

APOSTOLIC RIGHTS OF A CATHOLIC MONARCH? THE HUNGARIAN ROYAL PATRONAGE AND SUPREMACY (1417–1918)

I. The historiography

There is hardly another question in Hungarian historiography spanning from the time of the establishment of the kingdom to the beginning of the 20th century, which would have been paid such focused attention, mainly for reasons of current church political interests, as the question of Royal Patronage the ever increasing control of Hungarian monarchs over ecclesiastical benefices.

The historiography of the question is diverse and exciting. A long list of historians, canonists, churchmen and laymen dealt with the problem in Hungary, as well as in Rome from the 17th century to the 20th century. At the turn of the 1630/1640s the forgery of a papal bull also took place for proving the canonical legal ground of the Hungarian royal patronage. According to that, Pope Sylvester II (999–1003) granted the right of patronage to King Stephen I (997–1038, king from 1001), the founder of the Hungarian state and church. The text of the bull was published by Melchior Inchoffer, who also took part in the Galilei trial, in 1644 (*Annales Ecclesiastici Regni Hungariae*), which was influential for some hundred years. Adám Ferenc Kollár was the first to call attention to its falsehood; in 1762 he originated the right of patronage from directly the royal right of supremacy. (There are various answers for the question of the bull's forgery; however, there is none that was satisfactory.) In 1885, based on the Hartvik-legend from the early 12nd century, Lajos Balics suspected its origin in the role of a quasi apostolic legate bestowed upon Saint Stephen, while based on his research in the Vatican, Vilmos Fraknói did the same relating to the establishment of the dioceses. Besides, Ferenc Kollányi regarded it as the extension of the royal private right of advowson, while Ferenc Eckhart as the effect of the German *Eigenkirche*-phenomena in Hungary. The debate became rather heated and was spread in the forum of publicity after the abdication (his royal rights were suspended from the autumn of 1918) and death of the last Hungarian monarch, Charles IV (1916–1918). Even the Hungarian Catholic canonist clergy split in two groups: the determined ultramontanists and those who were extra loyal to the state party, they even accepted the supremacy of the republican government. The parties having scientific arguments could not even agree in the fact whether the right of the Hungarian monarchs was based on canon law or public law. In the 1960s, Andor Csizmadia originated it from the monarch's jurisdiction as the head of state, primarily from the legal grounds of the state – which could hardly be separated from the ultra-statist state-socialist approach. Besides the forgery of the bull, the other sensational historiographical excitement is served by the fact that the text of the so-called “bull of Constance” – which was only

known from secondary references and was quoted to prove the canonical origin – was only identified during the Second World War thanks to Elemér Mályusz.

II. The origin and the beginnings of the Hungarian Royal Patronage (15th–16th century)

Let us see in short, what the real historical context of the Hungarian royal patronage's development was. In accordance with the general European tendencies, from the second half of the 14th century secular influence over the granting of ecclesiastical benefices was growing in Hungary as well, which relatively soon became manifested legally in the form of decrees. The decrees stated not only that papal conferment of benefices without the monarch's consent were invalid (1394, 1397), but also placed the enactment of all papal decrees, provisions etc. under the monarch's control (*placetum regium*, 1404).

These developments, which in the early phases could be likened most to those in England, went way beyond every contemporary example already in the first decades of the 1400s. What is more, at the Council of Constance, taking advantage of contemporary power relations, King Sigismund of Luxembourg (1387–1437) became the first European monarch to get the Holy See to acknowledge his influence over the conferment of ecclesiastical benefices in his country. The “bull” issued by the College of Cardinals, which got lost for more than four hundred years after the Battle of Mohács (1526), outlined the Hungarian king's licenses in this way: the cardinals covenanted that in the future, the Apostolic See would consider the Hungarian monarchs' personal suggestions concerning bestowal of the Hungarian episcopacies and other greater benefices. They would do it due to Sigismund's services for the whole Christianity at the Council of Constance and Hungary's heroic countermove against the Ottoman expansion.

