

Matthias and the Saints

The cult of the saints, especially that of the most popular saint-type in medieval Hungary, the cult of the holy rulers and princesses always had close ties with the kings and the royal court. Saint Stephen, the first Christian king of Hungary had an important role in introducing these cults by acquiring prominent relics (such as those of Saint George) or going to battles under their protection (e.g. with Saint Martin, believed to be of Pannonian origin).¹ Saint Stephen and his son Saint Emeric had been elevated to sainthood in 1083, following the initiative of Saint Ladislav, who himself got canonized in 1192 under the patronage of King Béla III. The cult of these holy rulers, in the thirteenth century, had been more and more conceived as a dynastic cult where the virtues of the saintly predecessors were, in a way, inherited by the descendants, making the whole lineage a kind of *beata stirps* (Vauchez, 1977: 397-406; Klaniczay G., 2002a). At the same time, with the explosion of the cult of Saint Elizabeth (Blume – Werner eds., 2007), a new type was added to the triad of Saint Stephen, Saint Emeric and Saint Ladislav, that of the charitable, religious holy princess. This type was “reincarnated” by Saint Margaret of Hungary, daughter of Béla IV, who lived her life as a nun in the royal Dominican convent built for her on the Rabbit Island (her canonization process, starting in 1272, is the only such procedure in medieval Hungary, which was finally concluded only in 1943) (Fraknoi ed., 1896: I. 162-383). Similar cult initiatives were related to aunts, sisters or cousins of Saint Elizabeth and Saint Margaret in other Central European courts (Saint Hedwig of Silesia, Saint Agnes of Bohemia, Saint Kynga of Cracow, Blessed Iolantha and Constance) (Klaniczay G., 2002a, 195-295). The courtly cults of these saintly princesses, patronized by the mendicant orders, became a popular extension of the earlier cults of the *sancti reges*.

The extinction of the dynasty of the Árpáds (and similarly that of the neighboring Přemyslides) at the beginning of the fourteenth century brought two new dynasties to Central Europe, the Angevins and the Luxemburg. The special attention paid to the cult of the saintly ancestors was among the privileged tools by which these newcomer dynasties tried to secure their claim to the Hungarian (and the Bohemian) throne. Since their claim was related to blood-descent (although only on female line), the idea of *beata stirps* was further developed by them (Klaniczay G.,

¹ The military miracles are mentioned in his *Legenda maior*, cf. *Legendae Sancti Stephani regis...* 1938.

2002a: 298-330; Kerny, 2007). To the enthusiastic patronage of the local royal saints and courtly cults they added that of the imported saints of their own dynasties: the two Saint Louises, i.e. Saint Louis IX, King of France and Saint Louis of Toulouse by the Angevins (Bertaux, 1900: 610-644; Le Goff, 1996; Gardner 1976: 12-33), Charlemagne (Folz, 1950) and later Saint Sigismund (Mengel, 2004: 145-158) by the Luxemburges). In both newcomer dynasties the apogee of these courtly cults and their most accomplished use came in the second generation – Louis the Great of Hungary (Klaniczay G., 2002a, 337-366) and Charles IV, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Bohemia (Rosario, 2001) It is important to add that the royal patronage of these saints was most intensively promoted by some female members of the dynasty, such as Elisabeth Piast, second wife of Charles Robert, the powerful “mother-queen” who remained influential during the whole reign of Louis the Great (Śnieżyńska-Stolot, 1974: 13-36; Śnieżyńska-Stolot, 1979: 166-168), or Anne of Schweidnitz, third wife of Charles IV (Machilek, 1978). Pious foundations, sumptuous works of art and architecture, chronicles, new legends, illuminated codices, relic-collection, royal-courtly pilgrimages, coinage and seals bear testimony of this unprecedented courtly display of the cult of the saints in Central Europe, which, incidentally, was closely paralleled by similar phenomena in Paris (Hallam: 201-214), Naples (Kelly, 2003: 119-128) and elsewhere in Europe.

