

THE ROYAL ÁRPÁD DYNASTY OF THE HUNGARIAN KINGDOM UNDER THE SPELL OF JERUSALEM AND THE HOLY LAND (1000–1301)

by

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Stephen, the first ruler of the Kingdom of Hungary, entered the stage of world history with his coronation in 1000/1001. It was not long before thousands of pilgrims, and then the crusader armies themselves, passed through Hungary. The arrival of the pilgrims in Hungary is not at all surprising, since from the early decades of the eleventh century the most important overland route to the Holy Land, the *Via Militaris*, which is referred to in the earliest sources as the *Via Hierosolimitana*, passed through Hungary.¹

The route through Hungary opened up to pilgrims in the second half of the 1020s, after the Hungarian king had consolidated his power in his country, established the foundations of the Christian Church, founded bishoprics and monasteries, and defeated rebellious tribesmen with arms. To do this, he also needed to ensure that the pilgrims could continue their journey in safety in Byzantine territory. This was thanks to the Emperor Basil II (r. 976–1025), who by 1018 had defeated the rebellious Bulgars and Serbs, and pushed the empire's borders back to the Danube River. This is supported by a description of the pilgrimage route, which survives in a twelfth century revision, reflecting conditions between 1050 and 1080.² The cross-country pilgrim road joined the most important European pilgrimage routes (*Via Francigena/Via Roma*; *Via*

¹ András Borosy, and József Laszlovszky, 'Magyarország, Szentföld és a korai keresztes hadjáratok' [Hungary, the Holy Land and the Early Crusades], in: *Magyarország és a keresztes háborúk. Lovagrendek és emlékeik*, József Laszlovszky, Judit Majorossy, and József Zsengellér eds., pp. 75–90 (Máriabesnyő–Gödöllő: Attraktor, 2006).

² Denys Pringle, 'An Eleventh-to Twelfth-Century Itinerary from Hungary to the Holy Land and Othmar's Vision of the Holy Fire', in *Bridge of Civilizations: the Near East and Europe, c. 1100–1300*, Peter Edbury, Denys Pringle and Balázs Major, eds., pp. 281–96 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2019).

Appia and the routes to Santiago de Compostela).³ From the Hungarian border, the route leads first to Hainburg-an-der-Donau (Heimenburch, now Austria), then southeast to Győr (Raab), the Hungarian royal centre of Székesfehérvár (Stuhlweissenburg, Wzzenburch), Tolna (Hanenburg), and Baranyavár (Duldumast, now Branjin Vrh, Croatia). At that time, there was a waterway section all the way to Eszék (Roman Mursa, now Osijek, Croatia, on the Drava). Then, via Valkóvár (Dordomest, now Vukovar, Croatia), one could reach Beograd (Belgarad, now Serbia), then in Byzantine hands, by crossing the Sava River. From there the route led to Niš (now Serbia), via Sofia, Plovdiv (Philippopolis) and Edirne (Adrianopolis in Turkish Thrace). Between Adrianopolis and Constantinople, the guidebook lists five stops, and then the last common coastal section of the *Via Egnatia* passed through Selymbria and Athyra. In Hungary, the route followed the ancient Roman military road, with the important difference that after Győr, it took pilgrims to the royal seat of Székesfehérvár. According to the itinerary, the Hungarian section could be covered in 19 days. It is clear from contemporary accounts that, before the end of the twelfth century, the sea route was considered much more dangerous than the land road, and the *pericula maris* was feared.⁴

The opening of the pilgrim route through the country had as much influence on the favorable medieval image of Hungary as the adoption of Christianity.⁵ The contemporary chronicler Rudolphus Glaber (d. c. 1047) emphasized how graciously the Hungarian king received the pilgrims: ‘almost all those from Italy and Gaul who wished to go to the Sepulchre of the Lord at Jerusalem abandoned the usual route, which was by sea, making their way through the country of King Stephen. He made the road safe for everyone, welcomed as brothers all he saw, and gave them enormous gifts. This action led many people, nobles and commoners, to go to Jerusalem’⁶.

In terms of the number of pilgrimages, the eleventh century was a real turning point. According to Aryeh Grabois, between 870 and 1026, 22 pilgrimages to the Holy Land are recorded, while by the end of the eleventh century

³ Magdolna Szilágyi, *On the Road: The History and Archaeology of Medieval Communication Networks in East-Central Europe*, pp. 107–17 (Budapest: Archaeolingua, 2014).

⁴ David Jacoby, ‘Evolving Routes of Western Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Eleventh to Fifteenth Century: an Overview’, in *On the Road in the Name of Religion*, Klaus Herbers and Hans Christian Lehner eds., pp. 75–100 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2016).

⁵ László Veszprémy, “Zarándokok és zarándoklatok a 11. századi Magyarországon” [Pilgrims and pilgrimages in 11th-century Hungary], in *Európa és Magyarország Szent László korában*, ed. Attila Bárány, László Pósnán, Debrecen: DTA, 2017, pp. 57–70.

⁶ *Rodulfus Glaber Opera*, Neithard Bulst ed., John France and Paul Reynolds transl., pp. 96–97 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); Aleksandar Uzelac, ‘Crusades and Eastern Europe’, in *The Routledge Handbook of East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500–1300*, Florin Curta (ed.), pp. 374–92 (London–New York: Routledge, 2022).

this number had increased several folds, even if we remain uncertain as to the exact number. The anniversary of the Passion of the Christ, when large crowds set out around 1033, is of particular importance during the century, and is also mentioned by Glaber.⁷

Our most important early source for pilgrimages to Hungary is the chronicle of Adémar de Chabannes. It tells us that William II Taillefer, Count of Angoulême (987–1028) set out on a pilgrimage in 1026, accompanied by a number of nobles and abbots.⁸ The speed of the journey is also clear, as they left on 1 October, and were in Constantinople by early January, arriving in Jerusalem in the first week of March.⁹ Adémar himself made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land via Hungary in 1033, but he died overseas in 1034, taking his personal experiences with him to the grave.