The document signed by twenty-one cardinals took unambiguous measures in the question of annates and minor benefices, the canonical institution of which, after some temporary hesitation, was also placed within the country's borders, under the authority of an ordinary. The case was different with the bishoprics. Sigismund's far-reaching demands were only indirectly satisfied, inasmuch as the document contains an introductory part mentioning, without going into details, that the Hungarian kings' right of presentation (*praesentare*), based on ancient tradition (*ex vetere consuetudine*), will not be called into question in future. At the same time, it only gives authorization to nominate the persons deemed suitable (although instead of the Latin verb *nominare*, the text uses its equivalent *supplicare*). In spite of its cautious formulation, the document provided a basis for considering

the Hungarian sovereign's full-fledged influence over the country's ecclesiastical positions formally accepted by Rome in Hungarian legal practice and legislation (as in the laws of the years 1439, 1440, 1445, 1446, 1447, 1458, 1486, 1495 and 1514).

The Hungarian legal conception became crystallized as early as the beginning of the 16th century. In a form that was to prevail for centuries, it was formulated by István Werbőczy (in the *Tripartitum* of 1514). According to this formulation, in Hungary the conferment of every ecclesiastical benefice was the king's privilege, while the pope only had the right of confirmation (*confirmatio*). This tenet is supported by four arguments. **1.** In Hungary every church, including bishoprics, abbeys and provostships, was founded by the kings of the country; therefore, as patron lords they are entitled to dispose of these churches. **2.** The Hungarian people adopted Christianity not because of apostolic teachings, but because of their monarch, King St. Stephen I. The prelates heading the churches that he had founded were appointed by him, and were approved and confirmed by the pope. **3.** Even if the pope had had some kind of right that became obsolete during the 500 years while the filling of benefices was carried out by the kings without papal intervention. **4.** This liberty of the country (*libertas regni*) was acknowledged by the Council of Constance in a separate letter of privilege.

III. The development of the Hungarian Royal Patronage (16th–17th century)

There is no space to survey the process of the state control's development over the Hungarian church realizing in the early modern period and late Middle Ages. Yet, some of its characteristics can be emphasized. Firstly, the Hungarian royal patronage was never regulated by a concordat or papal bull, as opposed, for instance, to French, Spanish or Portuguese examples. From the beginning of the 15th century, the Hungarian practice meant practically a total control over the personal and financial circumstances of the church administration. The documents of the royal appointments – of which texts were not changed until the beginning of the 20th century – were about the bestowal (*collatio*). This was not suppressed in the presentational documents (*praesentatio*) sent to Rome, either, in which they requested the benediction of the pope (*benedictio*) and his confirmation (*confirmatio*), like in the case of the capitular canonical elections. This was *de iure* unacceptable in Rome; however, *de facto* – except for some attempts – there were no actual measures taken; though by the 17th century, the number of the theoretical debates had increased. The papacy had various reasons for this: the influence of Sigismund of Luxembourg, Hungary's strong role among the middle powers during the Hunyadi and Jagiellonian period (1457–1526), after this, the Hungarian crown's shift to the Habsburgs, and then their personal union lasting up to 1918 with two cessations with the Holy Roman and later the Austrian imperial crown. Thanks to the Habsburg imperial influence, from the 1560s, the files of the consistories also mentioned the royal assistance in filling the Hungarian episcopal sees (“*ad nominationem Imperatoris uti regis Hungariae*”).

The concession of Constance of 1417 was a rather early, though only a syndical promise given in the milieu of Conciliarism despite its form of a bull; even if it was not owing to the council – as it was thought to have been by Werbőczy – but to the College of Cardinals. Yet, the future was not about the Conciliarism, neither about the oligarchy of the cardinals but about the papal centralization, then about the absolutism. This latter bracketed such conciliar decisions like that of the decree of *Sacrosancta*... which pronounced the conciliar superiority. It comes as no surprise that the papacy did not regard the concession compulsory, of which text fell into oblivion for some 500 years. Why did the popes abide by the Hungarian monarchs' right of patronage in the 16th–17th century? The country was more and more of a peripheric nature, and its battle against the Ottoman territorial expansion became more and more emphatic (the role already mentioned in the bull of Constance, the role of the Bulwark of Christianity), which war was concluded in 1718 by the Treaty of Passarowitz.

