

New prospects – digitisation in the Veszprém Archdiocesan Archives

The small archive of the Veszprém archdiocese had a 13 year-old contact with the ICARUS through the Monasterium consortium. Nevertheless there was a 7-8 years long pause in our relationship, which ended in 2017 as new opportunities emerged for our institutions. This presentation is to re-establish the contact with the international archival community by calling attention to our digitisation program and its possible Austrian and Croatian offsprings.

I. History of the diocese

The Veszprém Archdiocesan Archives preserve the archival documents of one of the earliest dioceses of Hungary. The episcopacy of Veszprém was organised as early as 1009, when Holy King Stephen I's deed of gift was issued, which charter is the earliest holding of our institution.

Bishops of Veszprém from the 11th century played an important role concerning the lives of Hungarian monarchs: the ecclesiarch of the city were the chancellors of the queen *ex officio*, and at the same time they, mainly in the Arpadian-age, also bore the office of the royal vice-chancellors. Apart from these, the right of crowning the queen also belonged to their duties: it is symbolic that Blessed Queen Gisella, wife of Stephen I furnished the cathedral of Veszprém, whose bishop crowned in 1916 the last Hungarian queen: Bourbon Zita of Parma nine hundred years later. Besides, bishops possessed secular power as well, being the sheriffs (*comes*) of Veszprém county as long as the late 18th century, whereas their castellans frequently had the position of county deputy-lieutenant.

The bishops' clerical power ranged from the Danube-bend to the Drava river, expanding the middling lane of the Transdanubian region. Before the Ottoman conquest in the mid-16th century, it consisted of 600 parishes. Having pushed out the Turks, it was in the late 18th century, that the large-sized diocese was divided: Queen Maria Theresia founded the dioceses of (Székes-) Fehérvár and Szombathely, mainly from territories of the episcopacy of Veszprém. The newly specified framework lived well into the 20th century, even peace treaties following the world wars left them intact.

In 1993, John Paul II the Saint erected the diocese of Kaposvár exclusively from the remaining territories of Veszprém – south of the lake Balaton –, whereas at the same time created the fourth archdiocese of Hungary. Currently it consists of 180 parishes (in which 100 parsons carry their duties) in 1,5 counties, the number of the roman catholic flock expands to 350.000.

History of the Archives

The diocesan archives are of the same age as the episcopacy. Bishops have been taking care of their documents on the castle hill of Veszprém for a thousand years, and the cathedral chapter of Veszprém as a *loca credibilia* (a specific Hungarian legal institution existed up to the late 19th century; more or less equivalent to public notaries) issued official documents and preserves that of private individuals. It was in the cathedral where the archives were accommodated. As the main temple of the diocese suffered from several demolitions or from combustions, documents – kept for instance in the sacristy – were also decimated throughout the centuries. The history of the archives of the bishops and the cathedral chapter split as Ottomans approached the region: the bishop transferred its seat in 1544 with his court – including his archive – to his other castle, Sümeg, whereas prebendaries of the chapter house moved their documents to Sopron.

The chapter was re-erected in 1628 and continued its earlier notarial activity from 1630, which is testified by its oldest protocol of attestations. Their archives were reinstalled in the cathedral, as long as the complete rebuilding of the temple, commenced in 1907, made it necessary to resettle it in other prebendal buildings situated in the castle. Now it has been located in the archiepiscopal palace for 25 years.

The episcopal archive got back to Veszprém only during the 18th century. Bishop Márton Biró of Padány supported the Catholic reformation of the diocese, which meant that the bishop occupied its predecessors' palace – with his court and archives as well. When the territory of the episcopacy was split in 1777, a substantial part of the documents were handed over to the newly erected neighbouring dioceses. The archives also suffered some minor losses during the second world war because of the cantonment of German and later Soviet forces.

Ecclesiastical archives in 1951 were nationalised on stock-protective grounds and were handled under the supervision of the local county-archives, which meant that entering into the archives were available only in the joint presence of the state and the church representatives. Fortunately, this system lived only to 1957, yet it provided time for assembling a uniform description of the holdings on national level. A decree of 1969 regarded church archives as a specific branch of the Hungarian archival system, whereas in 1995 they were regarded terminologically as *public private* archives.

Records of episcopal archivists have been available from 1807. The office was held by newly graduated and consecrated members of the clergy: being an archivist meant one of the first steps in one's ecclesiastical career. The timespan of the office lengthened from the early

20th century, and professional considerations occurred by nominating certain clerics for the position. The first lay, university graduate archivist was appointed in 2002, which marked an onset of a new era.