A notable participant in the pilgrimage recorded by Adémar is the later saintly abbot of Verdun, Richard de Saint Vanne (d. 1046),¹⁰ whose pilgrimage was inspired by his long meditations on the Passion of Christ. Richard also came into contact with the contemporary Hungarian Church, and the abbot Richard mentioned in the work *Deliberatio* by St. Gerard (Gellért), Bishop of Csanád in Hungary, canonized in 1083, may be identified with him.¹¹

A letter from the Bishop of Worms, Azecho, to the Bishop of Passau (1005–39), in which he asks for a letter of recommendation for the pilgrims to King Stephen, has survived from the years 1030–38.¹² The source is important because

⁷ Aryeh Grabois, 'Les pèlerinages du XI^e siècle en Terre sainte dans l'historiographie occidentale de l'époque', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 101 (2006), pp. 531–46; David Jacoby, 'Bishop Gunther of Bamberg, Byzantium and Christian Pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the Eleventh Century', in *Between Polis, Province and Periphery. Contributions to Byzantine History and Culture*, Lars Hoffmann and Anuscha Monchizadeh eds., Mainz Publications on Byzantine Studies 7, pp. 267–85 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005).

⁸ Adémar de Chabannes, *Chronique*, Jules Chavanon ed., p. 189 (Paris: A. Picard, 1897); Judit Csákó, 'A XI. századi Magyarországa a francia kútfők tükrében' [Eleventh-century Hungary in the light of French sources], *Fons* 18 (2011), no. 2, pp. 147–208, esp. 164–67.; László Veszprémy, *History Writing and Historians in Hungary of the Árpáds*, pp. 339–348 (Budapest: HunRen Research Center for Humanities, 2024); Daniel F. Callahan, *Jerusalem and the Cross in the Life and Writings of Ademar of Chabannes*, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions 181, p. 184 (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2016).

⁹ Richard Landes, *Relics, Apocalypse, and the Deceits of History: Ademar of Chabannes, 989–1034*, pp. 154–63 (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995).

¹⁰ Steven Vanderputten, *Imagining Religious Leadership in the Middle Ages: Richard of Saint-Vanne and the Politics of Reform* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell U.P., 2015).

¹¹ Előd Nemerkenyi, *Latin Classics in Medieval Hungary: Eleventh Century*, pp. 74, 145 (Debrecen–Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004); *Deliberatio. Gerardi Moresanae ecclesiae episcopi Supra Hymnum trium Puerorum*, Béla Karácsonyi, and László Szegfű eds., transls., pp. 660–61 (Szeged: Scriptum, 1999).

¹² *Die Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit: Die ältere Wormser Briefsammlung*, Walther Bulst ed., Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Vol. 3., p. 84 (no. 47) (Weimar: Böhlau, 1949); Heinrich

it is a first-rate source for contemporary diplomatic protocol, and proves that pilgrims with letters of recommendation could count on the support of the monarch of Hungary. Indeed, in a letter from Berno, abbot of Reichenau (1008–48), he mentions King Stephen's graciousness to the pilgrims and expresses his gratitude in particular for the support of two monks from Reichenau.¹³

The Great Pilgrimage of 1064–65 stands out among the pilgrimages to Hungary in the eleventh century, led by the bishop of Bamberg, Gunther (Günther) (1057–65).¹⁴ A rare astronomical conjunction occurred twice in the century, in 1065 and 1076. On this occasion, the resurrection of Christ fell on 27 March, almost the same day as the feast of the Annunciation on 25 March.¹⁵ Gunther's troop estimated by contemporary sources at several thousand, included many famous ecclesiastical figures, such as Siegfried I, Archbishop of Mainz, William I, bishop of Utrecht, Altmann, provost of Aachen, court chaplain of Emperor Henry III, then bishop of Passau.¹⁶ In 1058, immediately after his consecration, the historian Lampert of Hersfeld made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, from where he returned and, like Adémar, wrote much about the Kingdom of Hungary.¹⁷

Lietbert de Lessines, provost and later bishop of the cathedral of Cambrai (1051–76), set out between 1054 and 1056 with a force estimated at several thousand men. He was accompanied on his pilgrimage by Raoul (Radulf), a monk of the local monastery of the Holy Sepulchre, who wrote his memoirs in his *Vita sancti Lietberti*, written between 1099 and 1110. It says that "it was brought to the attention of the King of Hungary (King Andrew I) that persons in pilgrim's costume had come from a distant land to the borders of the kingdom to pass through. The

Fichtenau, *Reisen und Reisende. Beiträge zur Mediävistik* 3. pp. 1–79, esp. 21 (Stuttgart: Hierse-mann, 1986); *Diplomata Hungariae antiquissima. Accedunt epistolae et acta ad historiam Hungariae pertinentia. I. Ab anno 1000 usque ad annum 1131*, Georgius Györffy et al. eds., p. 108 (nr. 21) (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1992).

¹³ *Die Briefe des Abtes Bern von Reichenau*, Franz-Josef Schmale ed., pp. 51–52 (nr. 18) (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1961).

¹⁴ Fritz Lošek, "Et bellum inire sunt coacti": The Great Pilgrimage of 1065', in *Latin Culture in the Eleventh Century: Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Medieval Latin Studies*, 2, M. W. Herren, C. J. McDonough, R. G. Arthur. eds., Publications of The Journal of Medieval Latin, 5,2, pp. 61–72 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002); David Jacoby, 'Bishop Gunther', pp. 267–85.

