



ISTVÁN BAKK

PAULINE FATHERS IN THE AMERICAS MISSIONARY WORK AND SERVICE IN THE NEW WORLD

The appearance of monastic orders in Europe brought about a great development in written culture and in the position of vernacular cultures. Therefore books (written culture) and monks have become an inseparable institution from the very beginning.

The first 3rd- 4th century Rules prescribe that those who refuse to learn to read and write should be dismissed from the monastic community. In the cells of Egyptian, Galilean and Pannonian caves, books i.e. the Holy Scriptures, the Psalms and the Gospels have been of crucial importance.

The same took place in Hungarian areas. Pauline fathers cultivated a love of books, producing a flourishing integration of western and eastern cultural values. The monks' love for God incorporated and revived the Divine Word, which then they were supposed to be able to read and memorize the texts already read out. Copying and translating holy texts meant serving both fellow monks and the community. Friars or brothers literally performed church services as their work was guided by God and the love for their fellow brothers. While murmuring holy texts to himself, the monk, with his hands wrote the treasure of his soul and the warmth of his heart into the forming letters.

A monastic order, developed from a 13th century hermitic movement in the Middle Ages, the Paulines were the only order to be founded in Hungary. The history of the Paulines is closely interwoven with that of the Hungarian people. The order was established by Blessed Eusebius of Esztergom in the Pilis Mountains in 1250. Eusebius was also chosen as provincial at the same time. In 1263 he asked for the Rules of St Augustine but did not immediately get an approval. The bishop of Veszprém provided him with a Rule of Life which now serves as a list of one-time monasteries. These are as follows: Pilup Island, St Ilona, St Mária Magdolna at Kókút, St Jakab in the



Bakony Mountains, St Erzsébet in Idegsziget, St Imre in Badacsony, St Mária Magdolna on an island in Elek, near Örményes, St Domokos in Szakácsi.

Paulines received the Rules of St Augustine in 1308. One of Eusebius' successors, Lőrinc, moved the centre of the order to the monastery of Budaszentlőrinc. It was in 1329 that Pope John XXII expressed his strengthening pastoral care.

During the principality of Miklós I with the approval of the Apostolic Holy See their black habit was replaced by a white one, from then on distinguishing them from wandering hermits, the latter not always decent in their ways and causing scandals. Paulines were called "white monks" by the people thereafter.

In 1381 King Louis the Great obtained the relics of St Paul, their patron saint, the hermit of Thebe for the order. The relics were placed in the monastery of Szentlőrinc near Buda and the venue became a destination for pilgrims. Pauline monasteries operated throughout the country. The monks' ascetic life focused on worship and manual labour.

Hungarians' ancient devotion to the Blessed Mary, Our Lady of Hungary was first emphasised by this order in the Hungarian Catholic Church. By founding a monastery in Márianosztra in 1352, where from 16 Paulines went over to Cze-

stochowa, Poland, and the respect for the Virgin Mary was raised in Poland as well.

The stonemasons of Szentlőrinc built 100 Pauline monasteries all over Hungary. These master craftsmen made the stone engravings, sculptures, stoups and the tombstones of noblemen buried in these churches. All Pauline monasteries had stained glass windows, as well as organs in their churches.

The library of Szentlőrinc, the main monastery near Buda had an exchange agreement with the library of King Matthias. This means that the Paulines regularly worked for the Bibliotheca Corviniana of the King as its scriptorium. Literacy and the expansion of libraries was effectively supported by an obligation, according to which all novices were supposed to present a book copied by themselves to their future monastery on taking their monastic vows. Among Paulines there were highly qualified monks, some of them had gained university degrees before joining the order. Every age produced talented literates who could serve practical purposes with their works. Tamás Szombathelyi, principal of the order on two occasions (1476-1480, 1484-1488) compiled speeches encouraging virtues, as well as an Exhortation related to the Augustinian Rules and monastic life. He edited a book for younger monks, collected the speeches of the eccle-



Amerigo Vespucci (Firenze, 1451. március 9. – Sevilla, 1512. február 22.) olasz utazó, felfedező.⁴

siastical fathers (Augustine, Gregory, Jerome, and Ambrose both in Latin and Hungarian. Some of his notes about his own activities and the manuscripts of the Pauline chaplaincy have been passed down to us. These fragments draw the portrait of a monk who entirely devoted his life to his fellow monks.

By the 14th century alongside the Franciscans, the Paulines became the most widely-spread and the most popular order in Hungary. This hermitic order was always deeply aware of national issues. A basic principle in educating their novices was “you are here not exclusively for yourself but for the Hungarian homeland and its people, to pray and to do penance.”

Many men, old and young alike, joined the order. Later, with respect for their common prayers and general Pauline achievements several kings, princes and barons established monasteries in different countries. Altars were built to praise God, the number of Christians, and the intensity of worship grew at these places day after day.



