).\textsuperscript{13} These entries therefore provide a stable guide on the administrative period of the certain honorary canons, and they also facilitate the tracking of vacancies. In the present study, the charters, which were issued by the Chapter of Vasvár were complemented with further sources namely, with editions of the counties of Vas and Zala, university register books, and archive sources from the Vatican.\textsuperscript{14}

In the Matthias era, it was a conscious decision and effort to differentiate the canons, who held the same first name, which was achieved by applying the junior or senior suffix instead of the family surnames, or the ones, which would refer to the origins of the person.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{10} I\v{N}ÁNYI 1992. p. 122–125.
\textsuperscript{11} SILL 1976; SILL 1977; KÓTA 1997; KÓTA 1987.
\textsuperscript{12} FEDELES 2005; KRISTÓF 2014; G. TÓTH 2014; C. TÓTH 2015.
\textsuperscript{13} Further see: MNL OL DL 100665, 45300, 72816, 101043.
\textsuperscript{14} Many charters, which were originally issued by the County of Vas were published by Jenő Házi during the 1960’s and 1970’s on the columns of the \textit{Vasi Szemle} [The Vas Gazette]. KÓTA 1997. For the Zala County charters see: ZALA. Regarding the university peregrinations consider the following databases: SCHRAUF 1902; VERES 1941; KÖRMENTY 2007; HÁRASZTI SZAÞÓ – KELÉNYI – SZÖGI 2017. Archive sources from the Vatican: LUKESICS 1931–1938; CAMERALIA.
\textsuperscript{15} As an example, further see the case of the two canons from 1478, who were both called György: MNL OL DL 93522; MNL OL DF 285197.
Provosts

Among the canons of the observed era, the provosts were the ones, who, in many cases, fulfilled positions in other institutes, besides the chapter benefices they possessed. Furthermore, on a few occasions they actively took part in the national politics, thus the paths of such prebendaries could be uncovered the best. According to a papal charter from 1397, the income of the provost of Vasvár was 100 silver marks, but unfortunately, from the Matthias era, we do not have any information on the incomes.\(^\text{16}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stephen</td>
<td>3.28.1456(^\text{17}) – 9.14.1458(^\text{18})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas of Kutas</td>
<td>2.10.1459(^\text{19}) – 11.21.1478(^\text{20})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>6.17.1479(^\text{21}) – 8.19.1480(^\text{22})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen (the other)</td>
<td>9.27.1481(^\text{23})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew of Kolozsvár</td>
<td>02.21.1482,(^\text{24}) – 07.14.1483(^\text{25})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladislas of Kemend</td>
<td>12.11.1483(^\text{26}) – 12. 22.1500(^\text{27})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the chart’s data, it becomes visible that under the reign of King Matthias I, the benefice of the provost of Vasvár was held by six persons. Since Provost István ‘disappeared’ from the chapter’s life and abandoned its leadership soon after the accession of Matthias I, he is not included in the present paper. In the following sections, the life and carrier of the five provosts will be discussed in a chronological order.

**Thomas of Kutas (Gál’s son)**

It is provable, that from the 10\(^\text{th}\) of February 1459 until the 21\(^\text{st}\) of November 1478 Thomas of Kutas, the son of Gál was in the provost stall of Vasvár.\(^\text{28}\) His

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\(^{16}\) IVÁNYI 1992. p. 68.
\(^{17}\) MNL OL DF 261602.
\(^{18}\) MNL OL DL 39296.
\(^{19}\) MNL OL DF 209314.
\(^{20}\) MNL OL DL 12892.
\(^{21}\) MNL OL DL 101771.
\(^{22}\) MNL OL DL 45844.
\(^{23}\) MNL OL DF 279235, 279248.
\(^{24}\) MNL OL DF 282078.
\(^{25}\) MNL OL DL 70414, 101022.
\(^{26}\) MNL OL DL 29539.
\(^{27}\) MNL OL DL 90582.
\(^{28}\) MNL OL DF 209314; MNL OL DL 12892.
person has already been familiar to the Hungarian medievalists. The place of his origin is unknown, since in the fifteenth century Hungary, there were more than one settlements, which were called, Kutas in the counties of Csanád, Csongrád, Nógrád, Temes, Zaránd, Somogy and Zala. Based on his prior benefices, early historiography on the subject identified one of the Kutos named villages in Zala and Somogy as his place of descent. I also support this hypothesis and consider it valid, as long as another contrary evidence come to light, however, the chance of this kind of trouvaille is very low. Perhaps, the most probable is, that Thomas was the member of the Kutas family, the owners of the Kiskutas estate. We can also identify his close relatives: his father's name was Gál, and his brothers were Gregory, George, Nicodemus, and Ambrose.