¹⁵ Aryeh Grabois, 'Les pèlerinages du XIe siècle', p. 541; Rachel Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800–1200*, pp. 77–78 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

¹⁶ Ezzo Solasticus, who wrote a poem in German on the wounds of Christ for the occasion. *Vita Altmanni episcopi Pataviensis*, Wilhelm Wattenbach ed., Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores 12, pp. 226–43, esp. 230 (Hannover: Hierse-mann, 1856).

¹⁷ Tilman Struve, Lampert von Hersfeld. *Persönlichkeit und Weltbild eines Geschichtsschreibers am Beginn des Investiturstreits*, Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte 19 (1969), pp. 1–123, esp. 22–31.

king gave orders that they should be immediately brought before him....”¹⁸ The king, convinced of the guest’s piety, gave him his full support.

The first group of pilgrims from England came under the leadership of Aldredus (Ealdred/Aldred), bishop of Worcester, who later became archbishop of York from 1061 to 1069. His definitely datable pilgrimage to Hungary took place in 1058, with which research has associated, probably without justification, the transmission of the coronation ordo used in Hungary.¹⁹

These pilgrimages are also important for the Hungarian Holy Land tradition, as they may explain the foundation of the Hungarian pilgrim house and then a monastery in Jerusalem, which can be linked to the reign of the first Hungarian king, Stephen, in addition to Rome and Constantinople. The foundation of the house in Jerusalem is traditionally dated between the year of the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in 1009 and the death of King Stephen in 1038.²⁰ (*Fig. 1*) The persecution of al-Hakim subsided after the death of the caliph in 1021, and consolidation followed the armistice between the Fatimid ruler and the Byzantines in 1027, and even more so after the end of the Muslim gang wars from 1030. In 1021, the Patriarch of Jerusalem personally informed the Byzantine emperor of the start of the rebuilding of the churches.²¹ King Stephen lived to see the Byzantine–Muslim peace of 1036/1037, which settled the fate of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Since the foundation of the monastery and hospice was only preserved in three legends of the Hungarian king written between 1090 and 1100, who was canonized in 1083, the authenticity of the claim seemed uncertain for a long time. As the King’s Greater Legend says of the foundation: “*For he [King Stephen] constructed a monastery of monks in that city of Jerusalem where Christ lived according to his humanity, and he enriched it with estates and vineyards, to provide abundant daily food.*”²² The King’s Lesser Legend added: “*Moreover, in the*

¹⁸ *Vita Lietberti episcopi Cameracensis auctore Rodulfo monacho S. Sepulcri Cameracensis*, Adolf Hofmeister ed., *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores* vol. 30.2: pp. 838–66, esp. 853–58 (Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1934).

¹⁹ József Laszlovsky, ‘Az Angolszász koronázási ordo Magyarországon’ [Anglo-Saxon coronation ordo in Hungary], in *Anglo-Hungarian Relations in the Middle Ages*, Attila Bárány, József Laszlovsky, and Zsuzsanna Papp eds., pp. 103–109 (Máriabesnyő: Attraktor, 2012); Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, pp. 208–209 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1970).

²⁰ Denys Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus*, 3, *The City of Jerusalem*, p. 380 (no. 361), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine*, 634–1099, pp. 373–4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

²¹ Moshe Gil, *A History*, p. 397.

²² ‘Vita Sancti Stephani regis (Legenda maior) / Life of King Saint Stephen (Major legend)’, Cristian Gașpar transl., in *The Sanctity of the Leaders: Holy Kings, Princes, Bishops, and Abbots from Central Europe (Eleventh to Thirteenth Centuries)*, Gábor Klaniczay, and Ildikó Csepregi eds., p. 65. (Budapest–New York–Vienna: Central European University Press, 2023).

monastery which he built in Jerusalem he established a community of nuns, for whom he provided what was necessary through a similar disposition".²³

Likewise, we have no contemporary sources for the pilgrimage house and church in Constantinople, or for the even more vaguely dated hospice in Ravenna.²⁴ Still, the foundations of the Hungarian king do not appear to be fiction. The possibility of an early foundation may be supported by the large number of pilgrims who travelled across the country and sought contact with the king personally. The fact that the pilgrimage house in Rome is mentioned already in the bull of Pope Benedict X in 1058, makes this probable. The house in Rome was in operation long before the birth of the king's legends, and thus cannot be regarded as an arbitrary statement by the late eleventh century authors of the legends.²⁵ There is good reason to assume that King Stephen pursued a purposeful and independent foreign policy in the second half of his reign, from the 1020s onwards, which may have been forced upon him by the death in 1024 of his relative, the brother of the Hungarian queen, the German emperor Henry II. It was probably in these last decades that the monastery of the Orthodox nuns of Veszprém Valley was founded in close collaboration with the Byzantine emperor, perhaps for the Byzantine princess who was to marry the heir to the throne, Prince Emeric (Hung. Imre, died 1031). Thus, his donation to the Hungarian Hospice of Jerusalem can also be linked to this period. The diplomatic conflict that preceded the Hungarian–German war in 1030 can also be linked to this process. In 1027, the king refused to allow a German embassy, which was on its way to Byzantium, who called themselves pilgrims. The foundation of Constantinople may be identical with the Church of St. Julian, over which the Hungarian king exercised a patronage in the twelfth century.²⁶

²³ 'Vita et actus Sancti Stephani regis Pannoniorum (Legenda minor) / Life and Deeds of Saint Stephen, King of the Pannonians (Minor legend)', Cristian Gaşpar transl., in *The Sanctity of the Leaders*, p. 95.

²⁴ Endre Tóth, 'Pannonia Ravennában' [Pannonia in Ravenna], in *Laudator temporis acti, Tanulmányok Horváth István 70. születésnapjára*, Edit Tari, and Endre Tóth eds., pp. 129–40 (Budapest–Esztergom: Balassa Bálint Múzeumért Alapítvány – Martin Opitz, 2012).