Kolumbusz Kristóf arképe.⁵ Sebastiano del Piombo festménye (1529-1531).

If you accept the statement that at the heart of every culture there is the culture of the soul, you can imagine the significance of the 170 Pauline monasteries flourishing in the Middle Ages. They served as the fireplaces for the love of God, the sources of constructive aspirations for the welfare of the nation. The Pauline monasteries of Croatia, Slovenia, Dalmatia, Istria, Poland, Lithuania, Russia, Prussia, Silesia, Moravia and Czech areas, Austria, Portugal, France, Spain, Germany, the Holy Land and America mani-

fest the radiation of Christian spirituality.

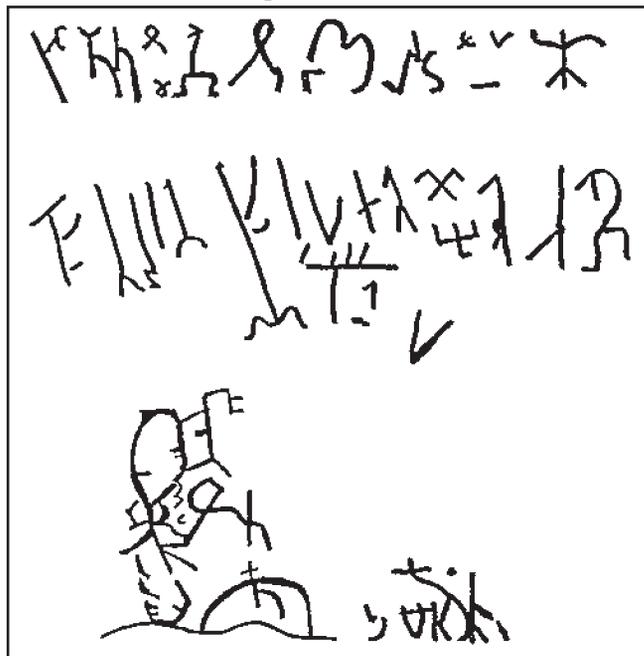
The Paulines are the only order in the Roman Catholic Church which did not use to be based in Rome but in Hungary. Their monasteries were the signs of the glorious past of Regnum Marianum. Few people know however, that the Paulines reached America as well. Queen Isabella found this order the worthiest to be invited onto the ships of Christopher Columbus to join him as missionaries to America. As a matter of fact Hungarian Paulines were well known in both the Spanish and the Portuguese royal courts and were also invited to discover the interior of South America and convert the native Indians.

The fathers often lived in caves, just as they used to live in the Pilis Mountains. A lot of Hungarian inscriptions, to be read from left to right, were preserved on the walls of these caves. The Pauline runic script is a version of the original Magyar or Szekler script modified and made perhaps more “literate” in the monasteries. This writing was known as the “szitya/szkita” runic script in the Middle Ages, a great many examples of which have survived in South America. The Paulines also used this way of writing in their correspondences and on their maps. They were later replaced by Jesuits who continued on the script for some time, mixing the letters with Latin ones.

Principal Tamás Szombathelyi’s farewell speech, addressed to 125 Pauline fathers on their departure to Portugal can be found in the State Archives of Lisbon. In Barcelona you can see a copy of the letter of the Catholic Queen Isabella (1451-1504), proudly claiming to be of Hungarian royal

descent, to Tamás Fráter, the Hungarian principal asking him to send Pauline missionaries:

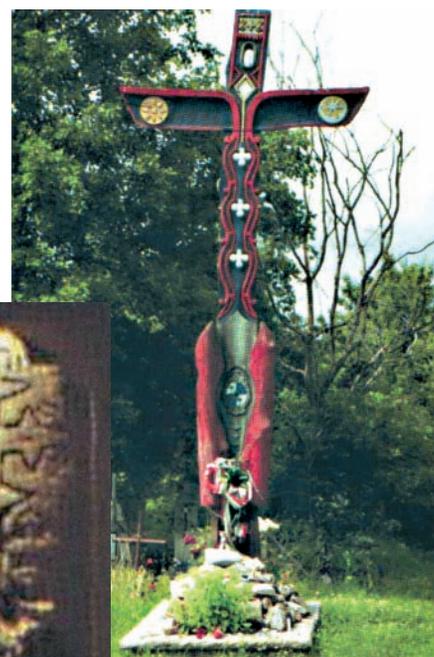
“Send out workers into the vineyards of the Lord, as workers will really be needed; hard work will be awaiting them.” The charter “Archivo de las Indians” in the Spanish port town of Cadiz contains the



Cerro Pelado dél-amerikai barlang faláról előkerült rovásos feliratok.¹⁵ Megfejtése: Született 1473.¹⁶

personal particulars of 300 Pauline monks.