Sigismund of Luxemburg, son of Charles IV, King of Hungary, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Bohemia inherited these courtly cults, and, as recent exhibitions have shown, took care to continue them (especially that of his namesake, St. Sigismund, and the cult of the Hungarian *sancti reges*) (Tóth, 2008 : 80-96; Szakács, 2006: 319-330). In the first half of the fifteenth century, however, the late medieval apogee of the cult of saints seemed to be fading away. It was challenged by the Hussites (Šmahel - Patschovsky, 2002), damaged by the easily aborting late medieval canonization initiatives and, during the Great Schism, the sobering controversies on ecstatic-mystical female sainthood (Vauchez, 1981; Wetzstein, 2004). Bridget of Sweden had to be canonized four times because of the renewed criticisms against her (1377, 1391, 1415, 1419) (Jelsma, 1986: 163-176), and Catherine of Siena had to wait almost 80 years until her cult got official recognition (Centi, 1970). As to the closer circle of Sigismund, the courtly patronage of the royal saints continued, but the king had to face the challenge that these cults were also patronized by the higher and lesser nobility and even broader circles (Kerny, 1987: 353-363). From an item of dynastic prestige they were on the way to become a kind of “national” symbol. Saint Wenceslas remained popular among the Hussites generally hostile to the cult of saints (Graus, 1975), the frescoes on Saint Ladislav and the Cuman kept on multiplying in Hungary under noble patronage (Marosi, 1987: 211-256), Saint Ladislav became the patron saint of the *natio hungarica* at the Vienna university (Klaniczay G., 2001: 87-108), and when the Hungarian barons conspiring against Sigismund in 1402 wanted to swear an oath of a supreme political quality,

they made it to the head-relic of Saint Ladislav in Nagyvárád (Bunyitay, 1883-1884: 221).

When we turn to the problem now, how King Matthias related to the saints, we have to bear this evolution in mind. Besides the slight “loss of momentum” of the cult of saints, especially the courtly cult of holy rulers and princesses in the early fifteenth century, a further consideration should be added here. Matthias came to the Hungarian throne by election, fully devoid of the dynastic principle – this alone should have made the whole idea of *beata stirps* or saintly predecessors meaningless for him, and we know, indeed, that he cherished rather the analogy with Attila (Birnbäum, 1993: 82-96) or the fanciful genealogy leading back to the Roman Corvinus family (Antonius de Bonfinis, 1936: vol. III, IV. 255, p. 95). Furthermore, the general image of the ecclesiastical policies of King Matthias is showing him as a true “renaissance” personality reigning according to the emerging new rationale of power and subordinating his ecclesiastical policies to his grand-scale political projects such as the use of the idea of “crusade” against the Hussites serving the expansion of his kingdom (Klaniczay T., 1975: 1-14). In his initial courtly surroundings, bishops, clerics, friars or even barons and nobles, started to be outnumbered by humanists, scholars, artists coming from Italy and many other parts of Europe, and rather a secular spirit prevailed than a religious one. If we are to believe Galeotto Marzio’s *De egregie, sapienter, iocose dictis ac factis regis Mathiae liber*, he shared the age’s satirical vision on the typical vices of the high clergy (which he sarcastically comments in part 11), and he humiliates and outwits Nicholas, bishop of Modrus, the envoy of Pope Pius II (in part 13) (Galeottus Martius Narniensis, 1934, cap. 13, p. 12-14; Fraknói, 1897: 1-23).

This image, more or less supported by an overview on the ecclesiastical policies of King Matthias by Vilmos Fraknói (Fraknói, 1901-1903) or later Ferenc Galla, (Galla, 1941: 95-170) has recently been challenged, or at least counterbalanced by József Török (Török, 2006: 107-112), Kornél Szovák (Szovák, 2008: 393-396) and Terézia Kerny (Kerny, 2008: 397-400), pointing to his personal religiosity, his patronage of religious orders and his dedication to the promotion of old and new cults of saints. Following a similar approach, moving away from the old stereotype of the irreligiousness of renaissance rulers, let me present and comment here the principal data on the relation of King Matthias to the saints.

The earliest manifestations in this domain relate to the canonization initiative of St. John of Capistran, to whom the young king must have been attached with justified personal reasons. John of Capistran, a prominent figure of Franciscan Observance and the leader of an anti-Ottoman crusade which helped liberating the besieged Belgrade, died in 1456, in probably the same disease as Matthias’ father, János Hunyadi (Hofer, 1964; Kulcsár, 1987). Capistran died at the Observant convent of Újlak, and there erupted an instantaneous cult after this, with a torrent of healing miracles occurring at his grave, recorded by urban notaries and friars (Andrić, 2000).