III. Archival profile

The importance of our archives is provided by its unique collection of medieval charters. There are some 200.000 medieval, that is before the battle of Mohács, 29th August 1526, charters issued within the Carpathian basin, the border the medieval Hungarian Kingdom, which are registered apiece. More than the half of this are kept in the Hungarian National Archives, which is followed by 8-10.000 charters preserved at the Esztergom Primatial Archive and the Archive of the Archabbey of Pannonhalma. The fourth most charters are kept in Veszprém, namely almost 1900 pieces, which, considering the transcribed pieces, enumerates some 3300 items. Most of them are of demesne-historical concern (acquisitions, changes or grants), yet there are two inventories of the cathedral, one register of archival documents from the mid-14th, and one book of prebendal income divisions from the early-16th century, together with royal and papal decrees concerning the bishops' right to crown the queens.

Documents of church administration dominates the holdings from the 18th century onwards. These can be divided into two major sections: one describing the history of provincial parishes including documents for organising these institutions, the protocols of canonical visits and the conscriptions of benefices. The other group consists of documents concerning the history of the episcopal court, by which church administrative history and the priests' individual careers might be discovered.

Church register books are the most consulted type of documents in the archives, which can also be divided into two sections. It was in 1895 that civil registration was introduced in Hungary: until that time matricules of the different confessions, including the roman catholic church registers are regarded as official ones. No matter that matricules legally belong to the parishes where they kept record of, our archives eagerly take over these registry-books in order to assist and ease the burdens of local parsons and at the same time to provide due storage circumstances. These original registers mainly started off from the second part of the 18th century with a few examples of mid-17th century books. The other group of registers are the replicates of the original parish ones, that are annually sent by parsons to the central episcopal archives from 1895 onwards. As these documents are not regarded as official documents (that are not consultable for legislative reasons), yet their content is almost

identical to civil registers, the replicates are consultable as long as other requirements of privacy protection are satisfied.

There are also different collections (record cards for ordained priests, obituaries, photos, designs and plans) and document bequests in our archives. It has been partly referred: as a collective archive, the Veszprém Archdiocesan Archives preserve the documents of diocesan parishes, educational, social and cultural institutions.

IV. Digitisation in the archives

The term: digitisation or digital presence should be explained beforehand. In my opinion there are three overlapping and interacting piers of digitisation: 1) The existence of an archival homepage that, apart from presenting basic information of the institution, publishes old hand-written or more modern printed manuals and indices of the holdings; 2) publication of digital pictures of original archival material; 3) building databases upon the data of archival documents – whether they are accessible online or not. Ideally these piers follow each other respectively. In cases of small archives, however, like church archives in Hungary that are usually short of human and financial resources, taking into consideration at the same time the spiritual and data protectional requirements of the sustainer, the above sequence does not always apply.

The digitisation work started in 2005, instantly at the second pier. The Monasterium consortium initiated a Central European digital stock of medieval church charters and we were invited to be a member of the project. Photos were taken of all the 2000 pieces of medieval charters at a time when the archive even lacked a homepage. The Hungarian National Archives republished the pictures on its website a couple of years later, following the reassessment of their metadata for this second instance of publication. Although this task was fulfilled, the new data for almost 15-20% of the 3300 items have not been implemented so far – they are available only at our archives, in an excel-sheet.

By the end of the first decade of the 2000, the Győr and Kalocsa church archives had already launched their e-research service concerning church registers. We also intended to take part of this initiation, and started the photo shooting of these registers soon. At this time our first homepage was not suitable for either publishing a vast amount of pictures or handling greater number of visitors. It is remarkable, that only one system administrator was employed at this time for all the central diocesan institutions without adequate IT skills for programming their individual needs – and who also employed as an electrician as well. Nevertheless, the

archives at this time had a static homepage at least, which was enough for publishing old manuals and our newly revised fond catalogue.

As far as church registers are concerned it was in January 2017 that a more dynamic, competent homepage was launched fitting for the requirements of the e-research. Matters of IT specialists have been solved by employing the same person who is supervising the home pages of the mentioned Kalocsa and Győr services – and who have been put in charge for that of the archives of the Hungarian Jesuit and Benedictine orders as well. There was a joint project of Hungarian church archives in 2015 which brought together these institutions: for the 70th anniversary of the end of the second world war, death entries of church registers from the years of 1944-1945 were published to illustrate the civil casualties of the frontlines. The IT specialist behind the venture was this very expert.