The curial expertise of the 17th century considered the Hungarian patronage as an existing phenomenon of an uncertain origin. At most, they were inclined to interpret it as a privilege of the prevailing Hungarian monarch. In the meantime, the Roman Curia did not hinder the royal bishop appointments in the case of such dioceses that were under the Hungarian monarchs' authority.

In parallel, Werbőczy's *Tripartitum* became the bible of the Hungarian feudal state administration, in spite of the fact that it was never enacted. It is important to know that until 1687 Hungary was an elective monarchy. Moreover, after the declaration of the inheritance of the House of Habsburg, and then of the female succession (1723, *Pragmatica Sanctio*) until 1848 – regarding public law – it remained to be a feudal monarchy despite the Leopoldian, Theresian, Josephinist and post-Josephinist efforts. By 1608 the administrative conditions of the so-called feudal dualism had been clarified: the power was mutually wielded by the estates and the elected monarch. As the successor of the medieval *prelati et barones*, the two ruling estates were: the *status ecclesiasticus*, which was headed by the archbishop of Esztergom, the primate of Hungary, and the nobility, the *status saecularis*, which was headed by the palatine of Hungary (*palatinus sive prorex Hungariae*). (Unfortunately, the role of the citizenry was negligible all along.) From 1608, the monarch was crowned by the archbishop of Esztergom and the palatine at the same time, which is a nice symbolic example for the power structure. It happened in a Catholic service, though, the palatine could be Protestant; he was elected by the diet from among 2-2 Catholic and Protestant noble men nominated by the monarch until 1790. (The title of the palatine ceased to exist in 1848, in Austria-Hungary the prime ministers crowned as vice-palatines, in 1916 the Calvinist István Tisza.)

In relation to our topic, the most important momentum is that the *status ecclesiasticus* remained to be Catholic as opposed to the Empire. Although, there were some dioceses and numerous smaller benefices that were secularized for a longer-shorter period of time (for instance, Várad, Gyulafehérvár [Alba Iulia] and Eger), the Lutheran and Calvinist church admin-

istrations were in parallel established independently of the state, at first in a banned and tolerated form, and then in 1734 in an accepted form (*Ind Carolina Resolutio*) by Charles III (1711–1740). However autonomous they were, they had little resources. From the 1620s such ideas did not occur any more, like that of Péter Alvinczi's, the Calvinist minister of the Prince of Transylvania, appointment as the archbishop of Esztergom. It is easy to realize that all of this was due to the monarch's being the head of church codified in the *Tripartitum*. The confessionalisation of the medieval church administration, which survived the Ottoman conquest as well as the expansion of Protestantism, was determined by the religion of the prevailing monarch of Hungary. It is not accidental that the above mentioned appointment of Péter Alvinczy as the archbishop of Esztergom emerged after Gábor Bethlen, the Prince of Transylvania (1613–1629) had been elected as the king of Hungary in Besztercebánya (Banská Bistrica) in 1620; however, in regard to the then current situation of the Thirty Year's War he soon resigned his title of *rex electus Hungariae* and very wisely beware of being crowned (Alvinczy would have undertaken the same as the archbishop of Esztergom, he would have raised his Helvetian denomination to the position of state church...). The firm determination of the Hungarian clergy to maintain the royal patronage can be explained by its need to keep the Catholic hegemony, the country's multi-confessionalisation by being loyal to the although non-Hungarian, but intransigent Catholic Habsburgs. Thanks to the Hungarian monarch's being as the head of church, the Catholic hegemony could be preserved and expanded as against Protestantism. It must have been impossible under an absolute Roman supremacy that was based solely on canon law.

