

Pázmány Péter Catholic University  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

MAGDOLNA GILÁNYI  
MANUSCRIPT MEMOIRS OF BLACK FRIAR KORNÉL BŐLE  
Thesis of PhD Dissertation  
2021

Doctoral School of History The Head of the School: Dr. Sándor Őze  
DSc

Ecclesiastical History Workshop The Head of the Workshop: Dr.  
László Perendy PhD

Supervisors: Dr. Kornél Szovák DSc, Dr. Balázs Zágorkhidi Czigány  
PhD

## **I. Research background**

The figure of Kornél Bóle (1887–1961) – according to the target system of the ecclesiastical politics after 1945 – sank into oblivion during the decades of Kádár era, although he had an important role in the Hungarian Dominican Order, moreover, „he was an original figure, almost a star of the Hungarian Catholicism” (Zoltán Nyisztor). Despite the fact that he was well-known nationwide due to his preaching and missionary activities, and the number of his articles was almost ten thousand, only a couple of encyclopedia items refer to his life (often with incorrect data). His name is mentioned only in connection with the canonization of Margaret of Hungary, the Dominican nun and her legends in scientific work.

From the second half of the 19th century the centre of the Order in Rome promoted such historical work that applied modern approaches. The reform of the Dominican Order, the spread of the new ethos played an important role in its fulfilment. In Hungary its representatives were the members of a new monastic generation (Kornél Bóle, Móric Gerdenich, János Szalay and later Mátyás Fehér). However, the modern history of the Hungarian Dominican Order was only partly revealed in these historical studies. This period is presented in the history of the different orders. The majority of the contemporary publications mainly propagated the dominican order and did not do any detailed research in it. After the operating licences of the orders were withdrawn in 1950, the archives of the provinces and orders dispersed and the legacy of the monasteries was impossible to follow. After the change of regime the Dominican Monastery Foundation of

Vasvár took on collecting the remains of libraries and archives, and supported the research in the topic. In 2016, in the 800th anniversary of the establishment of the Order, a series, *The History of the Hungarian Dominican Order (Magyar domonkos rendtörténet)* was started and during a two-year period four (2017–2018) volumes were published. One of the volumes is the memoirs of Kornél Bőte titled *My Paths (Utaim)* (2018).

The collection of the above mentioned foundation significantly augmented when the approximately 80-box written inheritance of Kornél Bőte was relocated here from the Saint Martin's Church in Szombathely (former dominican church) (Chapter III). Personally, I took part in the basic cataloging of the inheritance which led to my dissertation topic. Since during the process numerous manuscript memoirs (records and diaries) were found, putting the emphasis on the biography was obvious for me.

Besides the Dominican Monastery Foundation of Vasvár I did research in the following institutions: Historical Archives of the State Security Services, Jesuit Archives and Order History Library, National Archives of Hungary in Vas County, Primate Archives, Archabbey Archives of Pannonhalma, Diocesan Archives of Szombathely.

## II. Methodology

One of the assumptions of my research was to make the concerned part of the written inheritance of Kornél Bóle (manuscript memoirs) searchable, in other words, it was necessary to catalog one part of the inheritance. It was a crucial aim to systemize the tangled manuscripts and reconstruct the first copies. If it was not possible due to the loss of the manuscript, the duplicates helped. Parallely, I revealed the relation of the manuscripts (Chapter IV. 2. 2–4.), as the time order of their formation had an important source critique message. Last but not least, it had a practical aim as well to make the manuscripts a searchable and clear system for the later research.

First of all, it was essential to find the work methods of Kornél Bóle (Chapter IV. 1. 1.), on which I was working parallely with the manuscript order. I elaborated the text of the manuscript in order to form categories. I put the emphasis on the biographical texts.

The memoir is a special type of me-documentary, that led to the compilation of the biography. His career path was complemented with the help of the Dominican Monastery Foundation and other archives and library contents. They play the counter-sources in my dissertation. The main text, or the narrative of the career path, is intermitted by excursus (Chapter V.) These “flash-forward” parts often mean the analysis of the manuscript (Chapters IV. 3., V. 2. 2., V. 2. 3., V. 2. 8.). They modulate the information of the ecclesiastical and monestrial history.

The dissertation follows the traditional elaboration methods of publications and other sources, so it applies a positive approach. I

complemented it with the tradition of postmodern history, for instance microhistory (Chapter V. 2. 7.).

To elaborate the topic I used the following source types of Dominican Monastery Foundation: the prebendal files, Dominican directory and publications, annuals. As for the archives of the collection: all the materials from the Dominican order in Budapest, monastic inheritance (Kornél Bőle, Péter Nusser, Zsigmond Dóczy), provincial documents. The work, operative and investigative reports of Historical Archives of the State Security Services provided complementary information after the years of 1945. As for his years spending in the Care Home of Pannonhalmi I found information with the help of Society of Jesus Order in Hungary, Archabbey Archives of Pannonhalma and Primate Archives.

### **III. Results**

The presentation of the monk and priest life and calling of Black Friar Kornél Bóle can be shown by remarkably various approaches. The period between the last third part of the 19th century and the 1960s provides a lot of information not only for the ecclesiastical and monestrial history but also the religious practice in the country. The moral significance of his path is, on one hand, the personal life starting in Várpalota and finishing with the canonization of Margaret of Hungary, the Dominican nun, and on the other hand, his significant career as a monk which was well-known internationally as well. The active years of the friar contributed to the prosperous period of the Dominican Order: he documented the establishment and activities of the province during the catholic renaissance, then after 1945 he did the same with the era of persecution and illegality.

