

Episcopal Power and Authority in Communication with the City of Bardejov in the Late Middle Ages*

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This study deals with communications between the town of Bardejov and bishops in the Middle Ages. The author examines how the ecclesiastical power and authority of the bishops was demonstrated in their communications with the royal city of Bardejov. The bishops' power toward medieval towns in the Kingdom of Hungary was primarily manifested in the tithes and exemptions granted in the rights of archdeacons. In the case of Bardejov, there can be found some areas where the power of bishops of Eger (frequently represented by episcopal vicars) was demonstrated. First of all, the episcopal tithe collection caused permanent disputes between the parish priest, town representatives and the bishop. The author describes how the problems were solved and the machinery of episcopal powers in these cases. Another area of communication and the manifestation of episcopal authority was that of judicial cases between burghers, which were occasionally brought before ecclesiastical court contrary to town law. A further, greatly significant manifestation of episcopal power in the area of the city was that of ecclesiastical rituals and symbolic communication. The study mentions various examples of episcopal presence in the consecration of churches, chapels, altars and liturgical dress.

Keywords: Middle Ages; Bishops; Episcopal power and authority; Communication; Medieval city; Bardejov.

Introduction

"In virtute sancte obedientie et sub Excommunicationis pena firmiter precipiendo mandamus."¹

This phrase, commonly used in the charters of ecclesiastical dignitaries, can be found in the letter of the bishop of Eger, Ladislaus of Hédervár, dated 1449, in which the bishop calls upon the city of Bardejov to fulfil its duty to pay the tithe. Despite the stylistic formula he used, behind the call for holy obedience and the warning of ecclesiastical punishment lies the real power of the bishop as the highest dignitary of the medieval Catholic Church.² This power derives from the rite of the consecration and, according to the Church Fathers, was defined as the administration of the spiritual (*in rebus*

* The study is a revised version of the article: FEDORČÁKOVÁ, Mária. "V cnosti svätej poslušnosti." *Moc a autorita jágerských biskupov v komunikácii s mestom Bardejov v stredoveku*. In: *Studia Historica Nitriensia*, 2020, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 36–52. The text was also published in the collective monograph: FEDORČÁKOVÁ, Mária. "V cnosti svätej poslušnosti." *Moc a autorita jágerských biskupov v komunikácii s mestom Bardejov v stredoveku*. In: GLEJTEK, Miroslav (ed.). *Arcibiskupi a biskupi Uhorska: Moc prelátov a jej prejavy v stredoveku*. Bratislava: Post Scriptum, 2020, pp. 207–222.

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1 Štátny archív v Prešove, pracovisko Archív Bardejov (hereinafter ŠA PO, AB), Magistrát mesta Bardejov (hereinafter MMB), signature (hereinafter sign.) 547.

2 GLEJTEK, *Práva a povinnosti uhorských biskupov*, 80; HLEDÍKOVÁ, *Biskup*, 140–142.

spiritualibus) and temporal (*in rebus temporalibus*) goods.³ According to the *Decretum Gratiani*, the bishop's *potestas* concerns authority, teaching, witness, protection and judgement.⁴

It was not only the representation of power in an ecclesiastical sphere that characterised the role of the bishop in medieval society. The bishop was one of the political actors who ruled the state, which was reflected in his involvement in politics, administration and diplomacy, as we know from the Kingdom of Hungary and other European states.⁵

The connection between episcopal power and the urban environment can be traced back to the process of Christianization, in relation to the establishment of the episcopal seats.⁶ In East Central Europe, secular power was an important element in the process of establishing diocesan seats, which resulted in the duality of power as a common feature of the cathedral cities.⁷ In the thirteenth century, when social and economic changes took place in the Kingdom of Hungary, the Árpáadian kings shifted the focus of their interest to the establishment of merchant towns.⁸ Nevertheless, the cities in which an episcopal see resided strengthened their urban character, with some peculiarities regarding the legal status of their inhabitants and the development of urban literacy.⁹

Apart from those cathedral cities with direct interaction between the bishop and the urban environment since the thirteenth century we can follow the communication between the bishop and the royal cities, which reveals the area of operation of the bishop's power. The main issue in the communication of the developing urban communities with the bishop was the exemption from the jurisdiction of the archdean and the payment of a tithe.¹⁰ In the late Middle Ages, sources allow us to examine the manifestation of the bishop's power at other levels – in his personal presence in the city, in the consecration of altars and chapels, in the confirmation of lay religious confraternities and their privileges, or in the form of symbolic communication with city delegates. Clearly, the variety of these relationships and interactions could not be captured in their full breadth and complexity by written sources. The essential component of such sources, however, is the area of written and symbolic communication that served to manifest episcopal power and authority.¹¹

3 MELIŠ, *Moc a nitrianski biskupi*, 105.

4 Ibidem.

5 ULIČNÝ, *Dejiny Slovenska v 11.–13. storočí*, 339, 343; HLAVAČKOVÁ, *A Diplomat in the Service of the Kings*, 3–24; KALOUS, *King Matthias Corvinus and the Papacy*, 7–27; GÁL, *The Roles and Loyalties*, 473–474, 487–489; PETERSON, *Episcopal Authority and Disputed Sanctity*, 210.