²⁵ Antal Molnár, *Szent István és Európa. A római magyar zarándokház alapításának nemzetközi kontextusa* [St. Stephen and Europe. The International Context of the Founding of the Hungarian Hospice in Rome] Inaugural Lectures of the Szent István Academy of Sciences, New Series vol. 41, p. 23 (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 2025), the source cited, Luigi Schiaparelli, 'Le carte antiche dell'Archivio capitolare di S. Pietro in Vaticano', in *Archivio della R. Società Romana di Storia Patria* 24 (1901), pp. 393–496; esp. 483–84.

²⁶ The bull of Honorius III of 29 January 1218 refers to "ecclesia sancti Iuliani cum hospitali, domibus, apothecis". György Györffy, 'A szávaszentdemeteri görög monostor XII. századi birtokösszeírása II' [The 12th century census of the Greek monastery of Szávaszentdemeter II], *A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Társadalmi-Történeti Tudományok Osztályának Közleményei*,

Unfortunately, the earliest history of the Jerusalem monastery and hospice cannot be documented, but the institution was certainly already in operation in the twelfth century, with a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary and King Stephen, as attested by a charter issued by Pope Urban III in Verona, on 23 June 1187. According to the charter: “*Truly when Géza, former king of the Hungarians whose memory should be recalled, as is contained in his authentic writing, caused to be constructed out of piety in Jerusalem by his and his princes’s alms a church, in honor of God and in memory of Blessed Mary, His forever Virgin Mother, and St. Stephen the king, and a guest house (domus hospitalis) in which pilgrims and other people travelling on account of God might receive the support of charity.*”²⁷

The text most probably refers to King Géza II of Hungary (r. 1141–62), who was in direct contact with the leaders of the Second Crusade who were marching through his country, and had every opportunity to (re)found the pilgrimage house. Another charter of Pope Urban III, also issued in 1187 to the Stephanite Knights of Esztergom (The Order of Hospitaller Canons Regular of St. Stephen or *Cruciferi Sancti Stephani Regis*, discussed in detail in the following article by the current leadership of the Order), mentions King Béla II of Hungary (r. 1131–1141) in connection with the foundation of the House of Jerusalem, while mentioning the convent of the Hungarians in Acre, to which they had moved after the defeat at Hattin.²⁸ It is possible that the predecessor of King Géza II was also involved in the re-establishment of the Jerusalem hospice. This is supported by another contemporary source. Between March and August 1135, the prior of the Holy Sepulchre, Peter, sold two neighboring houses to a Hungarian lady named Petronilla for 440 Byzantine gold coins, with the aim of establishing a guest house for Hungarians.²⁹ The importance of the purchase is indicated by the fact that the charter includes the names of several bishops, in addition to the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and of the

2 (1952) no. 3–4, pp. 325–62, esp. 344–5; 3 (1953) n. 1–2., pp. 69–104, esp. 80.; Theiner, *Vetera monumenta* 1: p. 10 (nr. 16).

²⁷ Denys Pringle, *The Churches*, vol. 3: pp. 380–38 (nr. 161); Philippus Jaffé, *Regesta pontificum Romanorum: ab condita ecclesia ad annum post Christum natum CXCVIII*, Wilhelm Wattenbach et al., vol. 2, p. 526 (nr. 15992) (Lipsiae: Veit et Comp., 1888).

²⁸ Denys Pringle, *The Churches*, vol. 3: p. 381 (nr. 161); Rudolf Hiestand, *Papal Deeds for Churches in the Holy Land* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), *Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen. Philologisch-Historische Klasse* / 136, *Vorarbeiten zum Oriens pontificius* vol. 3, p. 328 (nr. 150).

²⁹ *Le cartulaire du chapitre du Saint-Sépulchre de Jérusalem*, Geneviève Bresc-Bautier ed., pp. 119–220, 250 (nrs. 101, 123) (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1984); Denys Pringle, *The Churches* 3: p. 381 (no. 161); Wolf Zöllner, ‘The Religious Environment of the Nascent Military Orders – The Augustinian Consortium Revisited’, in *Ordens militares, identidade e mudança. ordens militares, identidade e mudança. textos selecionados do VIII Encontro sobre Ordens Militares*, Isabel Cristina Ferreira Fernandes ed., vol. 1, p. 153 (Palmela: Gesos – Município de Palmela, 2021).

Hospitaller Master Raymond du Puy. The identity of Petronilla is unknown, but according to Denys Pringle she may have served as a lay sister of the Holy Sepulchre. Similar cases suggest that Petronilla, widowed, cashed in her estates in Hungary and came to Jerusalem as part of a group of pilgrims with the intention of settling there.

The charter reads, “*Up to this point she had been receiving daily food sufficient for four people from the refectory of the Holy Sepulchre: but this allowance was now reduced to two such prebends, equivalent to the food for one canon and one servant.*” Some of the recipients of these prebends may perhaps be identified among the witnesses, who included two Hungarian hermits named Cosmas and Boniface, in addition to Symeon, a Hungarian archdeacon (*Ungaricus archidiaconus*). The names also attest to the existence of a living Hungarian ecclesiastical community in Jerusalem, which is supported by the appearance of a certain Robert the Hungarian (*Ungarus Robertus*) in a charter of 1158/59.³⁰