IV. The Hungarian Royal Patronage and its ideology

It was not the case in Hungary, like on the lower levels of the advowsons that the advowee, who maintained the church, elected a minister according to his religious views and determined the denomination not only of the church but also of its community. Neither can we say that the monarch determined the religion of his subjects based on his authority, as it was enacted in the Sacred Roman Empire between 1555 and 1648. The theory of *cuius regio eius et religio* was never enacted in Hungary. When certain feudal lords, or sometimes the monarch himself (like Leopold I [1657–1705] in the 1670s) tried to enforce it, it resulted in a great outcry, or an insurgence (like that of Imre Thököly's from 1678). Namely, in Hungary the freedom of religion was enacted in 1608 by the Treaty of Vienna that concluded István Bocskai's war of religion.

As one has seen, the Hungarian monarchs' being quasi the head of church goes back to the time of the great schism of the western church, when during the reign of the many "legal" popes not only the belief in the sacraments' effect was wavered fundamentally, but also the curial control over the local church administrations. The ideological argument that occurs in the bull of Constance only in a lapidary simple sen-

tence, "based on ancient tradition the Kings of Hungary", at Werbőczy it reflects definitely to Saint Stephen. In accordance with the legend and chronicle literature, at the turn of the 16th–17th century theoretically the church-establishing "apostolic legacy" of the state-founder sacred king was put in the centre, which apostolic character devolved upon his successors. The Hungarian opinion and practice of around the 1600s is explained most intelligibly by Nuncio Camillo Caetani (1591–1592) to his successor, Cesare Speciano (1592–1598) in his instruction of 1592:

The root of the problems in Hungary – namely the Holy See do not fill the episcopal sees, moreover the bishoprics are charged with pensions and the prelates call themselves bishops without an apostolic confirmation – is the prelates themselves. They, in order to win their monarch's favour, state that all the dioceses were founded by their king, St Stephen, and their kings are more privileged than all the monarchs in Europe. They, practically speaking, practice a sacred jurisdiction over the bishoprics. What one should demand of them, however, they show respect towards the Apostolic See, for which we have to express the signs of love in many different ways [...].'

The Hungarian monarchs' role as a sacral, apostolic head of church – which was nothing else but the unique reincarnation of the *ex officio* royal sacrament in the early modern period, which truly existed before the investiture controversy – was primarily threatened by the papacy that redefined itself in Trent. We have already seen at Werbőczy that the – let us pronounce it – unique Hungarian established church had to define itself especially against Rome's claims as well as against Protestantism. In the 16th century, a practice evolved, namely, the bishops took over their dioceses only by a royal appointment and headed them *in temporalibus et in spiritualibus* without consecration. Still in the 17th century, certain bishops in the course of frequent changes of sees, were satisfied with obtaining their papal bull only once for their consecration, later they were content with the royal appointment. Moreover, on the synod of the Hungarian bishops in 1639, the idea of a consecration without Rome's approval also occurred, though, it was not based on the legacy of Saint Stephen, but on the early Christian tradition. In the Eternal City it was considered a threaten equal to a schism, at least according to the secretary of the Propaganda Fide, Francesco Ingoli's recollection. The main reason for this idea was that Rome did not approve several royal appointments to such dioceses that were not temporarily under the authority of the Hungarian monarch due to Protestantism, the Ottomans or Venice's expansion. The Catholic hierarchy headed by Primate Imre Lósy (1637–1644) admonished Ferdinand III (1637–1655) to defend the rights of the Holy Crown of Hungary against the pope. Under the Barberini pope, Urban VIII, the debates over the Hungarian monarchs' right of patronage – supplemented by the question of annates – increased in the Curia, which can hardly be separated from the 30-year long anti-Habsburg policy. The problem was solved in the 1660s. Consequently, according to the *modus vivendi*, the Holy See approved the nominations in the dioceses established by Saint Stephen without any examination, even if they were under the rule of the Otto-

mans or the Prince of Transylvania (Kalocsa-Bács, Csanád, Pécs or Várad).

