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# Rediscovering the virgin martyrs in medieval Central Europe. The case of the cult of Saint Dorothy in Hungary

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## *Abstract*

Saint Dorothy was highly popular in the fifteenth-century Hungary, however, she was almost unknown a hundred years earlier. This phenomenon is not unique and not limited only to this particular saint and territory. The fourteenth century seems to be the period when the cults and legends of virgin martyrs were rediscovered in Europe. How did their cult re-emerged in Central Europe? The present paper analyzes through the Hungarian cult of Saint Dorothy, which circumstances contributed to the proliferation of the cult of virgin martyrs with interdisciplinary method. For that I use all available materials: visual and written sources produced in medieval Hungary. My aim is to show how the general trends in the cult of saints contributed to the spread of Dorothy's veneration. Besides the growing importance of women, the general changes in the cult of saints facilitated the spread of the cult of virgin martyrs. The growing importance of images and sermons contributed to the spread of the old saints' cult, whose venerations were not connected to certain locations.

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Moreover, their intimate relationship with the Virgin Mary made them effective intercessors which also subsidized to their popularity.

Santa Dorotea divenne molto popolare nel Regno d'Ungheria durante il Quattrocento, ma fino a un secolo prima era una figura quasi sconosciuta. Questo fenomeno non è unico, né limitato a Santa Dorotea o al territorio in esame. Perciò si deduce che fu nel Trecento che le Sante 'vergini e martiri' furono riscoperte in Europa. Come mai il loro culto riemerse nell'Europa Centrale? L'articolo analizza con un approccio interdisciplinare le ragioni che hanno comportato la rapida diffusione del culto delle sante vergini e martiri tramite l'esempio del culto ungherese di Santa Dorotea. Oltre alla crescente importanza delle donne, anche i cambiamenti generali relativi al culto dei santi hanno giocato un ruolo di primo piano. Le immagini di santi e i sermoni hanno contribuito alla proliferazione del culto di antichi santi, il cui culto non era legato a luoghi specifici. Peraltro, la stretta relazione tra la Vergine e le Sante vergini e martiri ha contribuito a riconfigurare queste ultime come veicolo per un'efficace intercessione, fatto che ha giovato pure alla loro popolarità.

The fourteenth century seems to be the period when the cults and legends of virgin martyrs were rediscovered in Europe. Even though, the female martyrs' names of the early Christianity were recorded and preserved in *martyrologia* and their legends were produced before or around the first millennium, their cults – with a few exceptions – were not widespread until the mid-fourteenth century. From that period, their legends and artistic representations started to thrive, moreover new legends were produced<sup>1</sup>. The present paper's aim is to answer: how did their cult re-emerged in Central Europe? Why in the fourteenth century? This article analyzes through the cult of Saint Dorothy, which circumstances contributed to the proliferation of the cult of virgin martyrs with the help of written and visual sources.

The very first traces of virgin martyrs appeared in *martyrologia*, however, these sources contain only short notes about martyrs. These one-sentence descriptions developed to thousands and thousands line-long legends by the end of the Middle Ages. According to the legend of Saint Dorothy, she suffered martyrdom on February 6 or February 12 in 287 or in 304 together with Theophilus in Cappadocia during the reign of Emperor Diocletian. Although her life and death were located to the Eastern part of the Roman Empire, her person and her cult were unknown in the Greek tradition<sup>2</sup>.

The earliest source which kept Saint Dorothy's name is the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, an ancient *martyrologium*, which was wrongly attributed to Saint Jerome. The work itself originates from the fifth-century Italy, however, its manuscripts survived only from a few centuries later, thus, not all saints in the *martyrologium* had necessarily a cult as early as the fifth century. Because of the genre of *martyrologium*, information about Dorothy provided by this work is scant. Only her, and her co-martyr's names are listed with the day and

<sup>1</sup> Winstead 1989/1990, pp. 229-238.

<sup>2</sup> Wolf 1997, pp. 2-3.

place of their martyrdom. According to the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* Saint Dorothy together with Theophilus died on February 6 in Achaia. This is in contrast with the widespread location of her martyrdom, which was Cappadocia<sup>3</sup>.

The earliest version of Dorothy's legend remained in the treatise of Saint Adelhelm (639-709) entitled *De laudibus virginitatis*. This work was written to the abbess of Barking, Hidelitha. The aim of the treatise was to encourage the nuns to live a chaste life. For that Saint Adelhelm included several legends of male and female virgins as examples. One of them was the life of Saint Dorothy. The main early *martyrologia* contain the legend of Dorothy and Theophilus, such as the work of Beda Venerabilis, the anonymous cleric of Lyon, and Florus of Lyon, Ado of Vienna, Notker and Usuard, however, they provide little information. The *martyrologium* of the archbishop of Mainz, Hrabanus Maurus (843-854) has more details about the life of Dorothy. He recounts that she had two sisters, Christa and Calista, who died because they were put to a boiling cauldron<sup>4</sup>.

However, most of the virgin martyrs' name were recorded in the early *martyrologia*, they became popular from the twelfth century onwards in Europe which interrelated with the changing attitudes toward women<sup>5</sup>. Saint Dorothy is belated compared to the other virgin martyrs. Her legend started to spread from the eleventh century<sup>6</sup> but she only became popular from the fourteenth century<sup>7</sup>. For example, the original version of the *Legenda Aurea*, edited by Jacobus de Voragine in the thirteenth century, did not include the legend of Saint Dorothy. The reason behind this is twofold: on the one hand she was not popular in the thirteenth century when Jacobus completed his work. On the other hand, her legend contains superstitious elements, such as the remission from all sins and rescuing from poverty. These promises cannot have a good impact on morality, because why should anyone live a virtuous life, if only the Saint Dorothy's veneration will rescue from sins<sup>8</sup>.

Regarding the spread of the cult she was popular mostly in German speaking territories<sup>9</sup>. Her cult spread in Germany, Austria, Netherlands, Hungary,

<sup>3</sup> Delehaye 1931; Dubois, Lemaître 1993, pp. 106-109; Lapidge 2018, pp. 649-650.

<sup>4</sup> Wolf 1997, pp. 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> Baker 1978; Bynum 1987; Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Szell 1991; Klaniczay 1994, pp. 93-244; Vauchez 1997; Wogan-Browne 2001; Bernau *et al.* 2003.

<sup>6</sup> Wolf 1997, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Boesch Gajano 2015, pp. 18-19; Bergamaschi 2016, pp. 503-506.

<sup>8</sup> Reames 1985, p. 160.

<sup>9</sup> Kirschbaum, Bandmann 1968-1974, VI, p. 89.

Scandinavia and Italy (mostly northern Italy)<sup>10</sup>. She was less popular in France, and in England<sup>11</sup>.