From the Petronilla document it is possible to locate the exact site of the guest house. According to Denys Pringle’s handbook, the hospice was “between the church of St. Chariton and a public street, most probably ‘Aqabat al-Khanqa, which lies north of it; on the other two sides, presumably flanking the house in the same street’.”³¹ However, whether the church of St. Stephen stood next to the hospice is up to speculation, but it certainly could have been close by. The earlier house was identified with a house now belonging to the Franciscans “near the Seventh Station at the intersection of ‘Aqabat al-Khanga and Khan az-Zait Street”. According to Denys Pringle, the twelfth century hospice may have stood slightly to the west of this. The existence of the church of St. Stephen is confirmed around 1200 by John of Würzburg, who visited Jerusalem as a pilgrim around 1160. According to his work, „A Description of the Places of the Holy Land”, which makes extensive use of earlier travelogues, the Hungarians also had a church in Jerusalem. According to him, “*I have omitted many chapels and lesser churches, which people of various nations and tongues (add. B: all of them true practicing Christians) have there. For there are there Greeks, Latins, Germans, Hungarians (var. B: Bulgars), Scots, Navarrese, Bretons, English (add. B: French), Ruthenians, Bohemians, (Boemi), Georgians, Armenians, Syrians (Suriani), Jacobites, Syrians (Syri), Nestorians, Indians, Egyptians, Copts (Cephti),*

³⁰ Cosmas, who lived in a cell above the city walls, is also described by Gerard of Nazareth in his *De Conversatione virorum Dei*, see Benjamin Z. Kedar, ‘Gerard of Nazareth a Neglected Twelfth-Century Writer in the Latin East: A Contribution to the Intellectual and Monastic History of the Crusader States,’ *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 37 (1983) pp. 65–6.

³¹ Denys Pringle, *The Churches* 3: p. 381 (nr. 161). Earlier identification by Károly-György Borovicsény, ‘Cruciferi Sancti Regis Stephani. Tanulmányok a Stefaniták, egy magyar ispotályos rend történetéből’ [Study on the history of a medieval Hungarian Hospitaller order], *Communicationes Historiae Artis Medicinae*, 133–4 (1991–2) pp. 7–41, 155–70, esp. 24.

Capheturici, Maronites...”.³² The existence of the Jerusalem guesthouse, a hospice of the holy king, that is King Stephen (*hospitale sancti regis Iherosolimis*) in the twelfth century is also attested by a donation from the son of Count Miske of the Atyusz kindred in 1164.³³

THE FIRST CRUSADE

From May 1096, a few months after the Council of Clermont proclaimed the Crusade, more and more crusader troops requested entry and passage across the Hungarian border (*Fig. 2*). Until the arrival of the army led by Godfrey of Bouillon, these were known collectively as the ‘popular crusaders’, indicating that they were different in spontaneity and organization from the armies led by prominent dukes. Their common characteristic was that they set out before the established deadline of 15 August 1096, the date set by Pope Urban II. Their march, which provoked serious armed conflicts, must have taken the leaders of the newly Christianized kingdom by surprise, and its sad memory is preserved in the Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle. However, the Hungarians were not deterred from supporting the peaceful pilgrims and crusaders, and the pilgrim route remained open to them.

The troops were a formidable military force, and were not as undisciplined as had previously been assumed. While it is true that they were led by the lower nobility (Walter Sans-Avoir, Count Emicho) and lower ecclesiastical figures (Peter the Hermit, Folkmar, Gottschalk), they were nevertheless followed by a number of excellent and experienced knights who held their own in later battles. The chronicler of the campaign, Albert of Aachen, himself often calls them famous knights (*illustres milites*), one of them, Emicho (Emicho of Leiningen/of Flonheim) is introduced as ‘the noble and powerful lord of his land.’³⁴ Another leader, William the Carpenter (d. 1102), viscount of Melun, for example, previously had fought against the Muslims in Spain.

The first to arrive, Walter Sans Avoir, the lord of Boissy-sans-Avoir in Île-de-France, certainly complied with the unwritten forms of entry, as he was allowed into the country by King Coloman (Hung. Kálmán, r. 1095–1116) of

³² *Three Pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Saewulf, A True Account of the Situation of Jerusalem. John of Würzburg, A Description of the Places of the Holy Land. Theoderic. A Little Book of the Holy Places*, Denys Pringle ed., *Corpus Christianorum* in translation vol. 41, p. 187 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2022); Denys Pringle, *The Churches* 3: pp. 6, 380–81 (nr. 161.)

³³ György Györffy, ‘A szávaszentdemeteri görög monostor’ 2: p. 80.

³⁴ *Albert of Aachen's History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, Susan Edgington, trans., *Crusade Texts in Translation*, vol. 1, p. 38 (I, 27) (London–New York: Routledge, 2013).

Hungary and provided the necessary market facilities to supply the army. They reached Hungary on 21 May 1096, and crossed the country at a good pace, following the pilgrims' well-known route for about three weeks, crossing the Sava River around 11 June and reaching Beograd, the border of the Byzantine Empire. The peaceful nature of the march was not fundamentally affected by the armed conflict between the locals and some crusaders at the castle of Zimony (now Zemun, Serbia), known also as 'Maleville', on the Hungarian border. Walter ignored the matter and continued his journey towards Niš, arriving in Constantinople by mid-July. John France, moreover, deduces from the rapid pace of the march that the army was as well organized as the other 'popular armies'.³⁵ This may be particularly true of the armies of Peter and Gottschalk, who were capable of serious fighting in Hungary, and Peter's army put up a stiff resistance in the later battles in Asia Minor.