The next forthcoming issue is the topic of indexing online registers. Researchers expect with good reason that some kind of research option would be implemented to amend the better quality of pictures than that of the Familisearch.org homepage. It is clear, that native speaker researchers with local knowledge are to misread entries less than those, who are indexing entries from the lesser quality microfilm copies of the mentioned homepage with little knowledge of local names. Indexing registers in our case should be carried out by those amateur researchers' assistance, who have already processed some of the books out of individual interests and motivations. Their enormous work resulted mainly in excel sheets, of which connection to existing parish registers are „only” an IT-task. (Matricules of 8 parishes are to be published soon.)

In response to researchers' demands, other archival series beyond the registers have also been published online. Protocols of canonical visits or notes of János Pfeiffer former archivists concerning parish histories are available. Circular letters of bishops and indices of the Diocesan Authority are to illustrate the functioning of the central episcopal court. (In case of the indexes we intended to orientate possible researchers before they actually visit us. Once they filter out documents with the help of the indexes that they actually would like to consult, they are welcome to email the serial number of them, so that archivists can prepare the documents and research could immediately start upon the visitors' arrival. This, in other words, means a publication of an authentic archival manual in this respect.

The last pier of digitisation is building of databases. We decided to assemble such a database, to which similar data were at our disposal in a greater amount. Church catalogues, „schematisms” with the Latin term, are a certain type of historical sources, which were generally issued in printed format more or less regularly. These catalogues consist of the

institutions, organisations and the administrative system of the diocese (archdecanates, decanates, parishes, affiliated parishes), the „personnel” of the episcopacy with their biographical data and specific services either at the parishes, schools or at the episcopal court – all the information that describe the operation of the diocese.

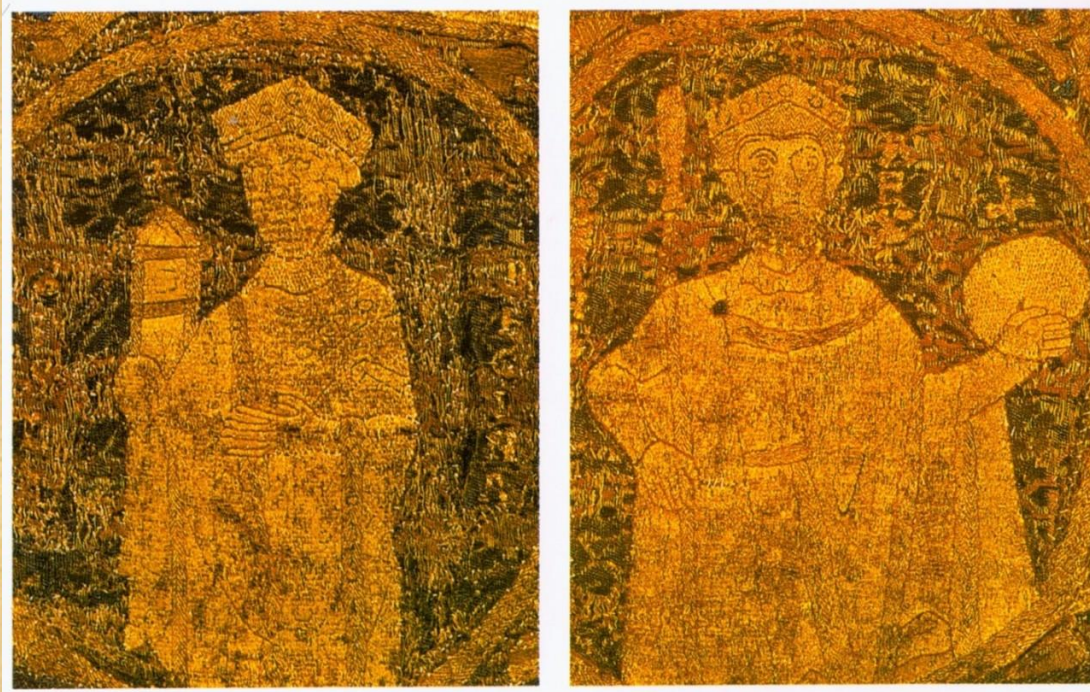
Modern IT-technology made it possible to combine, amend and merge these „printed databases”. By doing so different types of information are combined into one grandiose database from current times back to the 17th century (with medieval antecedents as a possible future development). Data fields include personal information, education, ecclesiastical careers both in central administration and provincial pastoration, photos (and paintings), literary works and biographies, with available cross-references. Priests moving within dioceses provide both national and international prospects for the project: it was Austria and Croatia that sent graduate seminarists to the episcopacy of Veszprém during the 17–18th centuries, and some members of the middle and higher diocesan clergy had also foreign origins even in the modern ages. Trends of ecclesiastical careers, professional operation of administration is of academic interest - we hope this database would satisfy that within the foreseeable future.