The first written mentioning of his name does not connect him to Vasvár, but to Italy, the University of Padua, since he was a witness of the canon law exam of Stephen of Várda in 1450.

From this source, we also gather the information – besides him residing abroad – that prior to his position as provost of Vasvár, he already had a prebend at the chapter. We can assume, that it was a smaller stall, which did not require local habitation, or even if it did, Thomas of Kutas was not able to satisfy that criterion. Presumably, he stayed in Italy for a longer period of time. He reappeared in 1453, when he was on his way to Rome, as the procurator in the tithe proceedings of Simon of Treviso, a doctor of canon law and lector canon of Esztergom. For this commission, he received nine golden florins. According to the testimony of our sources, Kutas returned to the Eternal City on several occasions after 1453.

There he took up the ecclesiastical orders in 1455 and became a subdiaconus, diaconus and a presbiteratus. In June, 1456 he submitted a supplication to the Holy See for him to be allowed to hold more than one benefice. A month later, he asked for the custodian canonship of Pécs, but he could not attain that. Based on the premise of the previous literature, he acquired to canon law licence in Rome, 1456. In 1457, he had already been in possession of the decretorum doctor title. However, after he gained his doctorate, he did not return home. At the Papal Court he, as a procurator...
represented the interests of Stephen of Várda, the Archbishop of Kalocsa.\textsuperscript{39} We encounter him again in Rome, 1467, when he inscribed his name into the register book of the Holy Spirit Confraternity.\textsuperscript{40}

As it is visible in the first chart, Thomas of Kutas performed duties as the provost of Vasvár from 1459.\textsuperscript{41} Due to the offices he parallelly held, he certainly spent only a little time at the centre of the chapter. In the meantime, he obtained other benefices and offices. From the year of 1465, together with his provostship, he also became the canon of Győr and Esztergom from 1466. He maintained his position in Győr until 1477 and kept the one in Esztergom up to 1473. Besides being a canon, he further acted as a vicar first in Győr, and then in Esztergom. In the second chart it is highlighted, that Kutas remained to be a provost of Vasvár until 1478, since in this year, he was promoted to custodian canon of the Chapter of Győr.\textsuperscript{42}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefice</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canon of Vasvár</td>
<td>1453–1459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provost of Vasvár</td>
<td>1459–1478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canon of Győr</td>
<td>1465–1477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canon of Esztergom</td>
<td>1466–1473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicar of Győr</td>
<td>1466–1471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custodian Canon of Győr</td>
<td>1479–1480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicar of Győr</td>
<td>1479–1480</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Provosts George and Stephen

The direct successors of Thomas of Kutas, George and Stephen, were the provosts of Vasvár for a short period with George being the leader of the community for only a year. We do not know his surname, nor his origins, and