However, all the other royal appointments were rejected by the Roman Curia. Namely, from the late 16th century, the Hungarian Royal Chancellery began to make Rudolph II (1576–1608), Matthias II (1608–1619), and then Ferdinand II and III (1619–1637 and 1637–1657) bestow such episcopal titles that survived in the so-called list of dignities of the royal registry, the *Libri Regii's* charters from the 14th century. Mainly, they started to use the titles of the Balkan and Dalmatian episcopal sees again, according to the geopolitical situation of the 14th–15th century. After the initial confusion, the papacy denied the confirmation of these appointments; only Knin (*Tininiensis*) and Belgrade remained *consecrabilis* titles. Up until the 20th century, there were Hungarian auxiliary bishops consecrated to them. It is itself a curiosity, that the consecration of a titular bishop happened to a title that a secular monarch bestowed, and not to the title of a onetime diocese in Asia Minor or North Africa that ceased to exist in the ancient times or in the Middle Ages. Above all, it is sensational that from the 17th century to the 20th century the Hungarian monarchs bestowed some thirty episcopal titles in a way that the appointees were not even presented in Rome. Some were only titles (Ansarien/Osor), others were held by the missionary bishops of the Propaganda Fide, and then they altered into episcopal sees (Scopien/Szkopje), whereas there were some which were well organized dioceses from the beginning headed by a resident bishop in the territories of the Republic of Venice, and then in the Dalmatian region of Austria, Austria-Hungary (Veglien/Veglia/Krk). These Hungarian priests appointed by the monarchs – mainly canons, professors of theology, abbots, provosts – held a title of an elected bishop, except for the liturgy, they wore the bishop's attire, insignia; they were called his Excellency. For instance, from 1889 until his death of 1924, Vilmos Fraknói – the most outstanding Hungarian positivist historian, the initiator of the systematic historical research in the Vatican – was the elected bishop of the Croatian Rab, in Italian Arbe; however, in 1828 the bishopric was dissolved and merged into the bishopric of Krk (Veglia).

During the compilation of the grandiose *Hierarchia Catholica*, this phenomenon was discussed in a separate study by the surprised Remigius Ritzler, in which he considered the “bishops of the Crown of Hungary” as the curio of canon law. However, there was more behind it: according to the Hungarian view of the early modern period, the Hungarian monarchs had similar apostolic rights, than that of the Apostolic See; while the latter was the successor of Saint Peter and Paul, the former was the successor of Saint Stephen, the evangelizer of the Hungarian people. According to the tradition, this apostolic legacy was devolved upon the prevailing monarch by the coronation with the Holy Crown and by the anointing. In the 17th century, a cult evolved around the “Holy Crown”, which existed in its present form from the late 12nd century, along with Saint Stephen. For the sake of legitimacy, the latter cult was supported by the Habsburgs, especially by Maria Theresa (1740–1780), who could not become an emperor due to being a female monarch; in 1764 she founded the still

existing most prestigious badge of honour, the Order of Saint Stephen of Hungary.

V. From the reign of Maria Theresa to the end of the ancient regime (1740–1848)

The reign of the queen was a turning point in the history of the Hungarian Royal Patronage. The queen, who followed the so-called “enlightened absolutist” politics influenced by Gerard van Swieten and Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz, could persuade Pope Benedict XIV (1740–1758) to acknowledge the “apostolic royal” character of the monarch. Although, the pope was willing to comply only in the form of a title-bestowal, the queen, who called herself explicitly “*rex apostolicus Hungariae*”, also absorbed the capitular dignities’ right of bestowal, while her predecessors were satisfied with the appointment of the great-provosts that headed the chapters; moreover, with occasional commissions they handed over this right to the ordinaries that they appointed.

