

TREASURES OF THE ABBEY

AN EXHIBITION IN THE ZIRC MUSEUM LIBRARY



Following the Age of Turks, the Zirc Abbey was reestablished by the Silesian Heinrichau (today: Henryków). As the medieval building was destroyed during the occupation, a completely new monastery had to be built. Resettlement was first directed from the Order's property purchased at Pápa, and from 1726 from the temporary friary at Zirc. In 1733 four friars moved to the new Baroque building, which had

only one storey at the time. The Abbey Church was consecrated by the Veszpém bishop Márton Padányi Bíró in 1752. As the number of monks had reached twelve by the middle of the century, Zirc was turned into a convent. Of the 29 monks in 1792, twelve were of Hungarian descent. In 1802 the Royal Council of Governor suspended the Heinrichau Abbot's rights over Zirc, appointing Antal Dréta, a Hungarian monk as governing provost. In 1810 the Prussian government dissolved the Heinrichau Abbey, and when its abbot died, Franz I appointed Antal Dréta, who had

already been acting as the head of the Pilispásztó abbey, to be the abbot of Zirc, which became the Hungarian Cistercians' centre. Between 1844 and 1857 Abbot Ferdinand Villax had the second storey of the building and the whole northern wing added.

The history of the library is inseparable from the Abbey. The stock of books was growing with the numbers of monks and chores. The Baroque Abbey already had a separate library hall with ten cabinets for shelving some 2500 to 3000 volumes. Thanks to Ferdinánd Villax's construction work, the exquisitely furnished large hall was opened in 1857, where a part of the collection is still kept. At the beginning, books came directly from Heinrichau. The earliest annotated one dates back to 1710 and the temporary friary in Pápa. From the time of the independent convent starting in 1750, books were acquired independently, mostly through purchase. For example, it was through purchase that a large part of the dissolved Győr Jesuit friary's books was obtained. The library's ex

The first page of Johannes Herolt's bestiary





The Baroque abbeys of Heinrichau and Zirc. Fresco from the ceiling of the Heinrichau Abbey's reception hall

libris was made in 1795. The first catalogue dating back to 1815 contained 4167 volumes. Active involvement in secondary education necessitated major developments, adding to the stocks textbooks and other volumes related to teaching. Acquisitions also served the purpose of preserving value: that is how ten precious codices ended up in the possession of Zirc.

The **Treasures of the Zirc Abbey** exhibition, open from 1st April to 26th June, introduced this period of a hundred and fifty years. The highlights were the codices noted and the manuscripts dating back to Zirc of the 18th century, which had never been shown to the public and which are now kept in the NSZL Manuscript Collection. The most significant codex is the Latin piece from the second half of the 15th century, containing Johannes Herolt's preaching and a

bestiary. At the end of the 15th century, it was furnished with annotations in Hungarian and Croatian in a southern Hungarian cloister. Containing twenty Hungarian words, it is regarded as a language relic and is referred to as the "Zirc glosses." The most precious early prints and antique pieces, as well as contemporary liturgical vestments and chalices were also on display, leased by the Abbey to the exhibition organizers.

The exhibition was opened by Cistercian abbot Árpád Sixtus Dékány, following General Director Dr. Andrea Sajó's words of greeting. It was seen by almost six thousand visitors.

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