\textsuperscript{39} CAMERALIA I. p. 128.
\textsuperscript{41} From the 1450s, we are indeed familiar with a cantor and a custodian canon, called Thomas in the Chapter of Vasvár, therefore it occurred as a possibility that Kutas might be identical with one of them. Based on the roster of dignitaries, Thomas, the cantor held the office between 1448–1455, while the custodian canon namesake had the position from 1448 to 1458. (MNL OL DL 50496, 58123, 50496, 102141). In my opinion neither of them could be undoubtedly identified with Kutas, since none of the sources mentions the university degree of these canons. Furthermore, in 1454, the charters also preserved, that the custodian canon, Thomas, functioned as the emissary of the chapter (see MNL OL DL 14782), consequently he had to live in Vasvár while, as we have seen it, Kutas studied in Italy.
there are no remaining records on his education either. We only encounter his name in the dignitary lines of the charters issued by the Chapter of Vasvár. He is not present in the sources of Vas and Zala county, nor in the ones of the Vatican. The situation is very similar in the case of Provost István, the successor of George, only that there is a further complicating circumstance namely, that he appears in one charter alone. Therefore, the more detailed definition of his person and the better knowing of him is going to be an even bigger challenge, than with Provost George.

It is more likely, that both of them came into the chapter from the outside and became provosts, since previously there were no canons in the organization with the names, George and Stephen.

**Andrew of Kolozsvár**

Similarly to the above-mentioned cases, there are few pieces of information at our disposal. It is true in the case of Andrew of Kolozsvár as well, who was the head of the chapter for a relatively short time, one and a half years. Based on his name, it is probable that the family was originated from market-town of Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca) in Transylvania, and Andrew was from a local middle-class family. However, the way in which he got to Vasvár from Transylvania remains unknown, relevant sources have not been found yet. It is conceivable, that he owed the acquiring of the benefice to his personal relationship to King Matthias, but this aspect could only be proven by further investigations. Prior to Andrew of Kolozsvár’s time as a provost in the Chapter of Vasvár, we know about a custodian canon, Andrew by name, but he is only called by his firstname in the charters. Therefore, we can assume, that he might be the member of the chapter prior to his provostship. The name, Andrew of Kolozsvár first appeared in the university register book of Vienna in 1475, and for a second time in 1489. That Andrew, who was first mentioned in 1475 could be identical to the later provost of Vasvár, however this is not certain at all. It is also likely, that Provost Andrew is the same person as the custodian canon of Győr, András (1481–1482). After all, Andrew of Kolozsvár became the provost of Vasvár right after the custodian canonship of the other Andrew ended. On the whole, in contrast with the Provosts George and Stephen, it is more likely that new information will appear on Andrew of Kolozsvár in future investigations, therefore we can expect his person to become better known than it is currently.

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43 MNL OL DL 101771, 45844.
44 MNL OL DF 279235.
45 MNL OL DF 282078, 70414.
46 Notice of the editors: the present hypothesis underlines the limits of a wide-ranking method: 1) when the person’s name corresponds to a locality name, it is considered as a place of origin; 2) if the place is a (royal or market) town, the individual is automatically enlisted to the middle-class. It is clear, however, that a second generation can use the same toponym as family name without any link to the place in question. In the same way, a social status is very questionable without any written evidence. Therefore, any identification remains very hypothetic.
47 MNL OL DF 279235.
Ladislas of Kemend

The last provost of the Matthias era is Ladislas of Kemend, – known as of Körmend in the previous literature\(^{50}\) – who functioned as the head of the chapter between 1483 and 1500.\(^{51}\) Provost Ladislas was from the settlement of Kemendollár (currently used name) in the county of Zala.\(^{52}\) The village was the property of the Gersei Pető family, consequently Ladislas could be one of his peasants, and they probably played a significant role in the shaping of Kemend’s later carrier. On one occasion, the Gersei Pető family attempted to obtain the chapter’s right of patronage, which endeavour was crowned with success in the fifteenth century civil war era,\(^{53}\) thus they could have an influence on the personnel of the chapter. Furthermore, due to their relationship with the monarch, they presumably had the chance to recommend Kemend for the queen’s chapter.\(^{54}\) The brother of Ladislas of Kemend, Peter, is noted as well. In 1490, he resided near the castle of Kemend together with the peasants of the Provostship of Zalavár, when László took them under the protection of the Gersei Pető family. Regarding Peter, we do not have any other information on his family and relatives,\(^{55}\) and no records have been found on his education yet.