The peculiarity of the Theresian, Josephinist and post-Josephinist (1740–1848) and neo-absolutistic (1849–1867) period is that the church administrative part of the “nation-amending” absolutisms, which were basically developed along modern state-ideas and popular trends, were not brought into effect solely relying on ration and the social needs and advancement in Hungary, but they were realized under the aegis of their role of quasi head of church and its authority. We talk about a strong paradox: there was an enlightened absolutist church policy and administration which regarded the sacral royal role that had been developed before the investiture controversy as its right for the modernizing measures. Besides, this paradox doubled in the period of Josephinism and neo-absolutism: Joseph II (1780–1790) never, Franz Joseph I (1848–1916) had himself crowned with the Holy Crown only in 1867 after the compromise between Austria and Hungary, since they did not want their authority, the ideology of their role as the head of church to be influenced by the Hungarian feudal tradition defined in the late Middle Ages and the early modern period. However, based on the papal privilege they called themselves apostolic kings from their accession to the throne. The phenomenon, on the one hand, is one of the numerous contradictions of the Habsburg-Hungarian condominium existing between 1526 and 1918. On the other hand, the demand for the continuous title-bearing can be comprehended in relation with the international dynastic prestige and diplomatic protocol: beside the *Defensor Fidei*, the *Rex Catholicus*, the *Rex Christianissimus*, the Habsburg monarch bore the title of the *Rex Apostolicus*, which Ferdinand III – who was crowned as the king of Hungary in 1625 – requested from Urban VIII in 1627 in vain.

The most striking evidence of the perfection of the Hungarian royal role of being the head of church in the 18th–19th century is the foundation of dioceses. In 1632 it was Cardinal Péter Pázmány, the archbishop of Esztergom (1616–1637) who requested his archdiocese's dismembering in Rome to enhance the circumstances of administration. In 1776, Maria Theresa accomplished it by herself by establishing the

diocese of Rozsnyó (Rožňava) and Besztercebánya (Banská Bystrica), and then a year later she established the diocese of Szombathely and Székesfehérvár – which were later canonized by the pope. While the queen consulted with the Apostolic See beforehand, Francis I (1792–1835) created Eger an archdiocese in 1804 and carved the bishopric of Kassa (Košice) out of its territory and attached Szepes (Spiš) also as a bishopric to the new *metropolia* in a way that Pope Pius VII (1800–1823) was informed about these changes only a year later. The enlargement of the Greek Catholic church administration happened according to similar power lines; it offered institutional framework for the Romanian and Ruthenian national self-awareness's development.

The role of the Habsburgs as great powers of Europe in the 18th century was notably owing to such resources that the – after the expulsion of the Ottomans the reunited – Kingdom of Hungary's territories provided for the dynasty. The preservation of the integer medieval country's idea was measurably the merit of the Hungarian churchmen. They stubbornly adhered to keep the right of bestowal of the episcopal titles and benefices of the territories belonging to the Ottoman Empire according to the Treaty of Adrianople (1568) – moreover, they took care of these territories' pastoral work as far as possible. Throughout the 17th century along with the leaders of the nobility they continuously applied political pressure on the court of Vienna that was engaged in the handling of the French expansion in Rhineland. While the maintenance of the episcopal titles of the Balkan and Dalmatian region seems ironic, in the re-occupied and liberated territories – like Pécs, Kalocsa, Temesvár (Timișoara), Várad (Oradea), etc. – the ecclesiastic centres were re-established after 200 years, which was followed by the development of the parishes and schools. The ownership could not be proven in fair-sized territories. Leopold I, Charles III and even Maria Theresa bestowed astonishing territories to the church to spend the resources on the spiritual and cultural restoration of the Habsburg Monarchy by drawing the eastern cultural line at the lower Danube.

If we agree with Hegel that the development of the state and its role's perfection is a “natural need”, then we should think that the special compound of the enlightened absolutism and the Hungarian kings' role as the head of church was capable of a serious modernizing achievement in Europe's periphery of the 18th century. Nonetheless, it does not apply only for the restoration of the liberated territories around the River Danube. The Hungarian assets of the Jesuit Order that was dissolved by Clement XIV (1769–1773), were put in a so-called “Education Fund” (*Fundus Studiorum*) in 1773, which was extended by the assets of the religious orders and monasteries were dissolved by Joseph II and became the so-called “Religion Fund” (*Fundus Religiosus*) in 1782. Its employment was always decided by the monarch with the assistance of the Locotenential Council's Committee for Ecclesiastical Matters (*Commissio Ecclesiastica*), which resided in Buda, and at his discretion the incomes of the earlier monasteries were solely spent on the development of the parishes and schools. For the request of the Hungarian feudal orders, Francis I authorized the function of the Benedictine, Cistercian

and Premonstratensian orders again and gave their properties back in 1802. In the meantime, he ordered a rigid obligation to educate; in other words, he practically formed them into teaching orders in Hungary, of which effect is still determining in the secondary education.