The most valuable findings of the dissertation are the followings:

1. While I was arranging the primary source group, I also went over the organized inheritance, and from the tangled pieces I reconstructed the original manuscript. A detailed document was carried out which noted the missing parts, the state, the number of the copies and the appendix of the manuscript. The following categories were set during the systematic work: 1. From my life story, 2. Diary, 3. Minor life paths, 4. Documents on monestrial history, 5. Documents on spiritual life, 6. Others (which cannot be categorized in the former

types), several methodological principles were also formulated during the process. Two manuscript memoirs categories of many were emphasized (manuscripts and dairies from *About My Life (Életemből)*) (Chapter V. 2. 1–8.). The structure of the biographical part of the dissertation follows the order and logic of the above mentioned source. Due to the sorting work the inheritance now is researchable. (Chapter IV. 2. 2–4).

2. The marginals of the author in the manuscript memoirs in addition with the references of the texts (Chapter X. 1. 2.) made it possible to draw the genesis from *About My Life* and to record the loss of the manuscript.
3. Using numerous examples in my dissertation led to the clearness of the real meaning of being a Dominican monk and its spirituality, for instance presenting the training being a monk and the missionary activities along with analyzing the sermons.
4. Some of the results contribute to the history of the operation of the Dominican Order in the capital city, for instance the changing of the status of the order in Budapest, or the changing conditions of the associations and organisations ruled by the order (Credo, Rosary Companies).
5. Some specific functions of the order are presented (e.g. *socius, promoter*). The status of *socius* in the case of

Kornél Bóle was connected to the events taking place during the Hungarian Soviet Republic, and the *promoter* assignment was connected to the canonization of Margaret of Hungary, the Dominican nun.

6. The research was extended to the collecting act of the publications of Kornél Bóle. The selected bibliography of his publications (Chapter VII.) includes the following categories: substantive volumes; studies; articles, shorter documents; translations; speeches; poems; furthermore, documents related to his personal life (film recordings and necrologies).
7. The biography implicitly made an outer approach of the me-documentaries necessary to get a precise picture of his personality. The contemporary opinions (Chapter X. 3.) gave definite answers for his popularity and nationwide acquaintanceship.
8. The dissertation - due to his form - provide a base for further research. For instance, the Dominican directory after 1950, the Credo Association, or the cult of Margaret of Hungary, the Dominican nun can be studied.
9. The closure of the dissertation along with the planned biographical monograph of the monk inspire me to further research. They (currently being studied) are exploring the role of Bóle Kornél as a public orator, the exploitation of the methods of the modern press (e.g.. radio sermons), and his relations with his monkmates.



#### IV. Papers published on the topic the dissertation

Bőle Kornél OP irathagyatéka [The inheritance of Kornél Bőle]. Levéltári Közlemények (2020) 3. sz. 22–32.

Bőle Kornél: Utaim [My Paths]. Egy domonkos szerzetes visszaemlékezései (1887–1944) [The memoirs of a Black Friar, 1887–1944]. S. a. r. Gilányi Magdolna. Magyar Napló Kiadó–Írott Szó Alapítvány–Domonkos Rendtörténeti Gyűjtemény, Bp.–Vasvár, 2018. (Magyar domonkos rendtörténet 3.)

„Életem Pannonhalma Szent Hegyén” – Bőle Kornél domonkos szerzetes kéziratosa visszaemlékezései [‘My life on the mountain of Pannonhalma’ – The manuscript memoirs of the Black Friar Kornél Bőle] In: Bencések Magyarországon a pártállami diktatúra idején. II. Szerk. Dénesi Tamás–Boros Zoltán. Pannonhalmi Főapátsági Levéltár, Pannonhalma, 2018. 165–186.

„Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo” – Bőle Kornél (1887–1961) kéziratosa visszaemlékezései [The manuscript memoirs of Bőle Kornél (1887–1961)]. In: A 800 éves domonkos rend Magyarországon. A középkori provincia felbomlásától a közelmúltig. Szerk. Barna Gábor–Zágorhidi Czigány Balázs. Szent István Tudományos Akadémia–Domonkos Rendtörténeti Gyűjtemény, Bp.–Vasvár, 2017. (Magyar domonkos rendtörténet 3.) 91–104.

„Álmomban Mindszenty bíboros ténykedett... én is ott voltam.” Bőle Kornél O. P. 1956-os naplója [‘In my dream Cardinal

Mindszenty acted... I was there to'. Diary 1956 of Kornél Bőle OP].  
Lymbus, Bp., 2016. 371–385.

Bőle Kornél OP jubileumi beszéde (1916) [The jubilee  
speech of Kornél Bőle, 1916]. Tanítvány (2016) 2. sz. 69–77.

„Karácsonyi csillanások”. Bőle Kornél OP karácsonyai  
[‘Christmas glitter’. The Christmases of Kornél Bőle OP]. Tanítvány  
(2016) 3–4. sz. 3–7.

Egy domonkos szerzetes I. világháborús feljegyzései [The  
memoirs of a Black Friar about the Great War]. Tanítvány (2015) 2.  
sz. 18–22.

„Krisztusért jártam mindenben követségben” – Bőle Kornél  
OP: Utaim [‘I always acted for Christ – Kornél Bőle OP: My Paths].  
Turul 88. (2015) 1. füzet, 16–21.