

DISPLAYS IN THE NATIONAL RELIC EXHIBITION AREA



LITTLE TREASURE CONTAINER

The exhibition presented the old print in the National Széchényi Library, translated by Pauline monk (Fráter) Lajos in 1627. The Little Treasure Container tells the story and miracles of the St. Mary of Czestochowa devotional picture. The *Black Madonna* is not only the „Queen” of Poles, but also the patron of Pauline monks. The exhibition also offers a selection of (Central) European images based on *Our Lady in Czestochowa*. Little is known about the Pauline monk Lajos Fráter. The rare book on display probably originates from a printing house in Krakow (RMK I 565). Czestochowa, the world-famous shrine, a historical and cultural centre in Poland, has close contacts with the towns and shrines of Lourdes, Fatima, Marizell and Loreto in the framework of the “Shrines of Europe” co-operation.

Czestochowa, the Polish national shrine of international significance, more precisely the Jasna Góra (Bright Mount) monastery located there, was founded in 1382 by Hungarian Pauline monks from Márianosztra. The Hungarian Pauline province was almost completely destroyed by the Turks but the monastery at Czestochowa gradually became the main centre of the Pauline Order. We know of pilgrimages to Czestochowa from as early as the 15th century.

The Paulines held the Virgin Mary in special reverence, dedicating most of their monasteries and churches to her and decorating their buildings with her images. The famous devotional image of Czestochowa, the icon of Mary, was donated to the monastery by Ladislas of Opulia, a relative of King Louis the Great, Palatine of Hungary, and later Governor of Poland. The Anjou lilies decorating the background of the icon indicate its royal origin. Over the centuries the icon acquired the status of a miracle-working devotional image and was given the name of *Regina Poloniae* (Queen of Poland).

The icon painted on linden wood probably came from the workshop of the Italian painter Simone Martini, which had contacts with the Anjous. In the image, Mary holds her son on her left arm as he extends one hand in blessing and holds the Book of Life in the other. The image is of the *Hodegetria*, the iconographic type portraying the Virgin Mary and the infant Jesus where the Virgin Mary gestures towards Jesus as the

source of Salvation. A copy of the icon popularly known as the Black Madonna, has been placed in almost all churches of the Pauline Order.

Hungarian printed Pauline works from the first decades of the 17th century are rare. The Reformation and the political and social conditions of the time did not favour the contemplative spirit of the Paulines. During those decades it was mainly the Polish brothers of the order who carried out literary activity; the Counter-Reformation activity of the Catholic Church, particularly of the Jesuits, produced more active and militant works.

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS OF THE EXHIBITION

The *Little Treasure Container* was on display from 25th March to the end of June 2008. The first visitors were the wives of the Polish and Hungarian presidents, Maria Kaczyńska and Erzsébet Sólyom. The *Little Treasure Container* exhibition was the library's contribution to the cultural program of the Polish Week. Polish Ambassador to Hungary Joanna Stempinska, honoured the exhibition with her presence on 15th April 2008.

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“MEMORY OF CRAFTS – RELICS OF GUILDS”

On 14th August 2008, the National Széchényi Library opened an exhibition dealing with Hungarian guilds' relics. The creators of the exhibition made no secret of their intention to contribute with it to the annual Celebration of Crafts, a national fair held in the Buda Castle every summer. Prints, manuscripts and objects recalling Hungarian guilds were displayed the National Relic Exhibition Area on the library's ground floor. The original plan was to close the event on 2nd November 2008, but partly because of the press interest, the exhibition was extended to 19th December.

The exhibits gave an insight into the history, operation and environment of 18th and 19th century guilds. The history of Hungarian guilds goes back to the early 14th century. Their burgeoning, however, took place



German charter of the young mason Jakob Georg Lok.
Engraving with contemporary painting. Size: 37 x 48 cm. Pest, 1822
(NSZL Collection of Posters and Small Prints, Céhl. 27/a)

in the 16th and 17th century country divided into three parts, especially in the northern and western counties and in the principality of Transylvania. In the 18th century, guilds are reorganized in the country liberated from the Turkish occupation. Parallel, in the 18th and 19th centuries, certain rigidity is witnessed in the guild system. The institution tends to be in the way of the separation of certain branches of industry and of the merger of others and also hinders mass production. Guilds' latitude is gradually more restricted by the central power of the monarch: the first move is that no new guilds are allowed to be established (1851), and later the institution as such is conclusively banned (1872).

The core material of the exhibition was constituted of original 18th-19th century certificates of mastership and charters of guilds. These prints are decorated with elegant painted or black and white sketches of towns. The German or Hungarian captions below the illustrations state by name how successfully each apprentice did his apprenticeship in his clearly identified trade under a guildsman whose identity is also specified. The "licence" complete with the guild's stamp and leader's autographs, served as a "passport" identifying the young craftsman setting out on his journey to gain professional experience. On returning from his study tour, often after years spent abroad, he became a

full-right member of the guild if guildsmen deemed his masterwork appropriate. This was testified by the certificate. Walking along the exhibition, a colourful variety of forgotten or dying out occupations was recalled. We admired the ornate charters and certificates of wainwrights, coopers, saddlers, boot makers, shoemakers, millers and butchers, bricklayers, stone-carvers, tailors and brush makers, iron-smiths and glassmakers, and finally gingerbread makers. The exceptionally beautiful rare prints of the exhibition are preserved by the NSZL Poster and Small Print Collection. The central site of the exhibition, the reliquary was occupied by the

Protocols of the Sopron Book Binding Guild. (OSZK Manuscript Collection, Fol. Germ, 1320). This masterwork in painted parchment binding was made by bookbinder Mihály Schrabcs Gottlieb in 1790. The other very rare and precious manuscript on display was *The Description of the Eperjes Button-Making Guild's Chest Escort* from 1655 (NSZL, Manuscript Collection Quart. Hung. 507). The exhibits were made more enjoyable by some tangible objects of guilds' everyday lives. Thanks to the Museum of Applied Arts, contemporary richly decorated chests, cups and jugs owned by guilds, as well as signs inviting people to guilds were display.

On this occasion, we wish to express our thanks to the contributors. The exhibition would not have been possible without the keen and dedicated work of colleagues in the Restoration Department, the Manuscript Collection, the Photo Laboratory and the Collection of Posters and Small Prints, and without support from the Special Collections Directorate.

Related to the exhibition, a homepage was designed, which is open to anyone interested.

(<http://www.oszk.hu/cehek/>)

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