New prospects

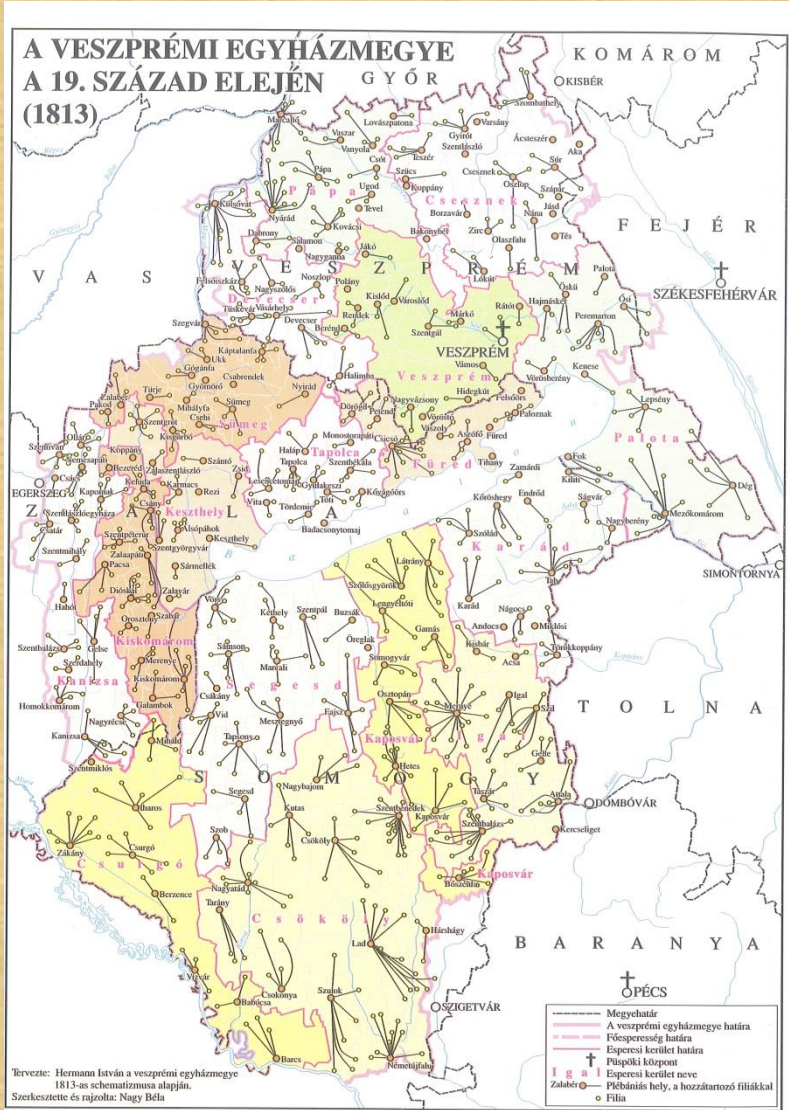
Digitisation in the Veszprém Archdiocesan Archives

Balázs Karlinszky PhD
16th March 2018, Trogir

The Archdiocese of Veszprém



- founded around 1009, by Stephen I.
- donated by Queen Gisella
- administrative and representative connection with queens thereafter