From the fourteenth century she appeared in visual representations. One of her earliest depictions is in a codex kept in the *Österreichische Nationalbibliothek*<sup>12</sup>, which shows her with other virgin martyrs. She became one of the favorite subjects of German painters in the fifteenth and sixteenth century as thousands of artworks testify. Her popularity in German-speaking territory is clear. As it was mentioned above, Saint Dorothy's legend was a later addition to the *Legenda Aurea*, the extra *lives* in the manuscripts of the *legendaria* reflect local interests. Saint Dorothy appears in a large number of manuscripts of the *Legenda Aurea* in Central Europe, mostly north of the Alps<sup>13</sup>. As early as the fourteenth century German vernacular versions of her legend were produced. These versions, together with the Latin versions, are mostly based on BHL 2324. One of the earliest vernacular German poems about Saint Dorothy was probably produced in Bavaria in the early fourteenth century. By 1400 several poetic versions were born in vernacular German language: the *Dorotheen passie* was written in East Middle German, *Sunte Dorotheen passie* in Middle Low German (perhaps composed in Ostfalen). Another version survived in Klosterneuburg, which was produced either in Bavaria or in Austria<sup>14</sup>.

Besides the poems, Saint Dorothy plays were popular in German-speaking territories. Most of these plays perished, only a fragment has remained. The *Ludus de Sancta Dorothea* was composed in Eastern Saxony or Bohemia around 1350. The sources recount that they were extremely popular in Central Europe: these plays were played in Lambach, Kulm, Mergentheim, Dresden, Butzbach, Zwickau, Nimwegen, Eger (Czech)<sup>15</sup>, and in Eperjes (today Prešov, Slovakia; German: Preschau). A source from 1413 recounts that during a Saint Dorothy play in Bautzen a tragedy happened which caused the death of thirty people<sup>16</sup>. This source reflects the popularity of Dorothy-plays in the early fifteenth century.

The spatial frame of the paper is medieval Hungary. I will focus on Saint Dorothy's cult in the Carpathian basin, meaning present-day Hungary, and parts of Austria, Slovakia, Romania, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Poland and Ukraine. Regarding to the sources, the amount of the survived documents or art historical representations cannot be compared to those which kept in the archives and libraries in Western Europe. Mainly for the first century of

<sup>10</sup> About the Italian cult see Boesch Gajano 2015, and *Santa Dorotea nel XVII centenario del suo martirio* 2005; Bergamaschi 2016, pp. 503-506 and the forthcoming book of Gianni Bergamaschi.

<sup>11</sup> However, some vernacular English lives were produced. See: Tracy 2007, pp. 259-284.

<sup>12</sup> Around 1330, Vienna, *Österreichische Nationalbibliothek*, cod. 874, fol. 3v.

<sup>13</sup> Tracy 2007, p. 261, n. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Wolf 1997, pp. 19-45.

<sup>15</sup> Ivi, p. 27.

<sup>16</sup> Schachner 1903, p. 158.

the history of the country there are only few sources, which is partly because of the fact, that the orality played more important role than literacy in that period. The quantity of sources was influenced by the Mongol Invasion which demolished a large part of Hungary in 1241-1242, and later the 150 year of Ottoman conquest.

The cult of Saint Dorothy emerged in Hungary only in the mid-fourteenth century. In the earlier period, her name and feast day had not appeared in the liturgical books<sup>17</sup>, and neither churches nor altars dedicated to her are mentioned in the sources<sup>18</sup>. In addition, it seems that Dorothy was not among the usual given names in the Árpáadian Age (1000-1301)<sup>19</sup>; only in the 1320s did this name appear<sup>20</sup>. The questions arise how the cult of Saint Dorothy arrived in Hungary and who the promoters of the cult were.

The cult of Saint Dorothy is not frequently studied in Hungarian scholarship, although the well-known folklorist, Sándor Bálint, included her feast in his book, *Ünnepi kalendárium* (Festal Calendar). In his three-volume book, Bálint wrote a few pages on each ecclesiastical feast and saint venerated in Hungary. He argued that the cult of Saint Dorothy spread in Hungary from Breslau (today Wrocław, Poland) by the Augustinian order, after they had founded a church dedicated to Dorothy there in 1351<sup>21</sup>. It is true that Dorothy was popular among Augustinians, since we know of medieval Augustinian monasteries consecrated to her honor – mostly in German-speaking territories<sup>22</sup>. In addition, she was popular with the German-speaking population as well. If the Augustinians of Breslau had a crucial role in the spread of the cult of Dorothy – as Mariann Slíz argues – they must have been very fast, because the first *patrocinium* appeared in southern Hungary in 1355<sup>23</sup>. And the question arises: How did the role of Augustinians manifest in the promotion of the cult of Dorothy in Hungary?

However, the centers of the cult of the female saint and the Augustinian monasteries of Hungary did not correlate. Moreover, none of the Augustinian monasteries of Hungary was dedicated to Saint Dorothy<sup>24</sup>. How did the idea of Augustinians' role in the cult emerge? Sándor Bálint based his opinion on a book by Leopold Schmidt who emphasized Dorothy's popularity with the Augustinians, as well as in Silesia and eastern Germany<sup>25</sup>. Focusing on the spread of drama, Schmidt argues that the Dorothy plays spread from Czech lands and Silesia in the sixteenth century. Schmidt, however, does not interfuse these two

<sup>17</sup> Radó, Mezey 1973.

<sup>18</sup> Mező 2003; Györffy 1963-1998.

<sup>19</sup> Fehértói 2004; Berrár 1952; Slíz 2011.

<sup>20</sup> Kristó *et al.* 1990-2015, IX, p. 209, No. 372; Cf. Slíz 2013, p. 140.

<sup>21</sup> Bálint 1998, pp. 228-229; Slíz 2013, p. 139.

<sup>22</sup> Eg. Dürnstein Abbey, Vienna.

<sup>23</sup> Slíz 2013, p. 140.

<sup>24</sup> Romhányi 2005, pp. 99-100.

<sup>25</sup> Bálint 1998, pp. 228-229.

aspects as Bálint did it in his book<sup>26</sup>. I argue that although the Augustinians did play a role in the popularity of Saint Dorothy in Central Europe, the appearance of her veneration in Hungary can be explained by other factors, as described in the following. This statement leads us to the following question: if not the Augustinians, then who were the promoters of the cult?

The name Dorothy (Dorothea) first appeared in the Hungarian sources in Nyitra County in 1325<sup>27</sup>. The next known Dorothy was mentioned in a charter in Zala County in 1340<sup>28</sup>, but the name did not become popular at all in the fourteenth century, which is attested to by the fact that hardly more than a dozen individuals were named Dorothy before 1400. In contrast, Mariann Slíz found 70 individuals who were certifiably named Margaret between 1301 and 1359<sup>29</sup>. Later Dorothy's name was one of the most populars<sup>30</sup>.

Although fourteenth-century liturgical books do list her feast, surviving charters dated by feast days testify that the cult of Saint Dorothy was less important than others<sup>31</sup>. Reviewing Hungarian charters from the Angevin period, the first charter dated by the feast of Dorothy, appeared as late as 1356<sup>32</sup>. Up to the 1360s, the charters issued around February 6 were usually dated either by the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary (February 2)<sup>33</sup>, or that of Saint Agatha (February 5)<sup>34</sup>. Later evidence suggests that dating by Dorothy's feast was becoming widespread from the 1360s onwards<sup>35</sup>, which reflects the spread of her cult in Hungary.

The very first source is about a chapel dedicated to Saint Dorothy which was not built. The charter describes the litigation between the citizens of Sopron and their parish priest, Heric in 1354. Among many problems, one was that the former parish priest, Servatius, bequeathed clothes and garments (*vestes et vestimentum*) for the construction of a Saint Dorothy chapel, but Heric used

<sup>26</sup> Schmidt 1962, pp. 177, 216, 324.