Walter's army was followed by the army of Peter the Hermit (Pierre d'Achères), which the chronicler Albert of Aachen put at 40,000, with an estimated 2,000 chariots.³⁶ The number may be an exaggeration, but their arrogant behavior suggests that they may indeed have outnumbered Walter's troops, and may have encouraged them to seek armed conflict. They reached the country at a gate marking the border in Sopron, and as usual, they could ask the Hungarian king for permission to pass. Problems may have arisen again at the border town of Zimony, where the castle was besieged by them. It is no coincidence that it was at Zimony, that the conflict surfaced. During the crossing of the Sava River, order and discipline may have broken down in the crusading army. They may well have suffered real damage during their march, in the form of exchange rate losses in purchases. They may also have come into conflict with nomadic elements in the country, the keepers of grazing flocks and herds, and may have questioned the Christianity of the locals, who dressed in oriental costume. The conflicts may also have been motivated by the prejudices of the crusaders, which were not entirely unfounded. The preachers with the army could have made an example of the nomadic light horsemen they had seen, especially the Pecheneg auxiliaries settled in the kingdom, and then had to fight with them in the Holy Land. They may have remembered that the Kingdom of Hungary had only joined the Christian world at the end of the tenth century, and they may even have seen traces of the devastation of the pagan rebellion of the 1040s.

These preconceptions are well captured in contemporary French epic poetry, of which some knowledge can be assumed on the part of the knights from

³⁵ John France, *Victory in the East: A Military History of the First Crusade*, pp. 90–5 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994).

³⁶ Jean Flori, 'Faut-il réhabiliter Pierre l'Ermite? (Une réévaluation des sources de la première croisade)', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 38 (1995), pp. 35–54.

the French territory. In the *Chanson d'Antioche*, we find the Hungarians in the camp of the emir of Mosul; in the *Song of Roland*, they appear in the camp of the Arabs who clash with Charlemagne.³⁷ Prejudice among the Germans is hinted at, among other things, in the works of Ekkehard, the first Abbot of Aura (d. 1126) and the anonymous chronicler known as *Annalista Saxo*. According to these, the Hungarian King Coloman became aware that in the eyes of the Germans there was no difference between killing Hungarians and killing heathens.³⁸ No less telling is the fact that Frutolf of Michelsberg (d. 1103) calls the Hungarians *semi-barbari* and holds them responsible for the harassment of the crusaders.³⁹ When the next crusader troops arrived, the Hungarian royal forces were already in readiness. The army of Folkmar, a German cleric, came from the north, from Moravian territory. The raiding and plundering army was crushed by the Hungarian royal troops near the town of Nyitra (now Nitra, Slovakia) without much resistance.

The chroniclers describe how the westerners were amazed at the fertility of the Hungarian land, the sight of the huge herds and horses. This wealth inevitably aroused their envy, especially if they were otherwise in need of supplies. Albert himself acknowledges that the crusaders behaved in an unqualified manner and deserved to be punished. Albert wrote his lines after the first defeats in the Holy Land, so he could justifiably look for the cause of the divine punishment. He believed that the cause of the sins lay partly in the indiscipline and unscrupulousness of the crusaders on their march, and partly in the offences committed against the locals. Surprisingly, most Western chroniclers blamed the crusaders for the conflicts. Thus, according to Albert, “*they violated the proclaimed peace, little by little stealing wine, barley, and other necessities from the Hungarians, finally seizing sheep and cattle in the fields and killing them; they destroyed those who stood up to them and wanted to drive them out. The others committed several crimes, all of which we cannot report, like a people foolish in their boorish habits, unruly and wild.*”⁴⁰ He then adds that “*In this the hand of God is believed to have been against the pilgrims, who had sinned in his eyes by excessive impurities and fornicating unions.*”⁴¹ The sympathy shown by the Latin chroniclers towards

³⁷ Sándor Csernus, *A középkori francia nyelvű történetírás és Magyarország, 13–15. század* [Medieval French historiography and Hungary, 13th–15th c.] pp. 133–36 (Budapest: Osiris, 1999).

³⁸ *Chronicles of the Investiture Contest: Frutolf of Michelsberg and His Continuator: Selected Sources*, Thomas John Henry McCarthy transl., p. 152 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014).

³⁹ Frutolf of Michelsberg, *Chronica*, in *Frutolfs und Ekkehard's Chroniken, und die anonyme Kaiserchronik*, Franz-Josef Schmale, and Irene Schmale-Ott eds., p. 108 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972).

⁴⁰ *Albert of Aachen's History*, vol. 1, p. 35 (1:23).

⁴¹ *Albert of Aachen's History*, vol. 1, p. 41 (1:29).

the Hungarians is a sign that the bloodshed in Hungary gave them the opportunity to morally condemn the unworthy behavior and to develop a picture that would make the events and the new crusade understandable to Christians.⁴² In this approach, the Hungarian kingdom becomes a land flowing with milk and honey, an idealized foretaste of the Promised Land, defended by its ‘most Christian’ (*Christianissimus*) ruler with heavenly support against those who transgress Biblical law. The message of the authors is clear: in the Holy Land, too, those who do not understand the aims of the crusade will fall.

The strongest of the popular crusader armies arrived under the leadership of Emicho, count of Leiningen.⁴³ They intended to cross at the gate of the border fortress at Moson, but apparently failed to obtain permission. They may have hoped for a larger force; the chroniclers exaggerate the number to 200,000. Albert describes ‘going in the direction of the kingdom of Hungary, where the royal highway was normally open to all pilgrims. But when they came to the king’s fortress at Moson, ...the gate was closed...They came to a decision ... that they should lay waste the king’s lands which adjoined this region, and should not withdraw from here until a bridge could be placed across the marsh and the River Leitha, over which they would penetrate, approaching the wall of the fortress by some artifice, so that even thus the way across Hungary would be opened up by the strength of their army.’⁴⁴ If King Coloman was indeed among the defenders, it is understandable that the defenders held out to their last breath. However, it is more conceivable that the king arrived at the head of a relief army, as Steven Runciman tries to interpret the facts.⁴⁵ In the end, the crusaders were utterly defeated.

The turning point was the arrival of the army of Godfrey of Bouillon, the first ruler of the Kingdom of Jerusalem (r. 1099–1100), which followed the Rhine and then the Danube to the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary in September 1096. The army left Hungary at the end of November at Zimony and reached the *Via Egnatia* via Sofia and Philippopolis at Selumbria, before arriving in Constantinople.