6 SZENDE, *Narrating a location*, 580.

7 SZENDE, *From Model to Rival?*

8 Ibidem.

9 Ibidem.

10 In 1248 Bishop Lampert and King Béla IV reached an agreement on the exchange of tithes from selected parishes for estates in the Heves county. This exchange included the parishes of Veľký Šariš, Prešov and Sabinov. In 1262 the bishop of Eger released the parish of Veľký Šariš from the jurisdiction of the archdeacon (together with other parishes belonging to Šariš Castle). In 1211, Archbishop John of Esztergom donated the revenues of the Church of St Nicholas in Trnava to the Chapter in Esztergom. ŠOTNÍK, *Zakladacia listina fary v Ponikách*, 39, 41; MAGDOŠKO, *Cirkevno-správný vývoj stredovekých Košíc*, 26; RÁBIK, *Trnavské príjmy Ostrihomskej kapituly*, 26.

11 KALOUS, *Biskupské a legátské rituály a ceremonie*, 317–367. Published works on communication in the Middle Ages: HLAVAČKOVÁ, *Od symbolu k slovu*; ZUPKA, *Communication in a Town*, 1–33; ZUPKA, *Rituály a symbolická komunikácia*, 141–168; LUKAČKA – ŠTEFÁNIK, *Podoby stretnutí*, 11–16.

The manifestation of the bishop's power and authority in relation to the royal city of Bardejov, as reflected in written sources, is the subject of this case study. It is important to note that some of the episcopal powers were delegated to his deputy (vicar), with whom the city communicated in some cases. Another authority that entered into the relationship between the city and the bishop was the monarch as the supreme patron of the Hungarian Church. The city appealed to him, especially in cases of the violation of its rights by ecclesiastical dignitaries. The town community was represented by its secular representatives – the town judge, the senators and the notary – and, in ecclesiastical matters, by the parish priest, who communicated with the episcopal curia and, in exceptional cases, with the bishop himself.

Urban patronage in Bardejov and the bishop of Eger

The territory on which the settlement of Bardejov was founded belonged to the diocese of Eger.¹² The oldest town documents relate to the emancipation of the Bardejov town community and the establishment of its rights. In the ecclesiastical sphere, the rights of the royal cities were formed within the framework of patronage law. Among the most important privileges belonged the free election of a parish priest by the local parishioners, free tithes, exemption from the powers of the archdeacon and the granting of judicial powers to the local parish priest.¹³ Not all towns possessed these rights to the same extent, and they may not have been recorded. The earliest privileges of the Bardejov community, dating from 1320, contain only provisions on the transfer of tithes. There is no mention of the right to choose a parish priest.¹⁴ The charter of 1320 does not even mention any exemption from the archdeacon's powers. We can agree with the opinion of Ferdinand Uličný that the choice of the parish priest was left to the king.¹⁵

An important milestone in the development of local self-government in Bardejov was the privilege of free election of the town judge, granted by King Louis the Great in 1376.¹⁶ According to it, the law of Košice and Buda became the norm for the city also in the area of patronage over the church. The city of Košice had the right to choose its own parish priest, free tithing and exemption from the jurisdiction of the archdeacon probably before 1249.¹⁷ It seems that Bardejov began to exercise its right to choose a parish priest only after 1376. However, the ruler Sigismund of Luxembourg intervened significantly. In 1391 he appointed his own chaplain to the vacant post left by the death of the Bardejov parish priest, with the promise that after his departure the Bardejov

12 The Eger diocese was founded by King Stephen, probably in 1009. Within the bishopric, probably in the twelfth century, archdeaconries were established, which are documented in written sources from the second half of the thirteenth century – the archdeaconries of Abov-Novohrad, Zemplín and Uh. The Abov-Novohrad archdeaconry was further subdivided into vice-archdeaconries. One of them was established in the border area as "districtus Gepel" with its centre in Bardejov. The earliest mention of it dates back to the fourteenth century. In later times it was called Bardejov vice-archidiaconate. The office of the vice-archdeacon was held not only by the parish priest of Bardejov, but also by the parish priests of the surrounding villages – Kobyly, Richvald and Gaboltov. ULIČNÝ, *Dejiny Slovenska v 11.–13. storočí*, 343; ULIČNÝ, *Začiatky a vývoj kresťanstva*, 37; HUDÁČEK, *Bardejov*, 90; MAREK, *Viceracidiakoni a ich pôsobenie*, 83; ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 410.