VI. Summary and outlook

At this point the question should be raised, how the Hungarian Royal Patronage differed from the state control that other western monarchies practiced over the local churches of the western Latin Christianity also from the 1500s (give or take 50 years). Namely, the historical phenomena of Gallicanism, the Spanish *Patronato real* and the Portuguese *Padroado*, or the hallmarks of the Protestant state church, like the *Landeskirche* and the *Ecclesia Anglicana* are well-known. Besides, it is also known that the Habsburg monarchs brought in effect an increasing control over the Catholic church administration also in the non-Hungarian territories, in such an extent that there was also a diocese founded, in the case of Sankt Pölten, where the royal action of 1784 also preceded the issue of the papal bull (1785), which can be regarded in this case only an approval (“*Zustimmungsbulle*”).

However, it was different in its origin: there is no such concordat like that of the Bologna of 1516, or the earlier one by Frederick II (1452–1493) concerning the hereditary provinces, neither such bulls that confirmed the patronage, like that of the *Universalis Ecclesiae* by Julius II (1503–1513) from 1508. It differed in its ideology: *Based on the legacy of Saint Stephen and its growing cult, in Hungary it was assigned an apostolic character independent from the Apostolic See*, mainly by the members of the Hungarian Catholic clergy, but also by the Habsburgs. It is not linked to the state but directly to the crowned monarch; however, (it became certain only in the 18th century that) the *Sacra Corona Regni Hungariae* could not have been Saint Stephen's in its survived form as it had been assumed. Besides, it also differed in its extent. Until the last year of the Hungarian *Ancien Régime* until 1848, as a result of a 400-year-long development, the apostolic Hungarian monarchs had the following licenses over the whole Catholic church in Hungary without any and anybody's limitation:

1. the defense of the Catholic religion and church and its administrative body;
2. the foundation of dioceses;
3. the appointment of diocesan, titular and elected bishops;
4. the appointment of the coadjutors with right of succession;
5. the appointment of actual abbots and titular bishops (with the exception of those under private right of advowson);
6. the appointment of the members of the cathedral chapters;
7. the control of the church possessions, properties (the right of their alienation, burden, etc.);
8. the organization and optional usage of the church funds;
9. the supreme administration of the Catholic schools and institutions;
10. the free demise of the patronage to a natural or legal entity;
11. the right to make decision in the controversies evolved concerning patronage;
12. the regulation of the practice of (manorial, municipal, etc.) patronage, pastoral subsidies, stola-allowances, etc.

As a consequence, the Hungarian Royal Patronage that had been codified by around 1500 thanks to Werbőczy and was evolved in the course of the great western schism, under the aegis of the Conciliarism, based on its official Latin term (*ius regium supremi patronatus*) it can be circumscribed in English with the term of Hungarian Royal Patronage and Supremacy. It is rather praxis than a theory, although, the ideological approach could not either be neglected. If it was not ahistorical, though it is since the term of *Ecclesia Hungaricana* is nowhere mentioned in the sources, the whole occurrence could be called rather *Hungaricanism*. Its historical view is definitely positive in the framework of the *Ancien Régime*. It enabled the Hungarian state to manage the country's resources according to its own interests, be it the formation of the defense system against the Ottomans, or later the enlargement of education system. It all happened without a serious break with the papacy. The Hungarian Royal Patronage and Supremacy was not only important for the Habsburg dynasty to use it as an effective state-organizing and centralizing tool, but it also contributed to the dynasty's Catholic nimbus's strengthening throughout Europe by embodying it with an apostolic character, like the pope himself had.