The evolving cult was under the patronage of Miklós Újlaki, one of the mightiest barons in Hungary, King of Bosnia, and promoted with equal zeal by local burghers and Observant Franciscans (Mazuran, 1972; Fügedi, 1977: 847-887). Capistran's equally famous colleague, James of the Marches (Lasić, 1974) popularized his miracles in 1457 at the royal court of Ladislaus V in Buda (Andrić, 2000: 85). The canonization campaign was in full vigor when Matthias came to the throne, and the Observant Franciscans, the preferred religious order of János Hunyadi already (Florea, 2005: 478-479; Cevins, 2000: 50; Varga, 2008: 401-404), did not miss the opportunity to quickly win the young king to support their initiative. There are altogether four letters by Matthias in this matter, beyond any doubt formulated by the Observant promoters of Capistran's cult but, at the same time, providing the first set of "official" statements of the young king in the matter of the cult of the saints.

The first letter, dated March 22, 1460, is ambitiously addressed to "the princes, dukes, margraves, counts, elders, priors, judges, rectors of the cities and the communities of Italy" (*ad Italicos principes, ducibus, marchionibus, comitibus, antianis, prioribus, iudicibus, ac civitatum et communitatum rectoribus*) to support him in turning to the Apostolic See for proposing the canonization of this "blessed man". The letter describes Capistran's fervor in disseminating the verb of God: "In various parts of our kingdom not only the simple people flocked to him but also barons, nobles and prelates, in such a multitude that he could only preach in fields or ample squares. They also took to him all the sick and ailing people and many of them recovered their health." Out of modesty, Capistran attributed this to the merits of his recently canonized companion, Saint Bernardino of Siena, "whose saintly relics he was keeping with himself and held them above the head of the ill people...". The letter subsequently narrates how Capistran decided "out of a fervent desire of martyrdom" to preach the crusade and turn with the huge crowd he assembled against the Turks in Nándorfehérvár (Nandoralba, Belgrade). There he contributed, "acclaiming the name of Jesus", and also with "brave fighting" to the glamorous victory of the "militia of Christ over the army of Satan". Finally, after his death, at his grave in Újlak, with the invocation of his name, innumerable healing miracles happened, which provide ample testimony to his sanctity (Fraknói ed., 1893, vol. I, p. 10-13; Andrić, 2000: 91).

A letter by Miklós Újlaki from 30 March reformulates this story by making Matthias himself a prominent beneficiary of miracles operated by Capistran: "We have also heard our most honorable king say in front of many barons and noblemen that he had been liberated from captivity and had been elected king after addressing a vow to this blessed father" (Andrić, 2000: 92-93). A second letter by Matthias, sent to Pope Pius II, adopts this personalized justification, including that "in our vow we promised that after our liberation we would insist on his canonization." (Andrić, 2000: 93-94). He repeats the same argument in a third letter, sent to the cardinals.

Finally, a fourth letter, addressed to the pope a few years later, maybe around 1464, expresses a less deliberate stance. He takes notice in this last letter, that the sanctity of John of Capistran, of which the believers seem to be convinced, may be an “error”, a “premature superstition,” which has to be quickly examined by an expert commission which should decide in this matter.²

This last letter could be explained by the unexpected difficulties a quick recognition of Capistran’s cult encountered (not the least in the attitude of Pope Pius II), and perhaps also the deception of the young king who hoped to be able to settle the matter quickly. It might be worth while to note, however, that the canonization initiative persisted. In 1473, the king’s mother, Erzsébet Szilágyi makes a renewed petition to the pope in this matter (Andrić, 2000: 96). The continued efforts of the Observants are also illustrated by the fresco-sketch prepared in Olomouc, in the convent of the Observant Franciscans (Bernardines) founded by Capistran (Fig. 1)³



(Hlobil, 1996: 223-34). This fresco-sketch was prepared very probably for the occasion of the visit of King Matthias there in 1468 (Kalous, 2008: 65-76), one can see on it both the towering figure of János Hunyadi, and that of the charismatic Observant preacher.

About the same time Matthias (or rather the Observant Franciscans around him) wrote these letters to the pope promoting the case of John of Capistran, he intervened, in 1463, in the matter of the foundation of the Saint Ladislav chapter in Nagyvárad (Fraknói ed, 1893: vol. I, p. 36-37), and also renewed the long-time begun initiative to carry to success the canonization process of Saint Margaret. These two initiatives, especially the two letters he wrote between 1462 and 1464 to the pope concerning Saint Margaret (Fraknói ed, 1893: vol. I, p. 57-59; Fraknói ed., 1896: vol.