A VESZPRÉMI FŐEGYHÁZMEGYE TÉRKÉPE

STIEFEL

1993 –



JELMAGYARÁZAT

- Megyehatár
- Egyházmegyehatár
- Főesperesség határa
- Esperesi kerület határa
- Autópálya csomópontjai
- Elsőrendű főút
- Másodrendű főút
- Egyéb út, helyi út
- Csak engedélyvel járható út
- Földút
- Komp, kikötő
- Vasútvonal
- Csak teherforgalmú vasútvonal
- Város 50 ezernél több lakossal
- Város 50 ezernél kevesebb lakossal
- Nagyközség
- Község
- Városok, települések
- Bazilika-Főesperességi ház
- Plébánia
- Templomigazgatóság
- Fila
- Szerzetesrend
- Egyházmegyei fenntartású oktatási intézmény
- Bencésrend
- Főesperességi Főesperesség (Veszprémi és Pálfi Esperesi Kerület)
- Sümegi Főesperesség (Sümegi és Tapolcai Esperesi Kerület)
- Pápai Főesperesség (Pápai és Zirci Esperesi Kerület)
- Zala Főesperesség (Keszthely-Zalaegerszegi Esperesi Kerület)
- Pannónia Termelői Főesperesség
- Zirci
- Esperesi Kerület neve

VESZPRÉM

PÁPA

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The diocesan archives



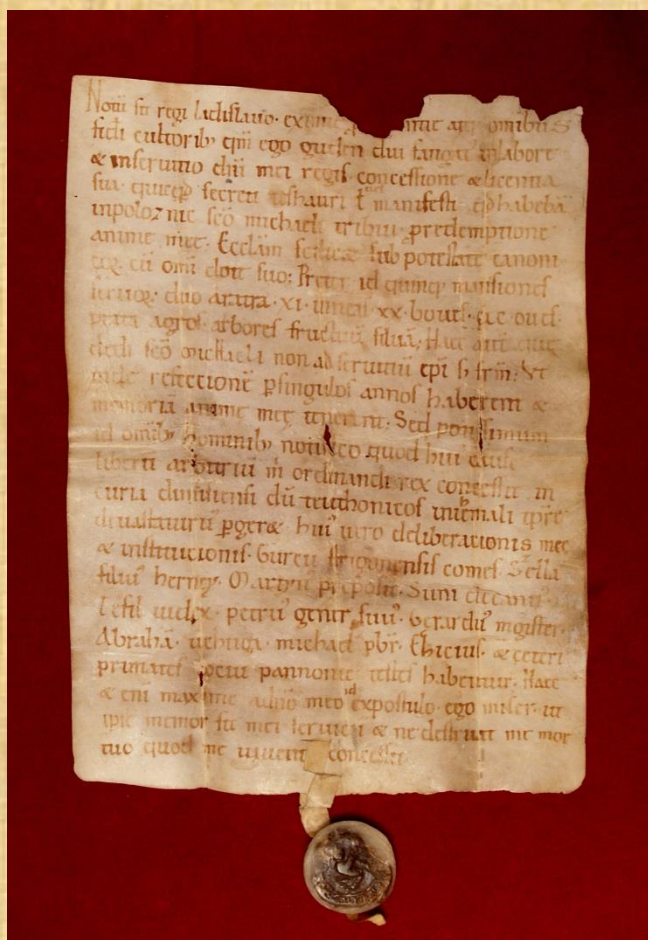
The history of the diocesan archives

- archives of the bishops and the cathedral chapter
- situated in the cathedral
- evacuated from the Turks 1544–1630 (1772)
- the stock decimated: 1777, 1945, 1951
- until 2002: exclusively clerics as archivists



The archival „profile” (1.)