13 RÁBIK – FRIDRICHOVÁ, *Patronátne právo mestských sídlisk*, 92.

14 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 17.

15 ULIČNÝ, *K dejinám Bardejova v 13. a 14. storočí*, 33.

16 ŠA, PO, AB, MMB, sign. 27.

17 MAGDOŠKO, *Cirkevnosprávny vývoj stredovekých Košíc*, 24; RÁBIK – FRIDRICHOVÁ, *Patronátne právo mestských sídlisk*, 89–90.

parishioners would be able to freely elect their own parish priest.¹⁸ We do not know personal motives for the monarch's action, but in the understanding of the monarch as the main patron of the Hungarian Church, this action falls within his sovereign powers.¹⁹

The facts described above were related to the competences of the bishop of Eger. When filling the lower benefices, the right to propose a candidate (*presentatio*) was in the hands of the patron, while other acts (*proclamatio*, *investitura* and *introductio*) were in the hands of the bishop or his deputies.²⁰ The document in question states that it was the monarch himself (not the city) who presented his chaplain for the vacant post in the parish of Bardejov to the appropriate ordinarius (*duximus presentandum*).²¹ There is no doubt that in the following period the free choice of the parish priest belonged entirely to the town community. Although the sources do not mention it explicitly, we assume that the participation of the parishioners in the selection of the parish priest was gradually replaced by his selection by the city council. This is indirectly evidenced by a letter of the Bardejov clergyman George, who, after the death of the parish priest Christian, wrote to the Bardejov city council that he wished to apply for the vacant post of parish priest in the city parish.²² The city council of Bardejov exercised its right of patronage in 1494, when it presented the new parish priest John Menlen to the vicar of Eger for the vacant post after the death of the former parish priest and asked the vicar to introduce the new priest to the parish.²³

Communication between the city and the bishop regarding the tithe

When examining the written communication between the city of Bardejov and the bishop of Eger, the topic of tithes dominates. This is not surprising, as the tithe was one of the most important episcopal revenues.²⁴ From the point of view of the city and its administration, the church tithe was an important tax obligation, the fulfilment of which required the cooperation of several parts of the city administration.²⁵ The earliest mention of tithing in Bardejov can be found in the above-mentioned charter of King Charles I from 1320.²⁶ It states that the tithes from grain should be divided into two equal parts while still in the field, one of which belonged to the local priest and the other to the monarch.²⁷ According to some scholars, the half tithe to the monarch was an exceptional provision, but it is more appropriate to state that the monarch

18 "quomodo vos pridem defuncto plebano vestro unum ex medio vestri vigore libertatum vestrarum pristinarum de communi consensu parochianorum prefate ecclesie, in vestrum concorditer ellegissetis plebanum". ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 30. The method of election by common consent of the parishioners refers to the Buda town law, according to which the parish priest was elected by the town council, but all members of the parish had to agree to the election. MAGDOŠKO, *Cirkevno správny vývoj stredovekých Košíc*, 24.

19 MELIŠ, *Cirkevné výsady miest a mestečiek*, 31.

20 HRDINA, *Jak klerik k benefícium prišiel*, 348.

21 ŠA PO AB, MMB, sign. 30.

22 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 1569.

23 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 3161.

24 GLEJTEK, *Práva a povinnosti uhorských biskupov*, 89–90; ŠOTNÍK, *Hospodárske a majetkovoprávne vzťahy*, 48–55; MÚČSKA, *Uhorsko a cirkevné reformy*, 102–104; OSLANSKÝ, *Význam cirkevných desiatok*, 861–869; KUŠÍK, *Cirkevný desiatok*, 462–468.

25 On the city granary: FEDORČÁKOVÁ, *Správa mestských zariadení*, 8–9.

26 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 17.

27 "quod decime ipsorum frugum equaliter in agris divise, una pars media plebano ipsorum cedat, alia media parte nobis remanente". JUCK, *Výsady miest a mestečiek*, 94. This was the "German way" of tithing, where the

did not act beyond his rights in this case either, since he was the owner of the right to the tithe along with the bishop, and the adjustment or exemption from the tithe obligation was in his hands after agreeing on the compensation of such revenues with the respective diocesan bishop.²⁸ The practice of giving half of the tithe to the sovereign probably ceased during the fourteenth century; there is no record of it in fifteenth-century documents.