² “nonnulli, prematura superstitione ducti, fratrem Johannem Capistranum colunt ut sanctum...” Fraknói ed, 1896: vol. I, p. 59-60; cf. Andrić, 2000: 133.

³ The fresco-sketch is published in Farbaky, Spekner, Szende and Végh, 2008: 402.

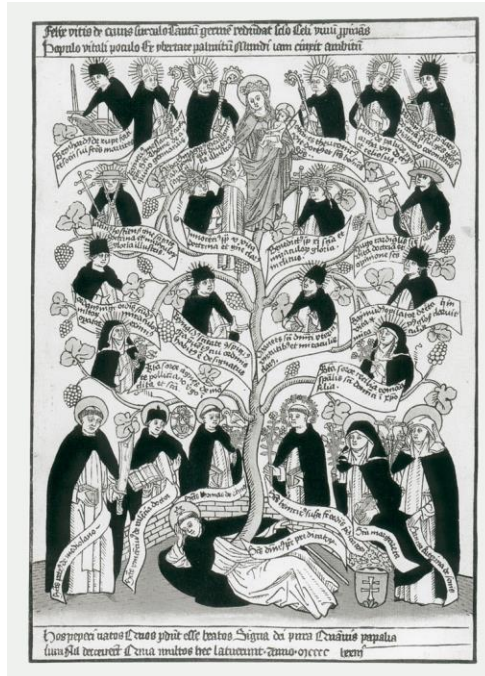
III. p. 174-176). represent a different kind on attachment to the saints: Matthias aligned his position here to the traditional Hungarian dynastic concept of sainthood.

Concerning Margaret the petition of Matthias stresses that she was “the daughter of our predecessor, King Béla.” He summarizes the matter with the following words: “There is an island in the middle of the Danube near our city Buda, which used to be called the Rabbit’s Island, then the Island of the blessed Mary. There stands on this island now a monastery of nuns of the Order of the Preachers, founded by King Béla, our predecessor, who dedicated his virgin daughter named Margaret to God. This Margaret conducted her honest life and saintly works with such a heavenly grace, that she operated great and evident miracles in life and after her death which are attested by many faith-worthy witnesses. Not much after her death various Roman popes have sent envoys or inquisitors who examined many apt witnesses coming from all around Hungary, and put this in writing. But as it happened, the frequent changes in the person of kings and the course of matters, this cause had been delayed or neglected thereafter. Now we should like to ask most humbly and studiously your sanctity ... to recognize this cause...” (Fraknói ed., 1896: vol. III. p. 58).

The canonization initiative of Margaret of Hungary was indeed an important issue to revive. Begun on the petition by Stephen V and then by Ladislaus IV, appropriately documented then aborted in the thirteenth century, this case had been three times brought again to the Papal court in the fourteenth century by the Angevin rulers and Queen Mother Elizabeth Piast (Klaniczay G., 2006: 443-454). It is logical that Matthias picked up the unfinished case of Margaret, not only with his letters, but also asking Marc, bishop of Tinin, his envoy to the Holy See to intervene in this matter (Fraknói, 1896: vol. III, p. 174). Though the matter has not been settled this time either, according to a notice in the modern canonization documentation of Margaret, Pius II has authorized the celebration of Margaret’s feast on January 18 with an office or even proper mass dedicated to her memory; and the lack of the related document is explained by the fact that almost all documents issued by Pius II had been burnt at a fire at Vatican library.⁴

This canonization initiative was naturally supported by the Dominican order, which has been efficiently striving for the official recognition of its saints. The joint veneration of the whole group of (canonized or not canonized) Dominican saints is illustrated by the iconographic model of the Dominican “genealogical tree”, depicted in 1473, growing out of Saint Dominic, a kind of spiritual version of the “Tree of Jesse”, where the still not canonized Margaret of Hungary also figured at a prominent place (cf. Fig. 2). (London, British Museum; Bianchi-Giunta, 1988: 163-164).

⁴S. Rit. Congr.: Positio - Inquis. p. LXXI-XXXV and p. 226; I owe thanks to Viktória Hedvig Deák for having checked these data in Rome.