Kemend therefore is a provost, whose inner and representative activities in connection with the chapter are both known. It seem like that his first deed after he ascended to the benefice was to issue statures, which were dedicated to regulate the inner life of the chapter.\(^{56}\) It was also him, who – after the struggles, which burdened the institute in the fifteenth century – convinced the king to reaffirm the previous privileges of the chapter in 1488.\(^{57}\)

Chart 3: Ladislas of Kemend’s dignitaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefice</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provost of Vasvár</td>
<td>1483–1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count (Ispán) of Borsod</td>
<td>1488–1489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor of Szekszárd’s Abbey</td>
<td>1490–1492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor of the Castle of Diósgyőr</td>
<td>1490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor of the Abbey of Zalavár</td>
<td>1490–1492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge of the Court of Esztergom</td>
<td>1491–1492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissary of the Holy See</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen’s chaplain</td>
<td>1477</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{50}\) DESICS 1929. p. 318; Kubinyi 1999. p. 83.
\(^{52}\) CSÁKRI III. 12; PRT VII. p. 68.
\(^{54}\) C. TÓTH et alii 2017. p. 85.
\(^{55}\) MNL OL DL 93604.
Although we do not know the details of his earlier life, he lived an eventful one after becoming the provost of Vasvár. First, he became the Count of Borsod, then the Governor of Szekszárd’s Abbey, the Castle of Diósgyőr, and lastly, the Governor of the Abbey of Zalavár.\(^\text{58}\) Undoubtedly, he belonged to the court of Queen Beatrice. By the end of August 1491, he became the judge of court of the Esztergom Archdiocese. At this time around, the archbishop was Ippolito d’Este, but due to him being a minor upon his appointment, Queen Beatrice decided on the fulfilment of positions at the archdiocesan court. The precise circumstances of Kemend’s appointment are unknown, but it is certain that, besides his services to the Queen Beatrice, his clerical past meant an advantage in the process, as it unfolds from the reports, which were sent to Ferrara by the Governor of Esztergom, Beltrame Costabili. According to the previous experiences of the governor of Esztergom, the secular judges of court handled the incomes of the archdiocese in an untrustworthy manner, and successively committed abuses.\(^\text{59}\) His earlier involvement as the Governor of the Abbey of Szekszárd and of the Castle of Diósgyőr made him even more favourable to the position. Later, Pope Innocent VIII granted him the governorship of the Abbey of Zalavár. He issued four surviving charters under these dignitaries.\(^\text{60}\) His fine political skills are again supported by the fact, that although he belonged to the court of the king’s widow for a longer period, after the death of Matthias, Kemend was sent to Rome as an envoy to King Vladislaus II in the matter of the annulment of the new monarch’s marriage to the dowager Queen Beatrice.\(^\text{61}\)

**Conclusion**

Based on the accounts of the sources, both Kutas and Kemend earned their provostship at Vasvár as a reward for their services. Kutas successfully represented the Chapter of Esztergom, therefore later, after finishing his studies and arriving home from Rome, he obtained his other stalls – with the mediation of Denis of Szécs, Archbishop of Esztergom – probably in return for his previous services. As his first major dignitary, Ladislas of Kemend was the queen’s chaplain, and since he fulfilled his tasks efficiently, the queen, in order to express her gratitude, had Matthias I to grant the provostship of Vasvár and the above-mentioned offices to him as well. Considering the two elaborately discussed carriers I firmly believe, that there was a notable opportunity in front of the provosts of the collegiate chapters if they possessed the necessary qualification and skills: they could serve the monarch as foreign diplomats, secular officials, or could hold benefices in other chapters too. The observation of the extent these aspects came to realization among the less familiar provosts and members of the Chapter of Vasvár will be the deed of future researches.

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\(^{58}\) PRT VII. p. 67; PRT VII. p. 68; PRT VII. p. 69; C. Tóth et alii 2017. p. 85; C. Tóth 2017. p. 28.


\(^{60}\) MNL OL DL 56228, 93604. (PRT VII. p. 67); MNL OL DF 285230; MNL OL DL 90582.

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