<sup>27</sup> Kristó *et al.* 1990-2015, IX, p. 33, No. 39.

<sup>28</sup> Kristó *et al.* 1990-2015, XXIV, p. 190, No. 409.

<sup>29</sup> Slíz 2017, pp. 13, 32.

<sup>30</sup> Slíz 2013, p. 140.

<sup>31</sup> Radó, Mezey 1973, pp. 30-31, 95-96, 101-102, 129-130, 140, 149-150, 295-296, 327-328, 359-360.

<sup>32</sup> Nagy I. 1891, p. 432.

<sup>33</sup> Eg. 1328: Kristó *et al.* 1990-2015, XII, p. 36, No. 56; 1339: Kristó *et al.* 1990-2015, XXIII, p. 48, No. 75; 1345: Kristó *et al.* 1990-2015, XXIX, p. 93, No. 91; 1350: Kristó *et al.* 1990-2015, XXXIV, p. 96, No. 119; 1356: Kristó *et al.* 1990-2015, XL, p. 91, No. 74; 1362: Kristó *et al.* 1990-2015, XLVI, p. 40, No. 51; 1362: Kristó *et al.* 1990-2015, XLVI, p. 41, No. 52.

<sup>34</sup> Eg. 1346: Kristó *et al.* 1990-2015, XXX, p. 59, No. 82; 1347: Kristó *et al.* 1990-2015, XXXI, p. 69, No. 82, 74, No. 96; 1349: Kristó *et al.* 1990-2015, XXXIII, p. 71, No. 83; 1350: Kristó *et al.* 1990-2015, XXXIV, p. 96, No. 120; 1357: Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, Budapest, Q szekció, Diplomatikai Levéltár, 4913.

<sup>35</sup> Eg. 1358: Kristó *et al.* 1990-2015, XLII, p. 60, No. 95; 1362: Kristó *et al.* 1990-2015, XLVI, p. 41, No. 52; 1366: Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, Budapest, Q szekció, Diplomatikai Levéltár 87403.

them for his own purposes<sup>36</sup>. The source refers to the litigation only, thus the plan of constructing a chapel in the honor of Saint Dorothy must have been born earlier. The urban charters of that period are sparse, although, a charter from 1319, referring to Servatius as parish priest of Sopron, may serve as evidence<sup>37</sup>. Unfortunately, no other data survived, but since the 1354 litigation refers to a long-lasting problem with parish priest Herric, it is justifiable to suggest that Servatius made his testament between 1319 and c. 1350. The litigation case proves that Saint Dorothy had a cult in Sopron, although, it could not have been very intensive, because the chapel has not been dedicated to her in the following decades<sup>38</sup>. However, a side-altar must have been dedicated to her honor in the Saint Michael Parish Church, because a benefice house is mentioned in the sources<sup>39</sup>. The feast of Saint Dorothy appears in a missal, copied by Stephan Golso, priest of Sopron, in 1363, which highlights the local relevance of Saint Dorothy<sup>40</sup>.

From the same diocese (Győr), an altar was dedicated to Saint Dorothy in the Saint Michael chapter in Vasvár in the course of the fourteenth century. The first mention of the altar comes from 1383 when Francis of Niczky, son of John, donated a possession to the chapter of Vasvár for daily masses at the altar of Saint Dorothy for his salvation<sup>41</sup>. In the same region, in Mártonhely (today Martjanci, Slovenia), Saint Dorothy is represented among virgin martyrs on the frescoes of Johannes Aquilla from the late fourteenth century<sup>42</sup>. In Nyitrakoros (Krušovce, today Slovakia) a medieval mural painting of Saint Dorothy was discovered in 2014. The fourteenth-century mural paintings on the vault represent Saint Dorothy and Saint Stanislaus<sup>43</sup>. Dorothy was usually represented with other virgin martyrs, such as in the fourteenth-century murals of Ludrova (Ludrová, Slovakia), where Saint Dorothy was depicted with Saint Barbara and five wise and five foolish virgins<sup>44</sup>. Or on the mid-fourteenth-century frescoes of Nagyócsa (today Očová, Slovakia) with Virgin Mary and Saint Katherine<sup>45</sup>. Saint Stanislaus was rarely depicted in medieval Hungary; thus, this representation may suggest connections with Poland.

The first known altar dedicated to Dorothy appeared in Pécs (Baranya County) in 1355. If the cult of Saint Dorothy originated from Silesia or Germany, how can we explain that the first altar appeared in Southern Hungary? For

<sup>36</sup> Kristó *et al.* 1990-2015, XXXVIII, p. 253, No. 316; Házi 1921, pp. 102-104.

<sup>37</sup> Nagy I. 1889, p. 83.

<sup>38</sup> Házi 1939, p. 234. There was an altar, dedicated to Saint Dorothy in the early modern period. See: Bedy 1938, p. 435.

<sup>39</sup> Jankó *et al.* 2010, p. 23.

<sup>40</sup> Házi 1939, pp. 328-330; Radó, Mezey 1973, p. 140.

<sup>41</sup> Kóta 1997, pp. 68, 75.

<sup>42</sup> Radocsay 1977, p. 151.

<sup>43</sup> Ilkó 2016, pp. 2-8.

<sup>44</sup> Radocsay 1954, p. 243.

<sup>45</sup> Dvořáková *et al.* 1978, p. 128. However, I cannot see the attribute of Dorothy.

the answer, I examine the circumstances of the foundation of the altar. Bishop Nicholas of Neszmély (or Poroszló) founded a chapel dedicated to Virgin Mary, later called “gilded chapel” (*deaurata*), in the mid-fourteenth century. It was built northwest of the cathedral of Pécs. In 1355 Nicholas reported to the pope that he founded a chapel with eight altars and he asked indulgence for one hundred days for the visitors of the chapel<sup>46</sup>. It was later Nicholas’s burial place; thus, the chapel and its altars can be seen to reflect his religiosity. The altars were dedicated to Saint Stephen, Saint Ladislaus, Saint Emeric, Saint Martin, Saint Livinus, Saint Elizabeth, Saint Dorothy, and Mary Magdalene<sup>47</sup>. From this list Saint Dorothy and Saint Livinus are very interesting. A fifteenth-century source, the Missal of Pécs, recounts that Bishop Nicholas brought the relic: the history, the legend and the complete mass of Livinus from the Benedictine Saint Bavo Abbey of Ghent<sup>48</sup>. The motivation behind the Saint Dorothy altar could be different and may lie in the Silesian origin of Nicholas<sup>49</sup>. This also corresponds to the suggestion that the possible origins of the cult was in Silesia. Notably, there was an Augustinian monastery at Pécs, founded at the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth century, without any connection to the cult of Dorothy<sup>50</sup>.