Similarly to the presence of Franciscan Observants in Matthias' court, there are also several - Hungarian, Croatian and Italian - Dominican friars in his surroundings, who were beyond any doubt assisting him in this attempt to renew the case of Saint Margaret (Banfi, 1938: 7-8).

There is still another occurrence to be mentioned here: the decision of Pope Pius II - of Sienese origin - to declare the canonization of Saint Catherine of Siena in 1461 (Volpato, 1986: 149-162). The case of Margaret of Hungary has been linked by the Dominicans, for many decades, to that of Saint Catherine of Siena. The *stigmata* attributed to Margaret in Italian hagiography and iconography was considered as a kind of pre-figuration of Saint Catherine's *stigmata* (Klaniczay T., 1995: 3-27; Klaniczay G., 2002b: 16-31). A minor but significant trace of these efforts could be discovered in a depiction of St. Margaret on the carved pulpit of the Dominican church in Dubrovnik, in the company of three more Dominican saints (Saint Dominic, Saint Vincent of Ferrer, Saint Peter Martyr). On the carving we can see Saint Margaret receiving the stigmata from a seraph-like Christ, like Saint Francis, with her crown put down to her feet (Fig. 3 and 4).



Though previous research has dated this pulpit to the 1450s (Fisković, 2003: 29-48), a Croatian art historian, Ana Marinković developed recently the interesting hypothesis (Marinković, 2008: 169-178), that this depiction of Saint Margaret could have been related to initiatives of Dubrovnik Dominicans (such as Serafino and Martino de Bona, Luca de Martinussio and Tommaso de Basilio) who had formerly studied at the Dominican *studium generale* in Buda (Klaniczay T., 1990: 604-607) and were near the court of King Matthias, and thus could have heard of the efforts by Matthias to renew the canonization initiative of Margaret. The influence of Hungarian dynastic cults in Dubrovnik in the time of Matthias, could also be perceived by the noteworthy altar dedication in the Chapter Hall of the Dubrovnik Dominican convent to the three Hungarian ruler saints, Stephen, Emeric and Ladislav, in 1498, by the sons of a Croatian knight, Drago Gozze, formerly fighting on the side of Matthias in Jajce, in Bosnia (Marinković, 2008: 177).

The initiative to revive Saint Margaret's canonization case must have played a role to turn the attention of the young king toward the traditional state patronage of the *sancti reges Hungariae*, which can be perceived in various other documents. We can discover a fourteenth century-inspired depiction of the three holy kings of Hungary on the "majesty seal" of Matthias prepared in 1464, (Marosi, 2008: 113-128.) the year of his real assumption of power, which was also underlined by a second coronation ceremony. Saint Ladislav, the most popular one among the saintly predecessors appears on the golden florins minted by the king, with his traditional attribute, the battle axe (Marosi, 2008: 120). The life-story of Saint

Ladislas, which kept on inspiring religious wall-paintings on his fight with the Cuman (Madas - Horváth eds., 2008), came to be integrated to the painted woodcut illustrations of the chronicle of John of Thuróc in the Augsburg edition, together with some innovative depictions of Saint Stephen and Saint Emeric – all discussed recently by Terézia Kerny (Kerny, 2008).

The cult of these dynastic saints is further illustrated by various pious foundations and works of art. In 1477 Matthias associates himself to the donation of a possession to the Saint Elizabeth chapel in Óbuda by his mother Elizabeth Szilágyi (Kerny, 2008: 398). Robert Suckale has developed an elaborated theory of Matthias' royal patronage of the lavish Saint Elizabeth altar in Kassa (Košice, Kaschau), inaugurated also in 1477 (Suckale, 2008: 101-113) – an interpretation supported by Jiří Fajt, but debated by Ivan Gerát and Ernő Marosi (Marosi, 2008: 123).

The group representation of Hungarian holy rulers (Stephen, Emeric, Ladislas) relying upon, or independent of royal patronage became quite popular in the northern regions – let me present here two examples, the parish church of Gánóc (Ganovce) where they were grouped around St. Stanislaus (who was a kind of common Hungarian-Polish patron saint since the fourteenth century) (Poszler, 2000: 179-180), and an especially interesting combination of saintly rulers at the Saint Martin altar of Szepeshely (Spišská Kapitula) (1470-78), representing a vision close to the royal court (Poszler, 2000: 180-181). The three *sancti reges Hungariae* are juxtaposed to the two saint Louises imported to Hungary by the Angevins (Sts. Louis Bishop of Toulouse and Louis IX, King of France) and the third figure has stirred up many speculations. It represents the figure of the early medieval royal saint Oswald from Northumbria, whose medieval German legends (analyzed by Vizkelety, 1964: 107-188) made him associated with the raven holding a ring as iconographic symbol – a noteworthy interference with the heraldic representation of King Matthias Corvinus. For this reason the hypothesis keeps coming back since Tibor Gerevich (Gerevich, 1942: 95-98) in the 1940s that his inclusion to this group might have hinted to King Matthias.