With Joseph II's Patent of Toleration of 1781 and similar acts of the Hungarian diet (Article 26 and 27 of 1790/91), the Catholic Church lost its position of state-hegemony in the multid denominational Hungary. Its state of state religion remained until 1848. Moreover, its privileged character did not cease to exist neither in the period of civil constitutionalism, which was gained in 1848 and realized in 1867. Namely, the constitution did not abolish the royal patronage; the king could practice it by the Minister of Religion and Public Education, practically in the same form as before. However, the historical opinion of this era was way more complex as before. Although, the Article 20 of 1848 declared the total equality of the denominations acknowledged by the state, the Catholic Church was more closely linked to the state due to the character of the apostolic king. To the state, which was already a liberal state; therefore liberal politicians were elected in such positions like the minister of religion and education. The launching Catholic autonomy-efforts did not succeed. (According to the plans, its approval and the establishment of its extent would have been the right of the apostolic king, as the 13 license...)

The unsolvable dilemma was concluded by the fall of the dual monarchy, Austria-Hungary. After the abdication of Charles IV (more precisely his withdrawal from state affairs) and the dethronement of the Habsburg House in 1921, the Apostolic See regained the right of appointment of the Hungarian bishopric sees in the whole territory of the successor states after 500 years. The reference was that it was only a privilege related to the person of the monarch. *The important factor of the sovereignty of the Hungarian state without a monarch – that was maintained throughout half a millennium – was lost within a moment.*

Despite the vivid legal and political debates, negotiations, the Hungarian state could influence the filling of the episcopal sees (*intesa semplice*, 1927) in Hungary only within the framework of occasional political agreement; true, it was possible (*intesa pratica*,

1964) still during the Hungarian state-socialism. Since 1990, the Hungarian authorities have absolutely no say in this question.

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(1417–1918)
SUMMARY**

There is hardly another question in the Hungarian historiography spanning from the time of the establishment of the Kingdom to the beginning of the 20th century, which would have been paid such focused attention, mainly for reasons of current church political interests, as the question of Royal Patronage and Supremacy: the ever increasing control of Hungarian monarchs over ecclesiastical benefices.

The lecture is taking an interest in the development of this unique Catholic state church occurrence – which is practically unknown for the international science – from the 15th to the 20th century. In parallel to the English example, from the 15th century the head of the Hungarian church administration was the monarch himself. The state control further strengthened by the Habsburg's accession to the Hungarian throne, by the personal union of the Hungarian and the imperial crown. Besides the dynasty, the Hungarian episcopacy was the main protector against Protestantism and the papacy's demand on centralization. The Hungarian prelates supported the Hungarian monarchs as the head of the Church with historical and theological arguments dating back to the times before the investiture controversy. The state control of more and more absolutistic nature rested upon sacral ideology, which was finally accepted by Rome by the middle of the 18th century after long debates but only in a very limited form. Pope Benedict XIV (1740–1758) recognized only the prevailing Hungarian monarch's title of *rex apostolicus*. Until the abdication of Charles IV in Hungary in 1918, the benefices of the bishops, abbots, provosts and chapters were all bestowed by the monarch. The Apostolic See officially did not have a say in the matter of appointments, in case of vacancy the incomes were handled by the state; the prelates immediately took their position after the royal appointment. However, *in spiritu alibus* they did not become independent of Rome, they – though belatedly and incompletely – received the papal bulls, they complied with the liturgical and inner church disciplinary regulations, if the royal *placetum regium* allowed their promulgation. According to canon law and the papacy, the state control was a privilege of only the prevailing monarch. After the abdication of (Habsburg) Charles IV (1916–1918) and then the end of the kingdom in 1946, the Hungarian state had less and less formal and informal influence on the Catholic church administration. The monarchy and the existence of the monarch strengthened the Hungarian state's sovereignty in one determining segment. The disappearance of the monarch and then the kingdom, resulted in the return of a further existing monarchy, the papacy's direct influence of power in Hungary after 500 years.

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