La pierre tombale d'un évêque 'suffragant' d'Alba Iulia : Savlvs (†1309/1310?) ou Benedictvs (†1320)

Abstract:

The purpose of this article is that of republishing, reediting, and analysing an epigraph previously dated to the end of the fourteenth century. The funerary slab is 154/168 cm long, 58 cm wide, and 32 cm high; it is placed in the lapidary of the southern gallery in the Alba Iulia Orthodox Archbishopric's inner yard. Re-evaluating the previous hypotheses that were linking the slab to a suffragan of bishop Goblin, the author considers that the slab dates back to the beginning of the aforesaid century. It carries an inscription following each of the four sides of the stone. Two supplementary lines, inside the first four, follow the longer sides. At their centre, one finds a representation of a bishop's crosier. This and the word EPISCOPVS from the inscription, allows one to propose that the tomb belonged to a catholic bishop from the beginning of the fourteenthcentury. A similar and more precise dating (1290-1320) could be drawn from the comparison with the inscriptions in Luncani (1290, 1299), Bistriţa (1320), Reghin (1330), and Aiud (1334). The text of the inscription may be the following one:1.[† HIC IACET ...?]2. [..?]S ◦ EPISCOPVS ◦ L[...] TENENS3. SVFRAGAN4. E‹V›S ◦ D‹OMI›NI ◦ GOBLIN‹I›[?]MI[?]C[..?]5.[.?]VN‹T ?› A POPVL‹O›◦ DOMINIC‹O›[?]6.[.?]‹A› IN ◦ ANNO ◦ D‹OMINI›◦ M ◦ CCC ◦[..](† Here lies...)s the bishop I(...) keeping, suffragan of lord Goblin (...) by the Lord's people (...) in the year of the Lord 13(...). When comparing the stone with the slabs of other Alba Iulia bishops (Andrew Szécsi, †1356; Dominic Szécsi, †1368; and Goblin, †1386), the early dating seems to be well advised, and the list of possibilities is reduced to three historical figures: the bishop Peter Monoszló (1270-1307); the vicar general Saul (c. 1308-1309), an archdeacon of Turda; and the bishop Benedict (1309-1320), a former Dominican from the monastery of St Margaret island in Budapest. An analysis of locum tenens and suffraganeus (two key-terms of the inscription), further reduces the list to Saul and Benedict. The author observes that the two words might be linked to Saul, but there are also cases of former Franciscans who became bishops and maintained a suffragan relationship with their original abbey. After a brief analysis of populus dominicus, which may hide the presence of the Alba Iulia chapter, the author ends without being able to choose between the two. The only proof one might bring into consideration could be the identification of the spurious dominus Goblinus from the text of the inscription. He could be a Dominican abbot, a bishop, or an archbishop.

Keywords: *funeral slab, epigraphy, bishop, uncials, Alba Iulia, Transylvania.*