Besides artistic representations, the memory of the Hungarian ruler saints has also been kept alive by sermons. The sermons of Pelbárt of Temesvár (ca. 1435-1504), an Observant Franciscan, should be mentioned here (Szilády, 1880; Horváth, 1889; V. Kovács, 1982), who dedicates in his *Pomerium*, compiled after 1489 several sermons to the Hungarian royal saints (Stephen, Emeric, Ladislas, and Elizabeth) (Pelbartus de Themeswar, 1502). and in these he does not spare the contemporary rulers (i.e. Matthias among them) of harsh criticism, because they could not come up to the moral perfection of their saintly predecessors. "Should Saint Ladislas or King Saint Stephen live or others like them today, they would punish the spoliators of the temples... They abound in dresses and do not care that the poor perish in cold and nudity. They erect huge palaces for themselves, to be admired by the people and do not care that the poor die on the street. They arrange huge feasts, stuff their own

bellies and those of the rich, and the poor starve with hunger..." (V. Kovács, 1982: 192; Szűcs, 1974: 574-580). It is hard to imagine that the sympathy of the young Matthias with the Franciscan Observants or the attraction of the saintly models persisted in a situation when Pelbárt of Temesvár (and probably his fellow friars) used them continuously for such polemics. The biographer of Pelbárt of Temesvár, Áron Szilády supposed that he had to leave Buda for Esztergom around 1487 because of a conflict with King Matthias precisely because of these sermons on Saint Stephen and Saint Ladislav (Sermons 54, 15, and 17 in the *Pomerium*) (Szilády, 1880: 33-40).

In the last part of my study I should like to turn to the problem how Matthias related to the "non-Hungarian" saints. First his support to the cult of Saint Leopold of Austria should be mentioned. This initiative by the Habsburgs to generate a national/dynastic cult centred on the person of the pious Leopold III of Babenberg (1095-1136), who was buried in Klosterneuburg, dates back to the fourteenth century. Sponsored by Albert II (the Numb) (1330-1358), the cult first got off the ground during the reign of Albert's son, Rudolf IV of Habsburg (1358-1365), the emperor Charles IV's son-in-law (Röhrig, 1984: 256; Kovács, 1986). The initiative was delayed then, as many other fourteenth-century canonization attempts, and it was again put on the agenda by Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III, when, in the second half of the fifteenth century, the Observants managed to revive the canonization activity of the papal Curia (as demonstrated by the canonizations of Bernardino of Siena in 1450, Vincent of Ferrer in 1455, Osmund of Salisbury in 1457, Catherine of Siena in 1461, Bonaventure in 1482 and the persistent initiatives to canonize John of Capistran after 1462 (Wetzstein, 2004: 514-533). In this situation Frederick III, keen to enlarge the sacral representation of the Habsburgs with the cult of a dynastic saint, which this house was still lacking, turned to Pope Paul II in 1468-69 to ask for the renewal of the investigations on the sanctity of Leopold (Wetzstein, 2004: 525-526; Ludwig, 1919.; Uiblein, 1985: 21-58).

Frederick III managed to win King Matthias to support this initiative with a petition written on March 2, 1470, on the occasion when he was staying in Vienna with Emperor Frederick III. Matthias stressed that Leopold of Austria "was as important for him, as a Hungarian king would have been" (Ludwig, 1919: 18-19). The "in partibus" canonization investigations in June 1472 finally lead to the canonization of Leopold in 1485. By that time, however, this issue became less important for Matthias – actually his occupation of the eastern Austrian territories prevented for some time the *translatio* ceremonies at Klosterneuburg, which only occurred after his death, in 1494 (Wacha, 1985: 137-142).