Interestingly, there are two other pieces of evidence for the late fourteenth-century cult of Saint Dorothy in Baranya County. In 1377, a certain Nicholas of Volfry, son of Lawrence, asked permission for the foundation of a chapel in the honor of Saint Dorothy in Asszonyfalva. The archbishop of Kalocsa gave permission for a *capellam seu oratorium absque cimiterio*<sup>51</sup>. The information about this chapel and the founder is scarce, recent researches explored that the family derived from Hont county, which is located to the northern part of Hungary<sup>52</sup>. The other evidence for Dorothy’s cult is a mural painting from the Church of Saint Stephen in Mecseknádasd. The paintings of church, which in the Middle Ages was dedicated to St Ladislaus, survived in a fragmentary state. Only few pictures are identifiable: Christ, John the Baptist and Saint Dorothy with a child. In the picture, there is a female figure with a basket, and a kneeling child (Jesus), representing a scene of Dorothy’s legend, when she sent roses and apples to Theophilus. Dorothy is represented with a crown decorated with Angevin lilies, thus the mural paintings are likely to have been made in the last quarter of the fourteenth century<sup>53</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> Bossányi 1916, II, pp. 194, 295-296.

<sup>47</sup> Koszta 2015, pp. 163-164.

<sup>48</sup> *Missale secundum morem* 1499, p. ccxx.

<sup>49</sup> Wertner 1911, pp. 33-35.

<sup>50</sup> Koszta 2015, pp. 126-130.

<sup>51</sup> Nagy I. *et al.* 1878, p. 15.

<sup>52</sup> Haraszti Szabó 2017, pp. 323-346.

<sup>53</sup> Hokkyné Sallay 1974, pp. 203-206.

Surviving sources suggest that the cult of Dorothy probably appeared in the diocese of Várad (today Oradea, Romania) in the mid-fourteenth century. The *Statutes of Várad* recounts that two altars were dedicated to Dorothy at that time. The source, completed in 1374, provides an insight into the religiosity of the fourteenth-century town. The first Saint Dorothy altar mentioned in the source was not exclusively dedicated to her but to two virgin martyrs: Saint Dorothy and Saint Margaret of Antioch. The *Statutes* also mention the founder of the altar, John of Puzsér, who was a canon (*per Johannem canonicum dictum Puser*)<sup>54</sup>. Unfortunately, this is the only surviving source that refers to him. The other altar was exclusively dedicated to Saint Dorothy, thanks to Bishop Demeter of Meszes (1345-1372), who offered a donation for the construction<sup>55</sup>. The dates of the foundations are problematic, because the *Statutes* does not provide the dates. However, a charter recounts that a certain Nicolaus was the director of the Saint Dorothy Altar of Várad in 1369<sup>56</sup>. Since it is improbable that a third altar was dedicated to Dorothy within a relatively short period, I suggest that one of the above-mentioned altars had already existed in 1369. Although the altar, founded by John was dedicated also to Saint Margaret, the text of the *Statutes* implies (*pro [...] construendo*) that the altar of Demeter of Meszes had not been executed by the time of the finishing of the *Statutes*. Emeric, the canon of Várad finished the *Statutes* in the end of 1374 (between October 31 and December 30), thus it seems, that the 1369 data refers to the dual altar of Saint Dorothy and Saint Margaret<sup>57</sup>. It is likely that the altar dedicated to both saints became known only by the name of Dorothy because Saint Margaret was less popular at that time in Várad. In contrast, Vince Bunyitay supposes that after Bishop Demeter's foundation of the other altar of Saint Dorothy, the "twin-altar" was known only by the name of Margaret<sup>58</sup>. The extant list of feasts in synodical decrees, albeit from 1524, testifies to the importance of the feast of Saint Dorothy in Várad (which was a bishopric center), because compared it to the synodical decrees of Esztergom (the archbishopric center)<sup>59</sup>, it reveals that the feast of Saint Dorothy was celebrated only in Várad with a holiday<sup>60</sup>. As a mural painting testifies, the cult of Saint Dorothy reached the easternmost regions of the Carpathian basin as early as the fourteenth century. The panels of the chancel in Almakerék (today Mălâncrav, in Romania; German: Malmkrog or Malemkref) picture virgin martyrs: Saint Christina (or Macra), Dorothy,

<sup>54</sup> Bunyitay 1886, p. 74.

<sup>55</sup> Ivi, p. 75.

<sup>56</sup> Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, Budapest, Q szekció, Diplomatikai Levéltár, 36, 825.

<sup>57</sup> Solymosi 1992, p. 137.

<sup>58</sup> Bunyitay 1886, p. 75, n. 2.

<sup>59</sup> Solymosi 1998, pp. 88-95.

<sup>60</sup> Jaczkó 2014, pp. 230-234.

Ursula, Katherine, Clare (?), Margaret, Barbara, Virgin Mary, Luce Agatha, and Virgin Mary with Cloak<sup>61</sup>.

The last four pieces of written evidence from the fourteenth century, indulgence notes, are even more reticent. In the first case, indulgences were issued to the nuns of Veszprémvölgy in 1386, mentioning the feast of Saint Dorothy<sup>62</sup>. The second indulgence is from 1397, which Pope Boniface granted to those who contributed to and visited the renovation of the Saint Dorothy chapel in Jászó (Jossau in German, today Jasov, Slovakia)<sup>63</sup>. It is not known when the chapel was built or who the founder was, but it must have been built earlier than the aforementioned date, because the document was about the reconstruction of the chapel. Another indulgence recounts the chapel of Saint Katherine and Dorothy in Csepreg (see later). The fourth indulgence provides information about the existence of the Saint Dorothy church of Alcnó (today part of Szepestapolca / Szepes-Teplicz / Zeplitz / Spišská Teplica, Slovakia), which was probably built in the fourteenth century<sup>64</sup>. Alcnó is a small village in Szepesség, where the cult of Saint Dorothy was apparently more intense in the following centuries, thus I will explore it in the following.

The cult of Saint Dorothy in Szepesség is highly relevant here because she seems to have been extraordinary popular in this region. Szepesség is the name of the region which is in Szepes County, in north-east Hungary. The territory became an independent county in the second half of the twelfth century<sup>65</sup>. Beside the Hungarians, numerous German population came to this territory from the twelfth century, and Slavs were also lived there. Mostly, the presence of Germans defined the characteristic of culture and religion<sup>66</sup>. Slovakian art historian Dušan Buran's study provides the main baselines for the following discussion on the cult of Saint Dorothy in Szepesség<sup>67</sup>.

It is not known when the cult reached this region, although the dating of the charters contains some relevant information. The first charter issued by the Chapter of Szepes and dated by the feast of Saint Dorothy is from in 1386<sup>68</sup>. According to Buran, Dorothy was the most frequently recorded name in fourteenth-century Szepesség<sup>69</sup>. Unfortunately, however, the surviving data does not allow drawing informed conclusions regarding the frequency of the name in this period and area. In this vein, it is notable that Buran's suggestion is based on three records of the name Dorothy, all from the early fifteenth century.

<sup>61</sup> Radocsay 1954, p. 14.

<sup>62</sup> Süttő 2000, pp. 142-148.

<sup>63</sup> Mályusz *et al.* 1951-2017, I, p. 304, No. 2801; Spilka 1943, p. 11.

<sup>64</sup> Ivi, pp. 595-596, No. 5407; Hudák 1984, p. 299.

<sup>65</sup> Zsoldos 2001, pp. 19-31. More about the Szepesség: Homza, Sroka 2009.

