

Emese Rácz: *The Old Collection of the Former Conventual Franciscan Friary in Nagyenyed: A Catalogue*¹

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In the Central European region the publications of the last twenty years signal a renewed interest in the history of libraries; researchers have been striving to become familiar with and interpret correctly archival sources. One cannot ignore the widespread use of the internet, which is an event of crucial importance for libraries as well, since it is closely connected with the revival of the research activities in the history of books and libraries. Libraries try to make their catalogues accessible on the internet, for thus their books may receive more scholarly attention. The libraries in possession of smaller or larger early book collections are no exception to this; apart from compiling printed catalogues to aid scholarly research, they have begun processing their documents in the cataloguing modules of different integrated library systems.

The compiler of the present catalogue owes much to the above mentioned events, since, in “her seclusion in Aiud (Nagyenyed, Romania)”, Emese Rácz used the possibilities offered by internet (from electronic catalogues and online national bibliographies useful in identifying incomplete copies, to the advisory e-mails of some scholars specialized in early books who helped and guided her in her work) when preparing the high quality catalogue of the library formerly owned by the Conventual Franciscan friary in Nagyenyed. Professional correspondence preceded the issuing of the catalogue which was finally published in collaboration by two prestigious libraries (the National Széchényi Library, Budapest and Lucian Blaga Central University Library, Cluj-Napoca) as the third volume of the series *A Kárpát-medence magyar könyvtárainak régi könyvei* (The Early Books of the Hungarian Libraries in the Carpathian Basin). The goal of the series started by the National

¹ Rácz Emese, comp., *Az egykori nagyenyedi minorita rendház könyvtárának régi állománya: katalógus. – Fondul de carte veche al fostei mănăstiri minorite din Aiud: catalog – Altbücherbestand der Bibliothek des ehemaligen Minoritenklosters in Strassburg am Mieresch*. Katalog, ed. István Monok, preface translated by Géza Deréky, Levente Rácz (Budapest: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, Cluj-Napoca: Biblioteca Centrală Universitară „Lucian Blaga”, 2009, LXI, 303 p. (A Kárpát-medence magyar könyvtárainak régi könyvei 3.) (Early Books of the Hungarian Libraries in the Carpathian Basin 3.)

Széchenyi Library and edited by István Monok is to explore the early book collections of the minor Hungarian libraries in the Carpathian Basin.

The catalogue has the following main structural units: a title page, a table of contents, and the introduction, all in three languages, followed by the list of abbreviations; and the catalogue containing the description of 836 prints and 33 manuscripts. At the end of the book, indexes help the reader's orientation: the index of printing locations, printing office owners, typographers, and editors is followed by the indexes of owners and engravers.

The short but consistent introduction of the catalogue presents the history of the Conventual Franciscan friary in Aiud in brief; it lists the names of the 172 superiors and priests who served there. This is followed by the history of the library which belonged to this religious house founded in 1778, the increase of the collection being outlined until 1948 when the Romanian state seized a part of it. Until 2005, this collection had been a part of Bethlen Library, also nationalized in 1948. In this period both libraries functioned as the branch institutions of the University Library of Cluj. In 2005, the books of Bethlen Library inventoried until 1948 were restored to their rightful owner, the Transylvanian Reformed Church District. In autumn 2005, the Franciscan material inventoried in 1959 was brought to Cluj, to the Lucian Blaga Central University Library and it can still be consulted there in the Special Collections Department. The next part of the introduction presents the 4 known book-lists, book-list fragments of the Franciscan library. From the point of view of its content, the library was specialized in theology, containing mainly Catholic devotional and religious literature, as well as textbooks used in education. The introduction ends with the enumeration of the editorial principles.

The present catalogue comprises the description of 836 prints and 33 manuscripts arranged in alphabetical order according to the authors' names or, in the case of documents with unknown authors, to the titles. The bibliographical description of the prints observes the international library standards. It includes the following data: author, title, printing location, typographer, name of the printing office, year of printing, dimensions and format, and the presence of illustrations. These are followed by the international bibliographical identification numbers of the books (in the case of Hungarian books RMK, RMNY, and Petrik¹). Among the bibliographical works referred to there are electronic catalogues as well, which facilitate the Transylvanian researchers' work, for they may offer compensation for the lacks in specialized literature in Romanian libraries. Despite the thorough bibliographical identification work, a few fragmentary works without a title page remained unidentified by the author of the catalogue. This constitutes a further task for the future researchers of this collection interested in the readings of the Conventual Franciscan fathers. The volume contains several Hungarian-related titles

¹ RMK – Károly Szabó, Árpád Hellebrant, eds. *Régi magyar könyvtár* (Early Hungarian Library), 1–3 (Budapest: 1879–1898).

RMNY– Gedeon Borsa et al., eds., *Régi Magyarországi Nyomtatványok* (Bibliography of Early Hungarian Prints), 1–3 (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1971–2000).

Géza Petrik, ed., *Magyarország bibliographiája: 1712–1860* (The Bibliography of Hungary: 1712–1860) (Budapest: 1888–1892). (Translator's note.)

which could not be identified with the aid of the Hungarian national bibliography. This may hold novelties for the retrospective national bibliography or they may be unknown copies of some already recorded works. However, it could be explained by the fact that Géza Petrik, when compiling his bibliography on the 18th century literature of Hungary, worked only with the materials of the three big libraries in Budapest.

The bibliographical description and the references are followed by a more exciting section: the letter-by-letter transcription of possessor's notes in chronological order. Nearly two hundred volumes have possessor's notes; apart from the inventory sign of the Franciscan friary, several volumes name other owners as well, among them many Minorite fathers and Hungarian Conventual Franciscan friaries, as well as some teachers of the college of Aiud. In a few volumes of the collection the more elaborate form of property marks, the *ex libris* can also be found. The *supralibros* and the different notes ranging from biographies to short poems also figure at the owner's marks. The next element of the descriptions is the current shelfmark of the book, which is at the same time the former inventory number. Since the library has recently been relocated, the volumes are likely to receive new shelfmarks. Finally, in the case of incomplete copies the missing leaves are mentioned in the observation section.

The index of printing locations, printing office owners, typographers, and editors enumerates the typographers in alphabetical order within the towns, while, in the case of place names, the Hungarian town names are followed by the official name, the historical versions, and the name of the country the locality is situated in nowadays.

The index of authors does not have a system of references at the alphabetical listing; the authors' names are included in a single officially accepted form, Christian names are given according to the book's language, family names in the form which appears on the book or in the form best known in literature. The Hungarian names are ordered according to the same principle (for example entry no. 584 of the catalogue is Franciscus Otrokocsi Fóris' *Theologia prophetica*). Unfortunately, the translators' names have not been included to the index of authors. As examples, we could mention entry no. 68, the Hungarian translation by Sámuel Deáki Filep of Jean-Jacques Barthélemy's *Voyage du jeune Anarcharsis en Grèce*, or entry no. 135, which is Boethius' philosophical work in the Hungarian translation of the Jesuit János Illei.

The book has hardcover binding; its typographical aspect is attractive, well arranged. Although in such extensive works editing mistakes occur almost as a rule, in this catalogue there are only a few (e.g. the abbreviation RMK is used inconsistently: RMK., RMK., RMK.). As a deficiency of the volume we could perhaps mention that it does not describe the bookbindings, though this would have been useful, especially in the case of older books. It would have also been good to include a few pictures at least of the title page of the rare books and a few important possessor's notes or bindings.

We warmly recommend this highly professional and elegant catalogue to all specialists in the history of books, libraries, and reading, as well as to church and town historians.

Translated by Ágnes Korondi