The church tithe was made up of *decimae maiores*, which represented the production of grain, and *decimae minores (minutae)*, which represented animal production (sheep, goats, rams, geese, pigs, chickens and bees).²⁹ It could be paid in money (*in pecuniis*) or in kind (*in specie*).³⁰ While the payment of the tithe to the local priest was also regulated by mutual agreement in the city statutes, the city had no power to legislate on the conditions under which the tithe was to be handed over to the bishop.³¹ Although in the late Middle Ages there was a well-established method of paying the tithe in money, the mutual communication between the city and the bishop shows that the method of paying the tithe was often adapted to the current economic and financial conditions of the bishopric or the city.³² The recipient of the tithe was the bishop or the persons and institutions to whom he leased the tithe (*arendatio*). The leasing of the tithe or parts of it (e.g. grain) was a common practice, and even the original lessees often leased it to others. The tenants of the tithe were nobles (often familiars of the bishop), religious persons or institutions, or the city itself. A deed (*litterae arendatoriae*) was drawn up for this transaction with references in the account book.³³

How was the power of the bishop demonstrated in different situations? One way was the return of the city's tithe to the city itself. In August 1425, Bishop Peter of Rozhanovce (*de Rozgon*) issued a charter to the representatives of the city of Bardejov, in which he leased the city a tithe from the current harvest of grain, threshed grain and bees for 200 gold florins.³⁴ The tithe lessees were a kind of intermediary in the flow of goods and finances between the city and the episcopal curia. If the tithe production was destined for a noble tenant, the bishop would have informed the city at the beginning of the agricultural season. Thus, in April 1447, Bishop Ladislaus of Hédervár informed the parish priests of the cities of Prešov and Bardejov that he had given the tithes of these cities to his familiar Nicholas of Torysa (*de Tarcza*), and ordered the aforementioned priests to hand over the tithes to him at the appointed time and without any inconvenience.³⁵

crops were left in the field until decimators came and picked every twelfth sheaf. The harvest was then taken to the granary. MELIŠ, *Cirkevné výsady miest a mestečiek*, 43.

28 ULIČNÝ, *K dejinám Bardejova v 13. a 14. storočí*, 33; RÁBIK – FRIDRICHOVÁ, *Patronátne právo mestských sídlisk*, 93; MELIŠ, *Cirkevné výsady miest a mestečiek*, 40–41.

29 ŠOTNÍK, *Hospodárske a majetkovoprávne vzťahy*, 50.

30 Ibidem.

31 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 313; sign. 1989.

32 Between 1502 and 1508, the town gave the bishop of Eger a total of 76 gold florins in two payments during the year. ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 1694, fol. 179v.

33 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 1694, fol. 179v.

34 "Quod nos universas decimas frugum Bladorum et Apium ... universitati hospitem et civium de eodem oppido Bartfa pro ducentis florenis ... locavimus in arendam". ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 143.

35 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 484.

The lease of the tithes to nobility gave rise to situations with potential to escalate into protracted disputes between all parties involved. In 1448, the city of Bardejov had a dispute with the nobleman Ladislaus of Šebeš, in which the bishop of Eger intervened in favour of the citizens.³⁶ Already during the pontificate of his predecessor, Simon of Rozhanovce granted the aforementioned Ladislaus of Šebeš the tithes of bees and grain from the city of Bardejov. However, Bishop Simon eventually leased it to the noblemen of the Cudar family, who in turn leased it to the city of Bardejov for 50 florins, which was confirmed by a document.³⁷ However, Ladislaus of Šebeš took his claim against the city to the court of the vicar of Eger. As a result, Bishop Ladislaus of Hédervár issued a charter to the vicar, explaining the situation with the aforementioned tithes and ordering him not to summon the citizens of Bardejov to court over the matter.³⁸

The power and authority of the bishop over the tithes was also manifested in the threat and imposition of ecclesiastical penalties. In 1449, Bishop Ladislaus of Hédervár ordered the tithes of the town of Bardejov to the nobleman Albert Farkas of Hasságh. The episcopal document urged the local priest to “the virtue of holy obedience” and ordered the citizens of Bardejov to hand over the tithes under penalty of excommunication.³⁹ The threat of ecclesiastical punishment in the case of non-compliance with the tithes obligation was not a stylistic exercise. The bishop’s letter mentions the defiance and rebellion that accompanied resistance to his orders. This resistance was expressed not only by the citizens, but in some cases also by the parish priest.⁴⁰ The involvement of parish priests in tithing disputes is mentioned in many documents. King Sigismund’s deed of 1402 refers to the then deceased parish priest Laurence who intervened in a dispute with the nobleman Andrew of Budimír over the tithes of the city of Bardejov.⁴¹