No actual military action took place when the crusading army led by Godfrey of Bouillon marched through. This may have been due to the fact that they arrived at a fortunate time when food was plentiful after the harvest. The crusader army stopped before the Hungarian border, and as a result of the negotiations, it was agreed that the crusaders would give the Hungarian king

⁴² James Plumtree, ‘Charlemagne’s road, God’s threshing floor; comprehending the role of Hungary in the first crusade’. *Hungarian Studies* 32 (2018) no. 1, pp. 1–26, esp. 1.

⁴³ John France, *Victory in the East*, p. 92.

⁴⁴ *Albert of Aachen’s History*, vol. 1, p. 39 (1:28).

⁴⁵ Steven Runciman, *A History of The Crusades, Volume 1, The First Crusade*, p. 141 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951).

noble hostages. The names of the prominent members of Godfrey's army are known, of whom Godfrey of Ascha is an interesting case. According to Albert, he was sent as an envoy to the Hungarian king to investigate the massacre and crime that had taken place earlier, because his person was known to King Coloman. This suggests that Godfrey of Ascha had been sent to the Hungarian court earlier to prepare for the crusaders' march.

According to a somewhat later account by the chronicler Gilo de Paris, Godfrey of Bouillon visited the abbey of Pannonhalma, then considered the birthplace of Saint Martin, perhaps on the feast of the saint on 11 November. There he was solemnly received by King Coloman, accompanied by the bishops of the country, in a solemn procession. "*As the agreed day arrived this city shone in splendor, the rich Sabaria from whence your holy native son Martin radiated throughout the world. The pious King [Coloman] arrived in this place with assembled bishops, his nobles, ordinary people and the holy clergy, who all gathered together bearing candles, crosses, gospels, holy relics and precious objects from churches to welcome them, [King Coloman] kissed them on arrival and led them to the cathedral, accompanied by joyful exclamations and the sound of hymns, aggrandizing their splendid and hospitable reception in a royal manner and confirming their treaty by the exchange of hostages.*"⁴⁶ Ralph of Caen is the only source, unfortunately not very convincing, who mentions that Hungarians may have joined the crusaders and may have been present at the siege of Antioch.⁴⁷

A few years later, around 1107, King Coloman's brother, Prince Álmos (died 1127), made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. He was the highest ranking of the Hungarian pilgrims to Jerusalem in the eleventh-twelfth centuries. Since he had been fighting for the throne with his brother King Coloman for years, his pilgrimage, in addition to his openly expressed repentance and reconciliation, was at least as much a means of gaining political support in Constantinople. But this was not the case, and no record of the details of his journey or of his stay in

⁴⁶ *The Historia vie Hierosolimitane of Gilo of Paris and a Second Anonymous Author*, C. W. Grocock, and J. E. Siberry ed. and transl., p. 50 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Dušan Zupka, 'Religious Rituals of War in Medieval Hungary Under the Árpád Dynasty', in *Christianity and War in Medieval East Central Europe and Scandinavia*, Radosław Kotecki – Carsten Selch Jensen – Stephen Bennett, eds. Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2021, pp. 141–157. The ruins of the Roman city of Sabaria are in today's Szombathely, but in the Middle Ages the name of Sabaria, associated with cult of St. Martin were appropriated by the Benedictine monks of Pannonhalma, called also 'Hill of St. Martin'.

⁴⁷ Ralph of Caen, 'Gesta Tancredi in expeditione Hierosolymitana', in *Recueil des historiens des croisades: historiens occidentaux*, vol. 3, pp. 587–715, esp. 676 (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1866); *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen*, Bernard Bachrach, and David Bachrach transl., p. 118 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

Jerusalem remains. After his return, he founded two churches dedicated to St. Margaret of Antioch, in Meszes (now near Mirșid, Romania) and in Dömös, presumably with relics he had brought with him from the Holy Land.⁴⁸

At first sight it seems astonishing to associate St. Gerard (Hung. Gellért), who was martyred in Hungary in 1046, with the First Crusade.⁴⁹ His Greater Legend tells that his father was a crusader (probably a peaceful pilgrim), who died in the Holy Land. Similarly, Gerard wanted to go on a pilgrimage to visit the tomb of Christ, but at the suggestion of his abbot, he changed his mind and instead of Jerusalem he went to the newly converted Hungary, where preaching was more needed.

According to the Carmelite tradition he was a Carmelite hermit on Mount Carmel until he was elected Patriarch of Antioch. Gerard did not accept the post, but went to Rome around 1040 and then came to Hungary on the orders of the pope. Gerard had a disciple, a knight named Guy, whom he tried to persuade to become a hermit. Instead, Guy married the daughter of a Hungarian king named Solon (presumably King Peter Orseolo, r. 1038–41, 1044–46). He had two sons, Aimery and Berthold. Aimery became bishop of Le Puy in France, and later became legate to Pope Urban II in the First Crusade. The only connection between the real St. Gerard and his Carmelite biography is that Gerard was a hermit for a time in Hungary before becoming bishop of Csanád. And if he was a hermit, he must have belonged to the Carmelites – at least according to the interpretation of the order.⁵⁰

We have fewer sources on the pilgrims and crusaders of the following decades, which suggests that there were no major problems as they moved through the country. Immediately such was the case of the year 1101, known as the Crusade of the Faint-Hearted, organized at the request of Pope Paschal II.

⁴⁸ Dorottya Uhrin, 'Protecting Christianity on the Eastern Frontier. On Some Aspects of the Cult and Representation of Saint Katherine and Saint Margaret in Medieval Hungary', in *Liminal Spaces of Art between Europe and the Middle East*, Marina Vicelja Matijašić, Ivana Priatelj Pavičić et al. eds., pp. 186–99 (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018).