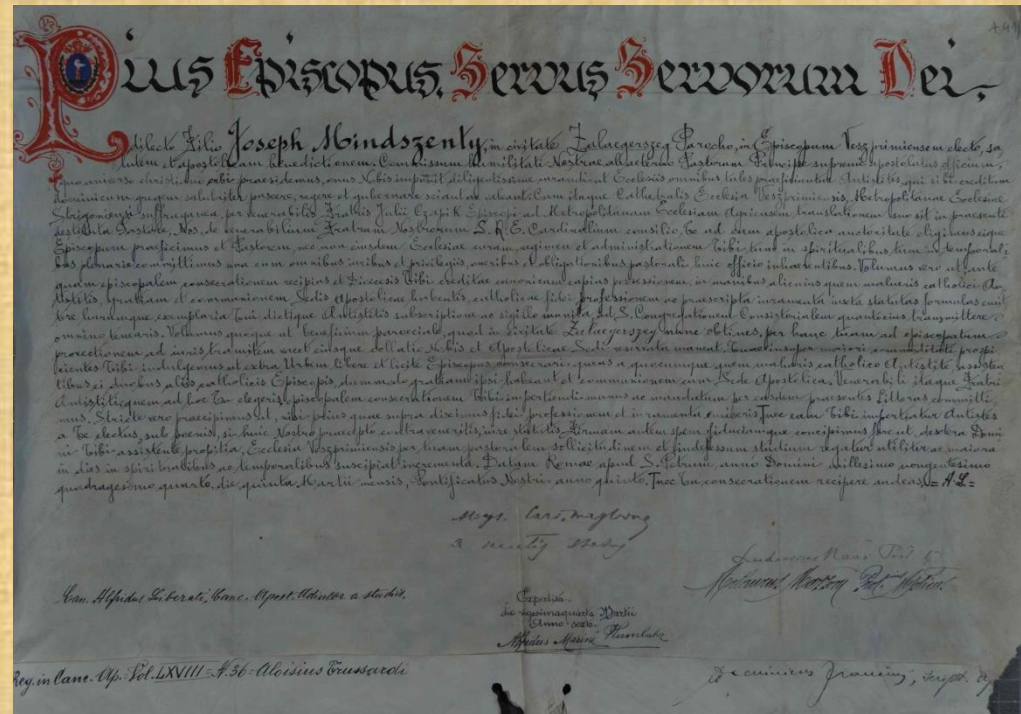
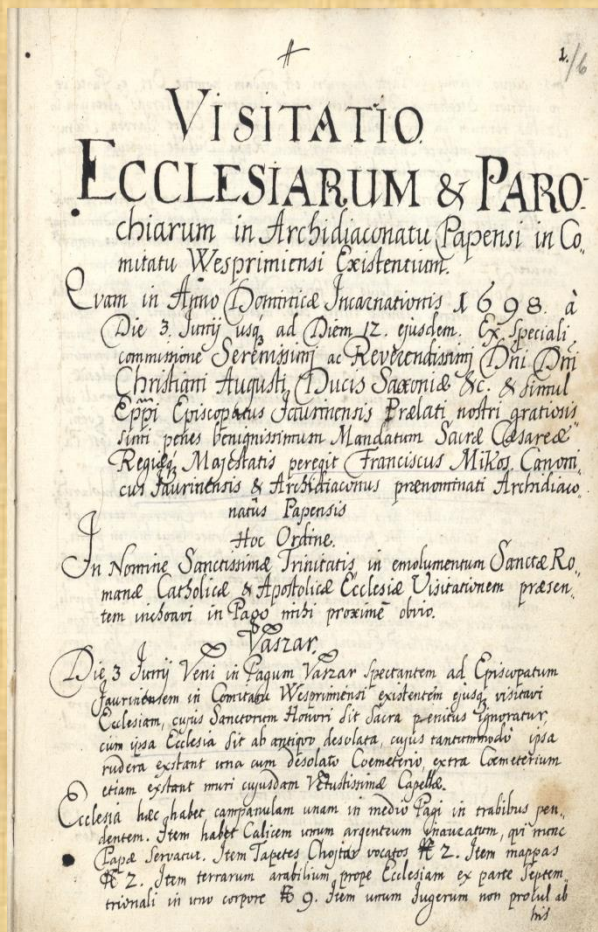
Medieval charters: 3300 items Registerbooks: 1895 dividing line



The archival „profile” (2.)

Parish history: canonical visits

Court history: nominations



Digitisation in the archives

- terminological establishment:
[homepage](#); [digital photoes of documents](#); databases
- digitisation of medieval charters:
Monasterium.net; [Hungarian National Archives](#)
- of [registerbooks](#):
[joint venture](#) of Hungarian church archives;
indexation is the next issue ([Familysearch.org](#))
- of other documents – based on researchers' like
- building a database: of church catalogues („[schematismus](#)”)
administrative system, personnel, institutions of the diocese;
possible national and crossborder connections concerning priests

Statistics of the database

All records:	17113
Clerics:	3689
Photoes:	409
Decanal districts:	61
Archdecanal districts:	20
Temples:	343
Parishes:	549
Settlements:	325
Services = clerics + parishes / (arch-) decanal districts :	11525

*Thank you for your
kind attention!*



Veszprémi
Főegyházmegyei
Levéltár Sematizmusa

SEMATIZMUS TARTALMI STATISZTIKA (2018.03.07)

- Összes felvitt rekord: 17113
- Egyházi személy: 3689
- Fénykép: 409
- Esperesség: 61
- Főesperesség: 20
- Templom: 343
- Plébánia: 549
- Település: 325
- Szolgálat: 11525