Before 1429, there was another dispute between the parish priest Michael and the bishop of Eger over the transfer of the tithes. In this case, the threat of the ecclesiastical punishment, which was imposed on the entire town community, was realized.⁴² In both cases, the town community appealed to the sovereign, who intervened in the communication between the city and the bishop. This form of communication between ruler, city and bishop also reflects the degree of involvement of individual rulers in the management of ecclesiastical affairs in the cities. In this respect, Sigismund of Luxembourg made extensive use of his patronage rights over the local church in Bardejov.⁴³ A few years later, in 1468, King Matthias Corvinus dealt with a complaint by the representatives of the city about a renewed demand for the payment of the tithes

36 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 517.

37 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 517.

38 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 517.

39 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 547.

40 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 547.

41 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 43.

42 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 203.

43 Not only was there interference in the freedom of choice of the parish priest in Bardejov, but also involvement in a tithes dispute with the nobleman Andrew of Budimír in 1402. The monarch intervened in favour of the citizens of Bardejov and warned Andrew to stop causing trouble for the town community. A similar situation occurred in 1429. King Sigismund, on his way to visit the king of Poland, wrote a letter to Peter, the bishop of Eger, asking him to postpone all disputes between him, the townspeople and the parish priest Michael until he returned to Hungary. At the same time, he asked the bishop to lift the interdict imposed on the citizens of Bardejov. ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 43, sign. 203.

once paid to the bishop of Eger. The monarch issued a letter to the administrators of the Eger diocese's revenues – Provost Lucas and the lector of the Eger chapter – instructing them not to make any attempt to recover the tithes already paid to them.⁴⁴ At the end of the Middle Ages, disputes over the tithe became less frequent, as the representatives of the city apparently came to an agreement with the bishop of Eger on the payment of the tithe in cash. This assumption is confirmed by the regular payments of a stable sum of money in the account books of the city.

Communicating with the bishop in legal matters

Another area in which episcopal power and authority was manifested was the judiciary. The bishop was the judge of the clergy, and, in certain matters, of the laity.⁴⁵ Among the powers of the bishop was the imposition of ecclesiastical penalties in a ritualized form.⁴⁶ We have already mentioned the imposition of an interdict on the citizens before 1429. The accounts of the city show various situations related to the episcopal jurisdiction. In 1428 the town paid 200 denarii for a journey to Eger for an interdict.⁴⁷ The granting of an interdict and its subsequent revocation can also be found in 1443. The city's accounts state that "for the reconciliation" the city paid 40 florins to the suffragan.⁴⁸ Some light is shed on this dispute by a draft of a notarial deed by the city's notary George Stock, who writes down the appeal of the Bardejov parish priest Christian to the archbishop of Esztergom in the matter of tithes of 1441 and 1442. Unfortunately, the broader context of the dispute is missing.⁴⁹

In the administration of justice, the bishop was often represented by his vicar.⁵⁰ The Bardejov city archives contain correspondence between the vicar of the bishop of Eger *in spiritualibus* and the parish priest of Bardejov in his function as vice-archdeacon. The latter took part in legal proceedings and dealt with various cases involving the laity. A number of documents and mandates have been preserved from Nicholas, the vicar of the bishop of Eger, who held this office in the 1420s. One of the cases he dealt with was a case of violence between the inhabitants of the villages Dubovica and Lipany, in which Gertrude, the widow of a certain Menczlin of Lipany, summoned the persons from Dubovica named in the deed to the court of the vice-archdeacon of Torysa in 1418.⁵¹ The course and reconstruction of the dispute is secondary to our topic, but the essential point is that this dispute was settled before several courts, including the court of the bishop of Eger, represented by his vicar, who issued a number of documents in this matter.⁵² These documents from the various hearings were handed over to the parish priest of Bardejov in his function as vice-archdeacon, which means that he took part in the hearings before the ecclesiastical court in virtue of his office.

A clash of powers between the bishop of Eger and the municipal court occurred in 1439 in the dispute of Catherine, a burgher from Bardejov, and the burgher Caspar

44 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 1733.