In the history of the Paulines their Latin American presence and mission is of great importance and should be appreciated by all Hungarians. Pope Alexander VI also commissioned them to go to South



Özséb keresztje, Pilisszántó



America. They operated mostly among the Indians and are still remembered. When Spain and Portugal turned against each other it was Pope Alexander VI again, who asked the Paulines to draw the border using astronomical methods between the two rivalling powers.

Spain occupied Guatemala, a land where in the holes and caves of a huge mountain range there lived numerous monks. The walls of these caves have preserved many runic inscriptions of the special Pauline script. Pauline monks reached Argentina, Bolivia and Peru (using present day country names). Pizarro and his soldiers met and even disturbed Hungarian monks in their mission, so there was an attempt to move them to minor islands. There are memories of the script in South America from as late as 1559 but not any more after 1560.

The Ottoman expansion brought about the plight of the Paulines, as they lost their base, the strong and independent Hungarian state. The best known member of the order György (Fráter) Martinuzzi was murdered in 1551. Spanish and later Central European Jesuits (among them 20–30 Hungarians) took over the missions. As mentioned above, they also used the Pauline runic



Pálos rovás

script mixed with Latin letters.

In 1745 at St Mark's University of Lima, the first university of Latin America, János Rév, a Hungarian Jesuit found traces of Hungarian Paulines. He reported in his diary that he had found runic notes among the Pauline books of the library. The University of Nagyszombat (today Trnava, Slovakia) had part of the surviving material, a copied map. This map was originally called "Mappa Antiqua", nowadays it is referred to as the "Vinland Map".

In Cerro Pelado, South America cave inscriptions were carved into the rock around 1500. In 1910 cave drawings of the Paulines were discovered in the mountains of Cerra Póllila, named after the Paulines. So we can conclude that the Christian bridge between America and Europe was built by the Hungarian Paulines.

In Hungary along with national historic research, runic script re-



Budaörsi passió

search also has its revival, trying to interpret ancient writings. "Runic memories are of great value, since they faithfully preserve the language of the age in which they were written." Runic inscriptions on archaeological findings are now providing more and more information for the research of European and Hungarian history, as well as for the studying of population migrations and pre-historic times.

At present there is no Hungarian Pauline order in our country but there is a Polish equivalent. What is referred to as Paulines these days is not the original Hungarian order

but a Polish descendant. At the request of the Polish King Augustine Stanislaw

Pope Pius VI issued his "Apostolicae Sedis Auctoritatis" on 3 December 1784, thus separating the Polish province from Hungary and freeing them from the control of

the provincial Father and establishing the Polish Pauline Congregation.

Emperor Joseph II repealed monastic orders, including the Paulines in 1786.

Dr László Lékai, cardinal primate, and archbishop of Esztergom commissioned

father Vince Árva as postulator with the canonisation process of Blessed Eusebius in 1985 (cf. Lékai's letter No. 155-6/1985-Dec.16.1985). The official canonisation process was launched on 18 January 1986 at a mass in Esztergom's basilica, celebrated by the archbishop. "Meditate about this, my brother and your soul will be filled with the grace of Christ."

Bálint Hadnagy, a Pauline author.

So as to commemorate the Pauline monks first to arrive in America, we have made use of the work of Bálint Hadnagy from 1511 which is the oldest Passion text of Europe. The Pilis Pauline Passion will be first performed on 21 June 2007 in Pilisszántó, the birthplace of the order. The New World Festival will mark the opening of the Euro-Passion meeting, organised in the Pilis-Visegrád region.

István Bakk
Canon Endre Bakk Foundation
Chairman



Jézus a kereszten

1. Frater Thomas de Sabaria, compiling explanations to the Rules of St Augustine, Exhortatorium related to monastic life. Cf. Budapest University Library

2. László Jankó: The Crypt of the White Monks of Pápa

3. Throughout his life, Columbus believed he had found India. Around 1501–1502 however, Vespucci declared the newly found area a new continent, even if only the northern and eastern coasts were known then. In 1507 Martin Waldseemüller from St Dié, Lathering named the new land America on his map. Columbus' name is preserved in that of a country, Columbia.

4. Amerigo Vespucci the 4th child of Nastagio Vespucci was born in 1451 in Florence. Little is known about his life. In 1490 he joined the same merchant house as Columbus, his contemporary. Sailing along the coast near present-day Suriname, he created a new name: "it is like a little Venice, i.e. Venezuela!" Having returned home, he set off to the new world again under a Portuguese flag. He stated having been to the new world on 4 occasions, twice commissioned by the Spanish, twice by the Portuguese.