<sup>66</sup> Kordé 1994, pp. 618-619.

<sup>67</sup> Buran 2002, pp. 84-86.

<sup>68</sup> Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, Budapest, U szekció, Diplomatikai Fényképgyűjtemény, 274, 392.

<sup>69</sup> Buran also mentions 1462, which is not discussed here, Buran 2002, p. 84.

In addition to the above-mentioned evidence for the spread of the cult, a Church of Saint Dorothy certifiably stood in Alcnó (today part of Spišská Teplica, Slovakia) in 1398<sup>70</sup>. As noted above, the church was mentioned in an indulgence, which implies that it had already existed in the fourteenth century. According to Jan Hudák, it was a fourteenth-century Gothic church<sup>71</sup>. Her *imago* can be found on the mid-fourteenth-century mural situated on the northern pillar of the arch in the church of Podolin (today Podolíneč, Slovakia; German: Pudlein; Polish: Podoliniec)<sup>72</sup>. By the first half of the fifteenth century, she must have been very popular, because an extensive fresco cycle depicted her legend in Lőcse and perhaps another in Jekelfalva (today Jaklovce, Slovakia; German: Jeckelsdorf). The identification of the protagonist of the mural paintings of Jekelfalva is problematic. Sándor Bálint identified the figure as Saint Dorothy<sup>73</sup>, despite the fact that in his cited source, Dénes Radocsay, explicitly stated that the identification of the saint had been disputed, and the frescoes had been demolished by his time<sup>74</sup>. Nineteenth-century art historians identified the saint as either Saint Dorothy, or Saint Barbara or Saint Katherine<sup>75</sup>. The description of these scenes is also too general to identify the saint<sup>76</sup>.

An extensive fresco cycle represents the life of Saint Dorothy in the Church of Saint James in Lőcse highlights the importance of Dorothy's cult in Szepesség<sup>77</sup>. The church was presumably built in the mid-fourteenth century<sup>78</sup>. The frescos depicting Saint Dorothy's legend were made in the late fourteenth or rather in the early fifteenth century<sup>79</sup> and located to the northern aisle. The cycle consists of twenty scenes which makes it the most extensive depiction of the legend of Dorothy in the Middle Ages. Buran argued that the legend of Saint Dorothy is

<sup>70</sup> Mályusz *et al.* 1951-2017, I, pp. 595-596, No. 5407.

<sup>71</sup> Hudák 1984, p. 299. Buran also included two other churches from present day Slovakia, but these churches were probably founded in the seventeenth century and are thus irrelevant for the present article, Buran 2002, p. 84.

<sup>72</sup> Radocsay 1954, p. 197.

<sup>73</sup> Bálint 1998, p. 229.

<sup>74</sup> Radocsay 1954, pp. 150-151.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibidem*. The representations of Jekelfalva were demolished in the nineteenth century, only photos and fragments remained about the frescoes (Togner, Plekanec 2012, p. 353). These pictures were kept in the National Committee of Monuments (later named as National Office of Cultural Heritage of Hungary, and more recently as Forster Center) which was discontinued. Because of the reorganization of the Hungarian cultural heritage management, these pictures are unavailable at the moment. <<http://www.koh.hu/gyujtemenyek-magyar-epiteszeti-muzeum/fototar/657>>, 05.06.2018.

<sup>76</sup> 1. A virgin martyr before a king; 2. Beheading of the saint; 3. The soul of the saint received in heaven. Gerecze 1905, pp. 379-380.

<sup>77</sup> Radocsay 1954, pp. 164-165; Dvořáková *et al.* 1978, pp. 117-118.

<sup>78</sup> Marosi, Beke 1987, p. 315; Hudák 1984, p. 125.

<sup>79</sup> Mária Prokopp claimed that the frescoes were made in the late fourteenth century (Prokopp, Méry 2009, p. 79) while Buran argues that the church was decorated with the scenes of the legend of Dorothy in the early fifteenth century (Buran 2002, p. 70). The latter is the accepted date (Gerát 2013, p. 240).

uncommon, because her cult spread only from the fourteenth century, when most of the churches had already been decorated<sup>80</sup>. The weakness of this explanation is that many of the churches were decorated or re-decorated during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, thus the reason behind the absence of these frescoes can be explained by other facts.

The cycle relates to the two Christological cycles, *The Seven Acts of Mercy* and *The Seven Deadly Sins* which were depicted on the northern wall of the church. The twenty scenes are divided into two rows. The top row goes from right to left, the lower row from left to right. The first scene (1) shows how the emperor persecutes Saint Dorothy's father, Dorus, because he despises idols. Then (2) Dorus flees to Cappadocia with his family, where (3) Saint Dorothy was born. Dorus settled in Caesarea with his wife, and their two daughters, Christa and Callista, and their third daughter was born there. (4) An unnamed holy bishop baptizes Saint Dorothy in the circle of her family. (5) Fabricius, the procurator, fell in love with Dorothy and proposed marriage but Dorothy rejected him. Dorothy admitted that she was the bride of Jesus Christ, which made Fabricius angry. The picture depicts the wrath of Fabricius. The older and younger men on either side of Dorothy are servants bringing Dorothy to the site of her torture and are not found in the *Legenda Aurea*. They might have been the invention of the painter or commissioner, in order to lead the viewer to the next scene, which (6) is the beginning of the torture of Dorothy. She was put into a cauldron filled with hot oil. The people around her are wearing Phrygian hats to suggest that they were Pagans. (7) The imprisonment of Dorothy. According to the legend she spent nine days in prison without any food or drink. The angels of God nourished her, thus by the end of the ninth day, she became more beautiful than ever. The visit of the angels is not depicted on the mural paintings of Lőcse. (8) Dorothy in front of Fabricius, who threatens her with torture, if she refuses to worship pagan Gods. (9) Dorothy is tortured and hanged on a wooden construction. Her flesh is being torn by iron hooks, she is flogged, and a burning stake was put to her breast. (10) Christ visited Dorothy. This scene is missing from the official version of *Legenda Aurea*. However, depicting Christ at this point of the legend has reason, because on the following morning, after the torture, Dorothy woke up unharmed. (11) Dorothy destroyed the idols. This is the first picture of the lower row. Interestingly, this scene in the text of the *Legenda Aurea* followed the debate of Dorothy and Fabricius. Angels appeared and with their help, Dorothy destroyed the idols and killed the evils. (12) Fabricius sat on a wooden throne, two of his pagan servants brought the older sisters of Saint Dorothy, Christa and Callista. (13) The conversion of the sisters of Saint Dorothy. Dorothy read from a book (Bible) for her sisters, and they found again their Christian faith. They were enclosed to prison. (14) Saint Dorothy was kneeling while two pagan men torture her. This scene also

<sup>80</sup> Buran 2002, p. 71.

emphasizes her similarity to Christ. (15) Because of the conversion of Christa and Callista, they were also sentenced to death. They were put to a bonfire and two pagans tortured them. (16) Dorothy was closed to the prison again. (17) Dorothy was brought to Fabricius. According to Buran two servants stand next to Dorothy. I suppose, one of them (the one on the right side) is Theophilus, because he mocked at Dorothy in this scene of the legend. (18) On the next scene, the death of Dorothy is depicted. She was beheaded, finally. On the right side of the picture, an angel and a child were represented. The child holds a basket with apples and roses. (19) The next scene represents Theophilus as a child brought him apples and roses from the Paradise, as Saint Dorothy had promised to him. (20) The last depiction represents the burial of Saint Dorothy. She was surrounded by angels. This scene is missing from the legend. I think it was borrowed from the legend of Saint Katherine, because the author of Saint Katherine's legend emphasized the burial of the saint.

