

OUR PAULINE MONKS, THE WHITE FRIARS

– EXHIBITION IN THE MODERN HUNGARIAN GALLERY OF THE
JANUS PANNONIUS MUSEUM –



The NSZL and the Hungarian Pauline Order organized a monumental multimedia exhibition about the history of the order and history of civilization celebrating a joint anniversary: the 80th anniversary of the re-settlement of the Pauline monks and the 25th anniversary of the restart of the order. The location of the exhibition was the Modern Hungarian Gallery of the Janus Pannonius Museum in Pécs. This was the second, large exhibition organized by our specialist-colleagues outside of the premises of the library, and it is a continuation of the successful collaboration between the NSZL and the Hungarian Pauline Order, started in 2012.

The exhibition, presenting the almost 800 years long history of the only Hungarian-founded and still existing order, was opened on October 17, 2014, and it

will end in February, 2015 with a day-long conference on the history of the order, held in the Department of Social Studies of the University of Pécs. The spectacular assemblage, rich in creative solutions, presents several elements of the history of the Pauline monks – almost unknown by today to the public education and public knowledge – based on the results of the archeological, literary-historical and historical research from the last decades. The preliminary works had started in November 2013, and resulted in the collection of objects and documents owned by the Pauline monks, as well as original documents kept in public collections of the NSZL, the Hungarian National Museum, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the Hungarian National Archives and other institutions. Several paintings and other curiosities arrived „as guests” from Czestochowa, the center of the order today.

The exhibition revived the activities of the order organized by Blessed Eusebius of Esztergom after the Tatar invasions. Their activities determined the culture and the spiritual life of the Hungarians. We tried to capture the figure of Saint Paul the First Hermit, the name-giver, through the presentation of the one-time center of the order at Budaszentlőrinc. Here was also Matthias Hunyadi’s „place of pilgrimage”. The ruins can be seen in Budapest, next to the road to Budakeszi. Besides the few fragments which survived from the one-time monastery and are now kept in the Budapest History Museum, the exhibition gave an insight into the cult of Saint Paul the First Hermit, which was based on the body- and head-relic of the Hermit safeguarded here, thanks to King Louis the Great.

The „blooming period” of the second half of the 18. century was presented also in the exhibition, when the spirituality and the schools of the order, through Pauline poets like Pál Ányos, Imre Kreskay, Benedek Virág and Ferenc Verseghi, among others, had contributed to the spiritual prosperity.

Our exhibition placed special emphasis on the connection of the Pauline Order to Pécs, but also on the most important effect of the medieval and early modern age emanation of the order, the settlement in today’s Poland and Croatia. After the dissolution in



Part of the installation, with the digitized version of the Festetics Codex in the foreground



The cross from the pre-war fitting of the Rock Church. Our Pauline monks, the white friars, Janus Pannonius Museum, Modern Hungarian Gallery, Pécs

1786 – which concerned 312 monks – the Polish monks played an important role in sustaining the order, and in the recommencement of the Hungarian order 80 years ago. The Pauline monks had settled in Croatia,

too, in the Middle Ages, and they are not only part of the Croatian national identity, but they constitute an important link in the many-centuries-long Hungarian-Croatian coexistence.

The history of the Rock Church in the side of Gellért Hill was also an important part of the exhibition, including the 16 years following the return in 1934, and the recommencement after 1989. The exhibition paid tribute to those Pauline Monks, who were prosecuted by the communist regime, especially to Ferenc Vezér, who was executed in 1951, and laid to rest in an honorable way in 2012, in the presence of high ranking officials, in Pálósszentkút, the service place of the order from the plain.

Last time in the spring of 2012, an exhibition of the history of the order had opened in Márianosztra, with the support of the NSZL. This happened in a smaller place, and in more modest conditions, but in an important location, (in an annex of the one-time Pauline monastery that functions as a jail since the 1850's), and what is even more significant, it is a permanent exhibition. Strengthening the good relationship between the library and the order, the curators and assistants of the present exhibition were the same as the last time: curators Gábor Sarbak (HAS [Hungarian Academy of Sciences] – NSZL Res Libraria Hungariae Research Group) and Annamária Sudár (NSZL), the editor was Jolán Mann (NSZL) and Tamás Szentirmay (Hungarian Pauline Order), and the graphic designer was Máté Török.

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