5. The portrait of Christopher Columbus by Sebastiano del Piombo (1529–1531). Originally Christophoro Colombo (Christophorus Columbus in Latin) was born some time between 25 August and 31 October 1451 in San Stefano, a suburb of Genoa in Italy. He died on 20 May 1506 in Valladolid. The Italian word *colombo* means pigeon.

6. South America is 17.840.000 km², appr. 35% of the territory of the earth. Population: 371.000.000 (2005). The 4th largest continent in size, the 5th in population.

7. János Zakarjás sent several letters to Europe from South America until the year of 1756. Cf. Tihamér Lacza: Hungarian Jesuits in Latin America.

8. Irén Schmidt: Extracts from the History of the Paulines 1250–2005. Miskolci Bölcsész Egyesület, Nagy Lajos Magánegyetem pp.78–79.

9. Anna Walter, Fehérné: From Cuneiform Writing to the Runic Script. Vol. 2 pp. 207–208, 210. Buenos Aires, 1975.

10. information from Father Vince Árva

11. Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia) must have commissioned

the Paulines before 1503, the end of his papacy. He initiated the Treaty of Tordesillas in which the Spanish and the Portuguese divided the newly acquired areas. According to the treaty 370 leagues (cf. 1 league = 5.572 kms = 3.46 miles) west of the Cape Verde Islands a longitude was established. Everything east of this line belonged to Portugal, west of this to Spain. The latter could trespass on Portuguese territories to maintain connections with the homeland but all forms of trade and occupation were prohibited. This agreement was signed on 7 June, ratified on 20 June and de jure was in use until 1777.

12. About the difficulties of tracing Hungarian Jesuits: László Szabó, a Hungarian journalist, who settled in Argentina devoted decades to the studying of Hungarian documents in South America. In his book *Hungarian Past in South America 1519–1900* he writes the following: "The search for the traces of Hungarian Jesuits sometimes means unimaginable difficulties. The Jesuit order, just like a military organisation, was divided into provinces and was present all over the world. Each province was lead by a provincial. As the majority of Hungary was under Ottoman rule, there was no independent Hungarian province. The remaining western and Upper-Hungarian territories of the Hungarian Kingdom belonged to the Austrian province. As a result, all Hungarians in Spanish and Portuguese America were registered among Austrian missionaries. Their surnames were either misspelt just as the names of their German, Czech, Croatian counterparts or were deliberately used in a Latinised form. This was a means to prevent distrust and jealousy of the native secular priesthood." Consequently there are only few surviving documents in Latin American archives and bearing in mind the sad end of Jesuit missionary work there, there is little hope that European Jesuit archives can provide us with sufficient sources. What we know about Hungarian missions is mainly based on the correspondences of the monks in question. They sent letters, notes and drawings back to Europe and there is even a manuscript meant for publication among these. Cf. Tihamér Lacza: Hungarian Jesuits in South America.

13. Ignác Szentmártoni was sent to Brazil as the royal astronomer and cartographer of the Portuguese king. On his way home he stopped for an audition in Vienna and reported Maria Therese about his Brazilian mission and his 18 years spent in captivity. After his return home he lived with his nephew in Csáktornya and served as a curate in Belica until his death on 15 April 1793. His notes and maps must be hiding in one of the Portuguese archives.

14. Győző Libisch: The Pauline Runic Script. In: Turán, 1999/5. pp.21–40.

15. Runic inscriptions on the walls of a cave in Cerro Pelado

16. the meaning of the above inscriptions is: "born in 1473"

17. Cf. Győző Libisch: The Church and Runic Writing

18. It is easy to reconstruct what happened to Paulines from a work called Memories of a Hungarian Jesuit (before the results of recent research). "...he visited even the most remote areas, he learnt several Indian languages and their dialects which was a prerequisite of successful missionary work, especially because there were areas where native Indians spoke a dozen different languages. The Hungarian Jesuit made detailed notes, compiled with the drawings and maps of a Latin book by Xavér Ferenc Éder, called *Descriptio provinciae Moxitarum in regno Peruano* (The Description of Province Moxitania in the Kingdom of Peru). The original manuscript, 289 densely written pages can be found in the Prayer collection of the Budapest University Library. Pál Makó, abbot of Buda made a short extract of this work in 1791, mainly publishing his own explanations and not the original text by Éder. This edition was published in Spanish as well in La Paz almost 100 years later in 1884. The original text and its translation however has not reached a wider public ever since.

19. Cf. Sándor Forrai

20. Varia Paulina III. Gergely Gyöngyösi: The Life of the Brothers of Hermit St Paul I. Fráter György Alapítvány, 1988 and edited by Vince Árva OSP

21. He published his work about St Paul the Hermit in Venice in 1551. Besides the official biography it includes the description of the wonders by the tomb in Szentlőrinc.