The church of Saint James originally had a door in the wall in front of the frescoes which served as entrance for illustrious burghers, thus the first glimpse of the entrants caught the *Life* of Saint Dorothy. The pictorial representation of the legend in Lőcse differs from the texts at several points. The order of some of the scenes was changed or extra scenes were added to the written version. Buran suggests that the order of the scenes derived from plays where it was changed so as to facilitate performance. However, he does not identify a play in which the order of the scenes corresponds to that in Lőcse<sup>81</sup>. There are only two other pictorial cycles of the legend of Saint Dorothy on murals which can be compared to the representations of Lőcse: the frescoes of the cloister of Neustift (today in Italy) represent the *Life* of Saint Dorothy in six scenes, whereas the frescoes of Rakovník (Czech) recount the legend in eight scenes. Both cycles were made around 1400. The main difference between these frescoes and those in Lőcse is that the latter emphasizes the Christological features of the scenes, while the other two do not<sup>82</sup>. Due to the lack of the sources the commissioner remains unknown. Buran supposes that he may have been a wealthy burgher of the town. Moreover, the Christological cycles together with the cycle of Dorothy could have been connected to the hospital of the town, because they were close to the sacristy, which served as a leper's chapel in that period<sup>83</sup>. (On the connection between the hospitals and Dorothy's cult, see later.)

As it was mentioned above, the earlier Hungarian literature assumed, that the cult of Saint Dorothy was brought by Silesian Augustinians to the country. Although the Augustinian impact can be rejected, the Silesian origin is plausible. The present research showed, that out of the five altars, three chapels and one church only one of the founders is relatively well-known. He was Nicholas of

<sup>81</sup> Buran 2002, p. 80.

<sup>82</sup> Buran 2002, pp. 83-84.

<sup>83</sup> Togner, Plekanec 2012, p. 151.

Neszmély who might have promoted the cult of Saint Dorothy because of his own Silesian origin. Incidentally, the mural painting of Nyitrakoros also point towards Silesian origin. Interestingly, the earliest mention of the name Dorothy also comes from Nyitra County, presumably not coincidentally.

The mid-fourteenth century political situation of Hungary also straighten the hypothesis that the cult of Saint Dorothy did arrive from Silesia. King Charles of Hungary married Elizabeth Piast, the daughter of Władysław the Short, prince (later king) of Poland, in 1320<sup>84</sup>. She arrived with a Polish, mainly Silesian retinue<sup>85</sup>. At that time, the Polish influence manifested primarily in church-affairs: for example, Bolesław, a relative of Elizabeth became the archbishop of Esztergom one year after the coronation of the queen<sup>86</sup>. In 1328, Bolesław's brother, Miesko, became the bishop of Nyitra, later the bishop of Veszprém<sup>87</sup>. Thus, one possible way of the arrival of Dorothy's cult was via clerics from Silesia. As demonstrated above, Saint Dorothy was popular in the settlements of Szepesség, a region mostly populated by Germans. Most of the Germans of Hungary had Saxon origin, thus they were most often called Saxons in the sources. The Germans, who lived in Szepesség were called Zipsers<sup>88</sup>. Beside the settlements of Szepesség, Almakerék was also a Saxon village in the called Saxon Land in Transylvania. The Silesian origin of and the German impact on the cult do not exclude each other. Breslau was also a partly German. The recent literature argues, that the cult of Saint Dorothy was supported by Germans in Breslau. The Saint Dorothy monastery in Breslau was originally dedicated to Saint Stanislaus, Saint Wenceslas and Saint Dorothy. The triple dedication reflects to three nations: Saint Stanislaus symbolized the Polish, Saint Wenceslas the Czech and Saint Dorothy the Germans<sup>89</sup>. Thus, I believe, the cult must have been connected to the Germans in Hungary as well. Besides the individual success of Dorothy as a venerated saint, the other reasons behind the spread of her cult can be sought in the changes of the cult of saints in general.

From the late fourteenth century several altars and chapels were dedicated to Saint Dorothy's honor. An altar and a chapel were dedicated to her in Gyulafehérvár (today Alba Iulia, Romania)<sup>90</sup>. She had altars in Győr<sup>91</sup>, Vác<sup>92</sup>, Nagyszombat (today Trnava, Slovakia; German: Tyrnau)<sup>93</sup>, Beregszász (today

<sup>84</sup> Szende 2007.

<sup>85</sup> Sroka 1994, p. 89.

<sup>86</sup> Szende 2007, p. 83.

<sup>87</sup> Sroka 1994, pp. 89-95.

<sup>88</sup> Kordé 1994, p. 619.

<sup>89</sup> Sobeczko 1993, p. 186; Zalewska-Lorkiewicz 1999; Łuzyniecka 1999.

<sup>90</sup> Entz 1958, p. 203. The chapel was mentioned in 1411 and 1439, Lukcsics 1931, p. 179.

<sup>91</sup> Mentioned in 1417: Mályusz *et al.* 1951-2017, V, p. 221, No. 696.

<sup>92</sup> Mentioned in 1420: C. Tóth 2016, p. 26.

<sup>93</sup> Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, Budapest, Q szekció, Diplomatikai Levéltár, 14, 212 «Dorothee virg. et mart., ac Cristoforus S. Elisabeth vidue altaris rectores in ecclesia Tyrnaviensi».

Берперове, Ukraine; German: Bergsaß)<sup>94</sup>, Arad (today Arad, Romania)<sup>95</sup>, Csanád (today Cenad, Romania)<sup>96</sup>, Eger<sup>97</sup> and Veszprém. The founders of these altars and the date of foundation are mostly unknown. However, a data refers to the founder of the altar in Veszprém. Nicholas, the archdeacon of Segesd founded an altar to the honor of Saint Katherine and Saint Dorothy around the 1430s. Later the altar was also dedicated to another virgin martyr, Saint Barbara<sup>98</sup>. It is not unique that an altar or was a chapel consecrated to more than one saint. A chapel in Nagyszeben (today Sibiu, Romania; German: Hermannstadt) was consecrated to fourteen saints (including Saint Dorothy) next to Virgin Mary<sup>99</sup>.