Three further important cults should be mentioned. One is that of St. John the Almsgiver, patriarch of Alexandria, the relics of whom Matthias received from Sultan Bayezid II in 1489. According to the chronicle of György Szerémi it was in front of these relics that Matthias made the barons swear that they would accept John Corvin as his legitimate successor (Wenzel, 1857: 28). Matthias' veneration of

relics Saint Paul the Hermit, imported to Hungary in a very similar manner a century earlier, in 1381. In 1480, on the occasion of a country-wide draught, M. joined efforts with the Paulinians in praying for the rain. He made a special vow, he had the relics of Saint Paul, brought in a solemn procession by the friars from their convent at Budaszentlőrinc to the royal palace (Gyöngyösi, 1988: 133-134). Finally, as also shown in several of his charters and on the depiction of his silver *denarii*, Matthias also paid a special veneration to the cult which more or less obscured the cult of the saints by the end of the Middle Ages, to the veneration of the Virgin Mary as *Patrona Hungariae* (Kubinyi, 1999: 335-339).

Let me conclude with a very brief assessment: how do all these data add up to a characterization of the kind of veneration Matthias was giving to the saints. The data show doubtlessly a greater variety and a more nuanced spirituality than what had been assumed until recently. Matthias was continuing and supporting the dynastic cults initiated and maintained by his predecessors. His contributions to further past canonization initiatives and initiate new ones show an active and conscious routine of ecclesiastical diplomacy as well as some elements of his personal religiosity and devotion – a feature which also stressed about him in the Pauline chronicle by Gergely Gyöngyösi (Gyöngyösi, 1988, 125-126, 133).

At the same time, if we compare these data with those of some Italian Renaissance princes with whom he was in closer contact, we are obliged to recognize, that he did not really engage in the kind of fervent devotion for contemporary “living saints” the same way as what could be observed in contemporary Italian courts (Zarri, 1990: 87-164). I would refer, as an example, to the court of the Este, with whom he was closely related: Ercole I of Este was his brother-in-law, his son, Ippolito d’Este obtained in 1487 the archbishopric of Esztergom. We find much documentation on the exchanges between the two splendid renaissance courts, but not much information – despite Ippolito’s prominent religious dignity – about the impact or even the existence of new Italian cults of ecstatic saintly women of the age, which was, however very much in vogue in Ferrara.

Though it was only after the death of Matthias, in 1496, that Ercole d’Este went in this field as far, as to have abducted from Viterbo and carried to his own palace a contemporary living stigmatic saint. This was Lucia Broccadelli, more commonly known as Lucia of Narni (1476-1544), called the “second Catherine of Siena”, upon whose body on 25 February 1496, during a meditation on the Passion on Good Friday the bleeding stigmata appeared. Her wounds on the hands, feet and side – represented a spectacular repetition of the miracle of St. Catherine of Siena (and ultimately of Saint Francis of Assisi). Duke Ercole I d’Este arranged a convent of Dominican tertiaries (*mantellatae*) and a special cell for this “*santa viva*” in his palace; he introduced her regularly to his guests, and allowed them even to take home, as

relics, the handkerchiefs soiled with her bleeding stigmata (Zarri, 1990; Herzig, 2008: 75-125).

Matthias did not go that far in the extravagant habits of late fifteenth-century courtly-mystic spirituality, his religiosity seems to have preserved a more archaic, a more sober and pragmatic stance. For him the saints remained, above all, powerful dynastic and personal patrons.

This attitude seems to have found a further expansion with the emerging new dynasty of the region, the Habsburgs, who made a remarkable synthesis also in this domain. Related to his ambition to succeed King Matthias on the Hungarian throne in 1491, and subsequently to secure the throne of Hungary and Bohemia by marriage treaties with the Jagiellonians, Maximilian showed a marked interest in demonstrating his descent from the holy rulers in the region, and, indeed, through the mediation of marriage alliances (*tu felix Austria, nube*), his kinship with every single royal saint in European history. Establishing his saintly pedigree – this was the purpose somewhat later of the *Fürstliche Chronik genannt Kaiser Maximilians Geburtsspiegel* written in six volumes by Jakob Mennel (1518), with a compendium of several collections of woodcuts, and many other works of art illustrating Maximilian's holy ancestry (Laschitzer, 1886: 70-288.; Endrődi: 196-220).

Looking back from here to Matthias, again, shows a rather neat difference – though he paid due reverence to the saints, he apparently did not think that he should make these cults as a political capital for his reign.

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