

Účtovné registre Bratislavskej kapituly 1417–1529 [Account registers of the chapter of Bratislava, 1417–1529]. By Rastislav Luz. Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave, 2018. 288 pp.

Historians usually approach the history of the medieval ecclesiastic chapters by using the prosopography, focusing on the personnel of the chapter, and drawing on the methods used in archontology. These methods and the findings they yield are no doubt valuable. However, to understand the ecclesiastic chapters entirely, historians should also study their economic and administrative systems. In this sense, the sourcebook edited by Rastislav Luz constitutes a significant contribution to the secondary literature. A young Slovak archivist and a doctoral student at the Comenius University of Bratislava, Luz has published the transcribed account registers of the medieval chapter of Bratislava. It was published as a first book in the framework of the series *Documenta Posoniensia*. As Luz explains in one of the chapters of the book, the transcription of these sources is not a simple task. Since the registers were subsidiary documents which were usually disposed of immediately after they had fulfilled their purpose, this directly reflected on the way in which the canons fashioned them. They were thus written in the Gothic cursive script, which is difficult to read, and many abbreviations were used, though not uniformly. Even the way in which the registers were bound and folded makes them difficult to read. The book itself consists of two main parts. In the first part (pp.15–51), Luz deals with the chapter of Bratislava and its personnel. He also describes the fond of the chapter of Bratislava in the Slovak National Archive, where the sources he transcribed are kept. Furthermore, he gives a short paleographic and diplomatic analysis of the registers. To make the study of the accounts easier, he has included a chapter on the monetary system which appears in the registers. In the second part (pp.53–242), he presents the transcription of the thirty-three account registers. In the end, the edition includes an index of the names (pp.245–58), places (pp.259–68), items (pp.269–83), and items that appear in German (p.284). The chapter of Bratislava was a collegiate chapter. Its personnel ranged from 10 to 15 canons in the late Middle Ages (the fourteenth century to the sixteenth century). The specificity of the chapter's personnel was that two canons of the chapter were the rectors of the parish churches in Bratislava. Though the chapter was small, it owned large estates and had the right to collect different incomes, from census and tithes to tolls and parish fees. This led to the development of an elaborate administrative system which relied on written account registers for

more efficient administration. The chapter divided the incomes into communal, individual, and those belonging to the provost. The mention of the oldest register, which is not preserved, is from 1400. However, Luz presumes that the account registers had begun to be written earlier, around the second half of the fourteenth century, when the whole institution became more bureaucratized. The canon who supervised the incomes and expenses and wrote the registers was the dean. He had to present the accounts two times a year, on St. George's Day (April 24) and St. Michael's Day (September 29), after which the canons distributed the incomes among themselves. The thirty-three account registers which Luz has transcribed in this edition cover the period from 1417 to 1529. Luz put the registers chronologically, but they are not continuous, since not all of them were preserved. Luz endeavored to keep the original distribution of the text as much as possible. He also kept the Roman letters for the numbers and abbreviations for the currencies. The canons originally wrote all the registers on paper, and Luz was able to identify 24 different handwritings, indicating that they were written by 24 different people. The account registers list the incomes and expenses in the span of one or two years and the distribution of the incomes among the canons. The expenses could be both communal and individual. Those could be money for travel, transportation, collectors of the tithes, gifts, lunch, shows of hospitality, new clothes, etc. Since the registers are not uniform, some list all the elements and some only list the expenses. The most significant change noticeable in the inventory management is that from the second half of the fifteenth century, the dues were also paid in kind, not just in money. Accordingly, some of the inventories also list the inhabitants who gave the dues, while the earlier registers note only the amount of the due given for the whole settlement. All in all, historians can use the account registers transcribed by Luz with confidence in further historical analysis. To list just several possibilities: the everyday life of the canons, the social history of the chapter, the administrative and economic system of the chapter, the trends in economic production, environmental history, e.g. the system of dams and fishing on the estates of the chapter. Finally, this edition also makes possible comparative analyses of similar material from different European ecclesiastic chapters.

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