Although, the exact dates of the foundations of the altars are not known, the growth of the popularity of Dorothy's cult in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries is certain. Beside the altars, artistic representations were produced in the first decades of the fifteenth century. Two recently restored murals depict the *imago* or a scene of the legend of Dorothy. The frescoes of the church of Torna (Turňa nad Bodvou, today Slovakia; German: Tornau) were painted in the first decades of the fifteenth century. The commissioner, most probably, was Paul Özdögei Besenyő who had been the ban of Croatia and Slavonia. The lower zone of the southern wall of the chancel was decorated with the figures of female saints: Saint Margaret of Antioch with a dragon and a cross, Saint Christina with an arrow in her breast, Saint Ursula with an arrow, Saint Ludmila with a cluster of grapes and Saint Dorothy with a basket full of roses. This decoration is fascinating because the virgin martyrs in the lower zone of the chancel (instead of the Apostles) are rarely depicted<sup>100</sup>. The other fresco is in the church of Baktalórántháza which was built after 1340, and most probably decorated in the first third of the fourteenth century. Possibly, the commissioner was Gregory of Bakta<sup>101</sup>. On the northern part of the arch, one scene of the Saint Dorothy's legend appears. On the fresco she holds a basket, in front of her there is a tower in which a man stands. Below the tower there stands a small figure, who is Jesus Christ. The mural depicts the scene when Jesus visits Theophilus, who did not believe in Paradise<sup>102</sup>. The martyrdom of Saint Dorothy and the miracle she performed right after is the source of her

<sup>94</sup> *A szatmári püspöki egyházmegye* 1904, p. 218.

<sup>95</sup> 1510: Gálfi 2011, p. 63, n. 180.

<sup>96</sup> Mentioned in 1419: G. Tóth 2014, p. 153.

<sup>97</sup> Mentioned in 1468: Nagy 2004, p. 166.

<sup>98</sup> Békefi 1913, p. 25; Magyar 1988, pp. 66-67. Most recently, Balázs Karlinszky wrote about the altars: Karlinszky 2017, pp. 64-84.

<sup>99</sup> Florea 2017, p. 49.

<sup>100</sup> Zs. Jékely, *A tornai plébániatemplom középkori falképeinek restaurálása*, <[http://oroksegfigyelo.blog.hu/2015/02/05/a\\_tornai\\_plebaniatemplom\\_kozepkori\\_falkepeinek\\_restauralasa](http://oroksegfigyelo.blog.hu/2015/02/05/a_tornai_plebaniatemplom_kozepkori_falkepeinek_restauralasa)>, 28.04.2018. The shorter English version of this blog entry can be found here: <<https://jekely.blogspot.hu/2014/12/restoration-of-wall-paintings-of-torna.html>>, 28.04.2018; Jékely 2013, pp. 51-52.

<sup>101</sup> Németh, Cabello 2013, p. 78.

<sup>102</sup> Gaylhoffer-Kovács 2013, pp. 90-91.

intercessory power, which is emphasized in her legend, that is she rescues from poverty and false accusation, moreover she promised the remission of sins. The representation of her miracle reflects that Saint Dorothy could have become popular thanks to her intercessory power.

The belief in her intercessory power could have resulted in the fact that hospitals were dedicated to her honor. The hospital of Csepreg was dedicated to Saint Katherine and Saint Dorothy in 1399<sup>103</sup>. The chapel of Saint Elizabeth Hospital in Csanád was dedicated to Saint Elizabeth, Saint Katherine and Saint Dorothy<sup>104</sup>. Ladislav, the bishop of Nándorfehérvár (today Београд (Beograd), Serbia) founded this institution in the first third of the fifteenth century<sup>105</sup>. According to Carmen Florea, a hospital in Segesvár (Sighișoara, Romania; German: Schäßburg) had a chapel dedicated to Saint Dorothy<sup>106</sup>, however I could not find it in the sources. The *patrocinia* of hospitals were not varied as much as the dedications of the churches. Most commonly, hospitals were dedicated either to Saint Elizabeth, or to the Holy Spirit or to Saint Anthony. Saint Anthony and the Holy Spirit were commonly chosen as patron saints because the Hospital Brothers of St. Anthony and the Hospitallers of the Holy Spirit were responsible for these institutions<sup>107</sup>. The Hospitallers of the Holy Spirit originally based in Santo Spirito in Sassia in Rome, which institution had an impact to the later foundations<sup>108</sup>. Saint Elizabeth of Hungary founded a hospital during her lifetime, which offered an example to follow for noble women. Choosing Saint Elizabeth as the patron saint of a hospital was very popular in medieval Europe<sup>109</sup>.

How can we explain that Saint Dorothy was also chosen as the patron saint of hospitals? Only few chapels have dedicated to her during the Middle Ages, but many of them were in hospitals. Why was she overrepresented in these institutions? To answer these questions, I will show the function of this type of institutions and compare it to Saint Dorothy's legend. Katalin Szende and Judit Majorossy summarized the aims of hospitals:

The main function of the hospitals was to shelter the poor and at the same time to provide religious assistance to cure their souls (and not their bodies). In those houses founded or run by priests, such assistance was evident, since the hospital had its own cleric for celebrating the masses (e.g. Pécs, Veszprém, Sopron, Eperjes, Pásztó, Olaszi, Váralja, Eger, Segesvár, Beregszász). In case of civic foundations, the founders or later the town as patron hired a priest or commissioned the nearby parish to exercise the religious tasks<sup>110</sup>.

<sup>103</sup> «[...] ecclesiam hospitalis pauperum in Schepreg, Jauriensis diocesis, in honore s. Katherine et Dorothee fundatam», Szende, Majorossy 2008, pp. 308.

<sup>104</sup> Kubinyi 1999, p. 264.

<sup>105</sup> C. Tóth 2016, p. 231.

<sup>106</sup> Florea 2017, p. 40, n. 8.

<sup>107</sup> Kubinyi 1999, pp. 260-267.

<sup>108</sup> Micciarelli 2013, pp. 565-580; Keyvanian 2015, p. 84.

<sup>109</sup> Gecser 2012, p. 46.

<sup>110</sup> Szende, Majorossy 2008, p. 301.

I argue that choosing Saint Dorothy as the patron saint of an institution (or its chapel) whose main function was to take care of the poor, was in connection with Saint Dorothy's promise before her death:

She prayed to Our Lord for all of those whom in honor and worship of Almighty God, did any kind of thing in remembrance of her passion, that it might be the cause of their salvation – especially from the *worldly shame of grievous poverty* [emphasized by me], also that they be delivered from shameful slander and loss of their name<sup>111</sup>.

The veneration of Saint Dorothy who promised to deliver from poverty those who were praying to her, in a poorhouse, is understandable. However, the joint veneration or depiction of Saint Dorothy and Saint Elizabeth can be approached from another point of view. Both Saint Elizabeth and Saint Dorothy were represented with a basket of roses<sup>112</sup>. However, the narratives of their legends are different, because in Saint Elizabeth's legend, the emphasis is on the transformation of food to roses, which saved her from lying<sup>113</sup>, while Saint Dorothy converted Theophilus by sending him roses and apples from Paradise. Maybe their similar iconography contributed to the common veneration in the case of Csanád<sup>114</sup>.

As we could see, Saint Dorothy's cult became popular rapidly in the course of fourteenth century. Her figure and feast were known before, *martyrologia* and *legendaria* kept her name and story, but her feast was not celebrated solemnly, and her life was not represented on altars and murals. It is not a unique phenomenon. Many other virgin martyrs' life was also rediscovered in that period, such as Saint Barbara or Saint Ursula. Why these saints were rediscovered in the fourteenth century? For the answer I analyze the general changes in the cult of saints.