45 GLEJTEK, *Práva a povinnosti uhorských biskupov*, 93.

46 KALOUS, *Biskupské a legátské rituály*, 336; GLEJTEK, *Práva a povinnosti uhorských biskupov*, s. 93.

47 FEJÉRPATAKY, *Magyarország városok*, 267.

48 Ibidem, 585.

49 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 724.

50 LABANC, *Počiatky úradu biskupského vikára*, 191–206.

51 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 81; RÁBIK, *Nemecké osídlenie*, 87–88.

52 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 109, sign. 111, sign. 117, sign. 119.

the Small.⁵³ The case was first heard by the city council, which made a final decision.⁵⁴ However, Catherine appealed to the ecclesiastical court, which sparked a dispute between the city council and the vicar of the bishop of Eger. The town considered the referral of the dispute to the ecclesiastical court to be an infringement of its powers and therefore, referring to the charter of King Sigismund of Luxembourg and its confirmation by King Albrecht of Habsburg, first asked Nicholas, the vicar of Eger, and later the Eger chapter to stop the court proceedings.⁵⁵ In the letter in question, the town judge and the town council announced that they would bring the case before the monarch again if, despite their disagreement, the vicar decided the dispute.⁵⁶ As a result of the city council's complaint, the vicar postponed the dispute and in the following months the case continued under the jurisdiction of the new vicar, James.⁵⁷ Due to the unwillingness of one of the parties to appear before the ecclesiastical court, the hearing was postponed until after the election of the new bishop of Eger, Dionysius of Szécs, who, through his vicar, decided that the case had no relation to the ecclesiastical court and therefore delegated it back to the city council.⁵⁸

Symbolic communication between the city and the bishop

The mutual communication between the city and the bishop had, among other things, its symbolic level. Contemporaries reflected on the spiritual dimension of the episcopate and its spiritual and liturgical competences. These were manifested in rituals, sacramental and liturgical acts, gestures and symbols.⁵⁹ Among the most significant acts were the consecration of the bishop himself, the consecration of priests, the blessing and consecration of persons and things, the consecration of the cornerstone of a church building, and the consecration of a new church, this last example a ritual of particular importance for urban communities.⁶⁰ Sacred rituals were combined with secular ceremonies, as the consecration of a church was followed by a feast.⁶¹ In connection with the presence of the bishop in the city, the ceremony of the bishop's solemn entry into the city should also be considered a welcoming ritual in the manner of the *adventus regis*.⁶² Other sacred rituals included the celebration of a mass by the bishop and solemn processions. One of the acts reserved to the bishops was the consecration. In the urban environment, the consecration of things and objects such as the church, the altar, the cemetery or liturgical utensils was the most common ritual.⁶³

Although in the case of symbolic communication we assume a whole range of acts, rituals and ceremonies, in reality the sources of urban provenance are pragmatic in their focus and poor in references to this area. Mostly we find references to the presence of

53 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 347.

54 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 347.

55 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 347.

56 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 347.

57 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 348, sign. 350, sign. 351, sign. 352.

58 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 350, sign. 351, sign. 352.

59 KALOUS, *Biskupské a legátské rituály*, 320–323.

60 KALOUS, *Biskupské a legátské rituály*, 330–331.

61 KALOUS, *Biskupské a legátské rituály*, 331.

62 ZUPKA, *Rituály a symbolická komunikácia*, 97.

63 OLEJNÍK, *Otázka liturgických kompetencií*, 237.

the bishop in the city and to the acts performed in the city accounts. Of this type is the information on the consecration of the Augustinian monastery (or church), carried out in 1432 by the suffragan of the bishop of Eger.⁶⁴ It is clear that the rite of consecration applies to all the churches in the city and its suburbs.⁶⁵ The centre of the spiritual and liturgical life of the city was the parish church St Egidius. Unfortunately, no records of its consecration have survived. During the Middle Ages, the church was the scene of architectural changes, including the construction of chapels and altars, financed by the city or the citizens. There are surviving records of sacred and liturgical acts performed in the parish church by bishops. In 1458, the city paid a suffragan for the consecration of the altar and chapel.⁶⁶ It was probably the altar of St Barbara, originally placed in the chapel of St Catherine, completed in 1458, which served the Brotherhood of St Barbara, documented in later times.⁶⁷ A consecration and the presence of a suffragan also occurred in Bardejov in 1512. A record in the city accounts mentions the consecration of a chapel in the monastery and an altar in the choir by Bishop Achacio.⁶⁸ In the case of the monastery chapel, the record probably refers to the Chapel of the Holy Cross, the reconstruction of which began between 1504 and 1505 and was probably completed in the mentioned year.⁶⁹

Another case of communication between the urban community and the bishop, which took place in the sacred space as well as in the written form, was the spiritual life of lay brotherhoods. In the medieval city of Bardejov there were several lay brotherhoods – the brotherhoods of Corpus Christi, St Barbara and St Nicholas and the confraternity of Our Lady of the Snows.⁷⁰ The oldest mentioned confraternity was the Corpus Christi brotherhood, which was active in the city before 1440; in 1449 the Confraternity of the Mother of Mercy was founded.⁷¹ According to the established Hungarian practice, the city confraternities were confirmed by the bishop, sometimes by the papal legate and exceptionally by the pope.⁷² The bishop played an important role in the spiritual life of the confraternity members in issuing the confirmation document or consecrating the altar of the patron saint. All these milestones can be seen when exploring the history of the confraternity of the Mother of Mercy in Bardejov.

The confraternity was founded in 1449 by the parish priest Christian and the priests of neighbouring villages, all of whom belonged to the same ecclesiastical district (*vicearchidiaconatus*) of Bardejov. This fact could bring the fraternity close to the priestly fraternities, but in its character, it was an urban lay fraternity. The confirmation of the foundation of the confraternity and its statutes, together with the indulgences granted

64 FEJÉRPATAKY, *Magyarországi városok*, 306; HUŤKA, *Augustiniáni*, 166.

65 In the Middle Ages, the following churches were documented in Bardejov: the parochial Church of St Egidius, the Church of St John the Baptist of the Augustinian Order, the hospital churches of St Leonard and the Holy Spirit and the as yet unlocated Church of the Virgin Mary outside the suburbs. The latter is mentioned as a newly founded church in 1501. ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 3627.

66 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 1660, fol. 6v.

67 SROKA, *Średniowieczny Bardiów*, 183. ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 1683, fol. 188r.

68 "Item Suffraganeo achacio de consecratione Capelle in Monasterio, et altari in choro". ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 1700, fol. 33r.

69 HUŤKA, *Augustiniáni*, 169.

70 JANKOVIČ, *Neskorý feudalizmus*, 123; SROKA, *Średniowieczny Bardiów*, 173.

71 SROKA, *Średniowieczny Bardiów*, 173.

72 KUBINYI, *Vallásos társulatok*, 123–134.

by the bishop of Eger, Ladislaus of Hédervár, was issued in 1449.⁷³ The document deals mainly with spiritual matters concerning the spiritual and liturgical practice of the members of the fraternity and the indulgences granted to them, but lacks other information about the fraternity.⁷⁴ As far as indulgences are concerned, the fraternity of the Mother of Mercy is known for the number of charters in which not only bishops, but also John of Capistrano, or Roman cardinals granted spiritual benefits to its members.⁷⁵ The foundation and confirmation were connected with the consecration of the altar of St Anna (also called the altar of the Virgin Mary or the small altar of the Virgin Mary), which belonged to the fraternity of the Mother of Mercy. In 1485, Bishop Bernard visited the city and consecrated the altar, which had previously been rebuilt, a sign of the fraternity's importance in the city.⁷⁶

It was not only the bishop of Eger who was mentioned in the city records in connection with the blessing ritual. In 1504, the city donated linen in the value of one gold florin to "the lord suffragan of St Martin's hill [...] for the consecration of liturgical vestments and for the honour of the city".⁷⁷ In this case we are not dealing with the clergyman in the function of the Provost of Spiš, although the range of their ecclesiastical competencies was at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries respectable and close to the episcopal ones. But in the matter of the ritual of consecration their powers were not sufficient and were limited only to the benediction.⁷⁸ In order to explain the entry in the town's account book, it is necessary to consider the fact that the archbishop Thomas Bakócz appointed the Dominican John de Meliche, OP, who was occasionally present in the Spiš provostry after 1502, as a suffragan for the rite of consecration. It is quite possible that the citizens of Bardejov took advantage of his presence in nearby Spiš and asked him to perform the aforementioned consecration of the liturgical vestments.

One specific form of symbolic communication was through a gift, which could have several meanings.⁷⁹ Gifts were an obvious part of the city's communication with the ruler, his wife or court dignitaries.⁸⁰ They were used to gain and retain favour, to establish communication and contact, or to ensure loyalty and allegiance. It is therefore not unusual for prelates to be among dignitaries to whom the city gave gifts. In 1510, the representatives of the Bardejov town community presented the bishop of Pécs and the bishop of Vác with two fish, each worth two gold florins.⁸¹ The price itself indicates that these were rare fish, probably salmon. It was not a random gift from the city, but

73 Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, Országos Levéltára, Diplomatikai Fényképgyűjtemény (hereinafter MNL OL, DF) 213218.