Sainthood had two functions in the Middle Ages. Saints were both examples for proper Christian life, and heavenly intercessors. Although all saints possessed these two attributes, they did not have equal influence as intercessors<sup>115</sup>. Before the thirteenth century, the *Lives* of saints were mostly written for the clergy, and were tailored to the needs of nuns or monks, etc. Growing literacy from the thirteenth century resulted in broader audiences and the need of new versions of the legends that better suited the demands of laity. In this century the tone of the virgin martyrs' legends changed; as Karen A. Winstead summarized «[t]o begin with, they omitted long didactic and devotional passages and vividly depicted the confrontation between the saint and her adversary. In their legends,

<sup>111</sup> Jacobus de Voragine 2003, pp. 37-38.

<sup>112</sup> The iconography of Elizabeth: Kirschbaum, Bandmann 1968-1974, VI, pp. 133-140.

<sup>113</sup> Gecser 2013, pp. 149-171.

<sup>114</sup> For example, Saint Dorothy was represented with Saint Elizabeth, and Virgin Mary on the frescoes of Erdőszentgyörgy (today Sângeorgiu de Pădure, Romania; German: Sankt Georgen auf der Heide), Entz 1996, p. 96.

<sup>115</sup> Duffy 1990, pp. 175-196.

both the heroine and the villain became more aggressive than they had been in the past»<sup>116</sup>.

Another interesting, yet important change was the growing importance of images and sermons. Until the fourteenth century, the miracles usually took place next to the shrine or the relic of the saint. From the fourteenth century, the saints' miraculous power became more universal, and less connected to locations. Images partly took over the role of relics, and miracles could take place through images<sup>117</sup>. From the end of the twelfth century onwards, "lay saints" were increasingly popular and the legends of such saints were complemented with the story of their conversion and birth. «The saints re-descended – so to say – from heaven to earth»<sup>118</sup>. However, this did not allow ordinary people to reach sainthood. The saints' increasingly human character did not lessen their intercessory power, in fact, common people associated greater miraculous power to them<sup>119</sup>.

The significance of a saint's intercession or auxiliary power increased from the fourteenth century<sup>120</sup>. The increasing interest in the intercession resulted in the worship of a special type of saint, the so-called holy helpers<sup>121</sup>. The holy helpers were saints whose individual power of intercession was believed to be particularly effective against various diseases. They «[...] are lesser saints: neither apostles, nor evangelists, but belonging to more populous categories, the rank and file of the heavenly court, such as martyrs and confessors»<sup>122</sup>. These fourteen holy helpers as a collective could protect against almost anything. There were sub-groups among holy helpers: bishop saints, knight-saints and virgin martyrs. The origin of their cult is unknown, but the earliest traces of their veneration lead back to early fourteenth-century Southern Germany<sup>123</sup>. Numerous visual representations<sup>124</sup>, as well as written sources testify that from the fourteenth century Saint Katherine, Saint Margaret, Saint Barbara and Saint Dorothy were frequently venerated together as a distinct group for their collective powers, called *virgines capitales* in Central Europe and Germany. Their cult was formed as an offshoot of the Fourteen Holy Helper. Originally only Saint Barbara, Saint Katherine and Saint Margaret were the three female members of the group, Saint Dorothy was added to them during the fifteenth

<sup>116</sup> Winstead 1989/1990, pp. 229-238.

<sup>117</sup> Vauchez 2005, pp. 444-453.

<sup>118</sup> Vauchez 1991, p. 165.

<sup>119</sup> Vauchez 2005, pp. 167-172.

<sup>120</sup> Gecser 2016, p. 199.

<sup>121</sup> The most common members of the group are: Barbara, Katherine, Margaret, Denis, Erasmus, Blaise, George, Achatius, Eustace, Christopher, Giles, Cyriac, Pantaleon and Vitus. About the fourteen Holy Helpers, see: Dünninger 1972, pp. 336-346; Guth 1995-2009, pp. 305-324; Gecser 2016, pp. 174-201.

<sup>122</sup> Pötzl 2000; Gecser 2016.

<sup>123</sup> Weed 2010, p. 1069.

<sup>124</sup> Marosi, Beke 1987, p. 212.

century. The three or four virgins were commonly represented separately from the Fourteen Holy Helpers grouped with Virgin Mary or with Virgin and Child<sup>125</sup>.

The cult of the virgin martyrs spread with the cult of Virgin Mary, because of they were commonly represented together. From the fourteenth century, with spread of the so-called *Viereraltar*, the virgin martyrs became more and more popular. In these representations, Mary is in the center of the shrine, accompanied by virgin martyrs: *virgo inter virgines*. Usually, she was surrounded by the *virgines capitales*. The cult of Virgin Mary was prominent in medieval Christianity, thus her closeness to these saints had an impact to their popularity. Perhaps, the earliest Hungarian examples of this are on the altarpiece in Busóc (today Bušovce, Slovakia; German: Bauschendorf) and Zsiga (today Žehra, Slovakia; German: Schigra)<sup>126</sup>, both were made in the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth century<sup>127</sup>. This arrangement of the saints, that is, the closeness of the virgins to the Virgin, reflects that they belong to Virgin Mary's inner circle, they are in close relationship, which makes them effective intercessors<sup>128</sup>. Stanley E. Weed explains the representation of the *virgines capitales* with Saint Anna, Virgin Mary and the events from the life of Christ, arguing that they were the brides of Christ which made them extended family members of the holy family<sup>129</sup>.

It is hard to draw conclusions regarding to the origin of the cult in Hungary from these fragmented sources. However, it is clear that the cult of Saint Dorothy emerged in Hungary in the first half of the fourteenth century, but the veneration remained relatively scarce. The dating of the charters suggests that Saint Dorothy became popular only from 1360s onwards. Earlier literature claimed that the cult was imported to Hungary from Breslau by Augustinians, however, this was believed because of the misinterpretation of sources. Probably Dorothy's cult can be connected to clerics from Poland, who arrived in the entourage of Queen Elizabeth Piast, wife of Charles I. Other traces suggest German origins, since her cult was mostly popular in the German-speaking territories of Hungary. The two origins do not exclude each other, because the Polish towns were also frequently populated by Germans. Dorothy's veneration centered in Szepesség in Hungary, where an extensive fresco cycle commemorates her suffering. Interestingly Saint Dorothy's veneration can be connected to the hospitals in Hungary. There are only few chapels which were dedicated to this saint, but some of them were hospitals. The reason behind this might have been her promise before her death. Moreover, her similar iconography to Saint Elisabeth could also contribute to this phenomenon. To conclude my paper,

<sup>125</sup> Weed 2010, pp. 1065-1091.

<sup>126</sup> However, here only Barbara and Dorothy can be identified, Radocsay 1967, p. 225.

<sup>127</sup> Radocsay 1967, p. 158.

<sup>128</sup> Weed 2010, p. 1084.

<sup>129</sup> Ivi, p. 1081.

the cult of virgin martyrs re-emerged in the twelfth century in parallel with the growing importance of women but strengthen in the fourteenth century. They were known before: their feasts and legends survived the centuries. However, the general changes in the cult of saints facilitated the spread of their cult. The growing importance of images and sermons contributed to the spread of the old saints' cult, whose venerations were not connected to certain locations. The virgin martyrs were frequently represented together with Virgin Mary, their intimate relationship with the mother of Christ made them effective intercessors which also subsidized to their popularity.

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