74 De CEVINS, *Les confréries en Hongrie*, 356.

75 FEDORČÁKOVÁ, *Civitas nostra Bardfa vocata*, 148.

76 MNL OL, DF 213 218. The consecration of the altar of St Anne is connected with its reconstruction and also with the construction of the chapel of the Virgin Mary and a new altar dedicated to the Virgin Mary, which is also mentioned in Bishop Bernard's document. DROBNIÁK – JIROUŠEK, *Bazilika minor sv. Egídia*, 72. TÓTH, *Magyarország keső – középkori*, 28.

77 "Item domino Suffraganeo de Monte Sancti Martini tertia post vincentii de consecratione cuiusdam casule et pro honore Civitatis". ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 1694, fol. 68r.

78 OLEJNÍK, *Otázka liturgických kompetencií*, 236–237.

79 ZUPKA, *Rituály a symbolická komunikácia*, 55.

80 LUKAČKA, *Podoby stretnutí a komunikácie*, 15–16.

81 "duos Salmones". ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 1700, fol. 39r.

part of a diplomatic mission to the monarch's court, where the town envoys presented several gifts.⁸² Fish were among them as it was the time of Lent.⁸³

Other high-quality products from Bardejov were beer and linen. Both goods were in demand on the market and therefore became the subject of donations. In 1426, the city of Bardejov sent a barrel of beer to Bishop Peter of Rozhanovce.⁸⁴ We have already mentioned a piece of linen given to the suffragan, who consecrated the liturgical vestments.⁸⁵ The linen was also a frequent gift to the vicar, to whom the city gave it in 1513, when the city's envoys visited the episcopal seat.⁸⁶ In 1505, the city presented the bishop of Oradea with a silver-plated chalice.⁸⁷ This was at the time of the confirmation of Bardejov's toll privileges, as is emphasized by the accounting records.⁸⁸ This gift can therefore be interpreted as an expression of gratitude for the bishop's diplomatic work on behalf of the city. Communication with the archbishop of Krakow is also recorded from this period, which took place through messengers, but there is no mention of the gifts given.⁸⁹ On the other hand, the bishop of Przemysl received two spoons in 1505 and half a barrel of wine in 1506.⁹⁰ It is also worth mentioning a letter written by Bishop Ladislaus of Hédervár in 1458, in which he writes to the city of Bardejov about a cabinet for the storage of items from the chapel and asks that it be transported to Eger without damage.⁹¹ The restoration of the cabinet was connected with the work of the city craftsmen, from whom several dignitaries ordered wooden products.⁹² This reference to the work of Bardejov craftsmen indicates the activity of a workshop that operated in Bardejov in the 1450s and by which the late Gothic fragments of the choir stalls in the Church of St Egidius were made.⁹³ At the same time, this workshop was connected with the workshop in Košice, which produced works for the bishop of Eger during his stay in the city of Košice, when he took part in a military campaign against John Jiskra and Czech mercenaries called *bratřici*.⁹⁴

Conclusion

Communication between the city of Bardejov and the bishop took several forms in the Middle Ages. Each of them created a space for the manifestation of episcopal power and authority. These attributes in relation to the city were most evident in the fulfilment of the tithe obligation, when in some situations ecclesiastical punishment was invoked. Concrete examples demonstrate that the bishop's judicial powers also extended, through his deputy, the vicar, to the disciplining of lay people in the city.

82 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 1700, fol. 39r.

83 HLAVAČKOVÁ, *Ryby a pôstna tradícia*, 447–460.

84 FEJÉRPATAKY, *Magyarországi városok*, 213.

85 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 1694, fol. 68r.

86 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 1700, fol. 115v–116r.

87 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 1694, fol. 95v.

88 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 1694, fol. 95v.

89 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 1694, fol. 69v.

90 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 1694, fol. 96r; fol. 123r.

91 ŠA PO, AB, MMB, sign. 1023.

92 GÁCSOVÁ, *Spoločenská štruktúra Bardejova*, 129.

93 BADAČ, *Medzi umením a remeslom*, 340–341.

94 *Ibidem*, 342.

A separate area in which episcopal power and authority was manifested was in the rituals and ceremonies performed in urban settings. The town accounts show that the bishops (or suffragans) made relatively frequent appearances in the urban environment; the consecration of church buildings, altars or other liturgical objects provided an opportunity for the personal presence of the prelate in the town. Not only the rituals and ceremonies, but also the offering of valuable gifts reflected the attitude of the townspeople towards the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries and established mutual relations not only with episcopal offices, but also in the personal sphere.

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