⁴⁹ Andrew. T. Jotischky, 'Saint Gerard of Csanád and the Carmelites: Apocryphal Sidelights on the First Crusades', in *Autour de première Croisade, Actes du Colloque de la Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East (Clermont-Ferrand, 22–25 juin 1995)* pp. 143–55 (Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 1996); Id, *The Carmelites and Antiquity Mendicants and their Pasts in the Middle Ages*, pp. 241–42 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁵⁰ Oliverius in Sancto Anastasio, *Gheestelycken Iust-hof der carmeliten*, I-II (Antwerpen: Cornelis Woons, 1659–1661), quoted by Kees Teszelszky, 'A magyar toposzok használata a kora újkori Németalföldön – Szent Gellért, Szent István, Szűz Mária és a magyar korona megjelenése a németalföldi irodalomban' [The use of Hungarian topos in the early modern Low Countries – St. Gerard, St. Stephen, Virgin Mary and the appearance of the Hungarian crown in the literature], in: *Pázmány nyomában: Tanulmányok Hargittay Emil tiszteletére*, Alinka Ajkay and Rita Bajáki eds., pp. 425–34 (Vác: Mondat Kft, 2013).

The pope sent a letter to Anselm of Buis, archbishop of Milan, asking him to lead a Lombard army which was to march through Hungary towards Constantinople, following the route of Godfrey of Bouillon and Baldwin. Duke Welf IV of Bavaria set out in April 1101, and after joining William IX, Duke of Aquitaine, they made the Hungarian and Balkan stages together. William's army was greatly augmented by the contingent of Margravine Ida of Austria (d. 1101), who joined them in Carinthia. In 1111, the crusaders of King Sigurd of Norway (r. 1103–30) returned from the Holy Land by land and marched across Hungary, but no trace of them remains in Hungarian sources.⁵¹

It is at this time that the first Hungarian pilgrims appear. The earliest is a lady, "*domina Genuru*" (in Hungarian '*gyönyörű*', meaning 'beautiful'), who gave her estate in Zala County to the Benedictine monastery of Almádi before 1121.⁵² After the death of her husband, Bánd, she made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land between 1117 and 1121, and if it is indeed her tomb that has been identified in the surviving ruins of the monastery, she successfully returned home. In 1274, the abbot of the same monastery, Herman, prepared to go to the Holy Land with royal permission.⁵³ We do not know the result of his plan, but the incident proves that within a kindred, as in the West, pilgrims could appear in Hungary from generation to generation.

SECOND AND THIRD CRUSADES

During the Second and Third Crusades, the Hungarian Kingdom's relationship with the crusader armies marching towards the Holy Land becomes even closer. These are the campaigns when we know for certain that Hungarians will reach Jerusalem in their ranks. The loss of Edessa brought the Second Crusade to life, with the German and French kings, Conrad III and Louis VII, and in Conrad's army the vassal Duke Vladislav II of Bohemia and the Polish Duke Henry of Sandomierz. Both kings led their armies themselves, and marched across the country on their usual warpath. Why did the King of Hungary not join them, and why did the Pope not try to persuade him to do so? The answer lies primarily in geopolitical and closely related domestic political circumstances. King Coloman's son Boris, born to his second wife,

⁵¹ Jonathan Phillips, *The Second Crusade: Extending the Frontiers of Christendom*, pp. 11–12 (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 2007).

⁵² *Diplomata Hungariae antiquissima*, György Györffy ed. vol. I. p. 413 (no.151) (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1992).

⁵³ *Regesta regum stirpis Arpadianae critico-diplomatica*, Imre Szentpétery, and Iván Borsa eds. vol. 2: p. 97 (nr. 2519) (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1923–87).

accused of adultery, was not considered a legitimate heir at the Hungarian court, so he sought refuge and found support abroad, mainly with King Conrad III and Margrave Henry II of Austria. Consequently, in the 1140s there were serious clashes on the Austrian and Hungarian borders. In early 1146, the troops of the pretender to the throne temporarily captured the important border fortress of Bratislava (Pressburg/Pozsony, now Slovakia), although the Hungarians were victorious in the battle of the Leitha River against the Austrian Margrave. This was made all the more threatening by the political rapprochement between Germany and Byzantium, the seriousness of which is shown by the fact that in 1151 the series of Hungarian–Byzantine wars began. At the same time, the papal bull of 1145, the *Quantum praedecessores*, announcing the campaign, most probably never reached the Hungarians.⁵⁴

The march of the crusader armies through Hungary is well known from the chronicles of Otto of Freising and Odo de Deuil. The march of the German troops was understandably tense, and Hungarian chroniclers complain about it a lot. The background to these complaints may have been that Conrad demanded substantial sums of money in order to avoid supporting the pretender to the throne. The king of France was received with much more enthusiasm. We know of the gifts given to him, and King Louis VII accepted the godparenting of the then-born prince, later King Stephen III. The pretender to the throne, however, unexpectedly entered the country in the French king's army. Later Boris eventually settled and married in Byzantium, posing a potential threat to the Hungarian dynasty until his death shortly afterwards. Some may have joined the crusader army in Hungary, but none of these are mentioned by Otto of Freising, only by Odo de Deuil, in a vaguely worded sentence: "*Then, too, many dukes and counts of these countries, stimulated by his example with regard to the crusade, enrolled in it*".⁵⁵ It is a result of the former pilgrimages, which had been going on for a century, that the large numbers of troops had no problems in supplying the country and passed through without serious incident.

The Kingdom of Hungary's relations with the Holy Land intensified during the reign of King Géza II. It is during the reign of Géza that the orders of Knights Templars and Hospitallers appear in the kingdom,⁵⁶ as well as the

⁵⁴ Zsolt Hunyadi, 'Hungary and the Second Crusade', *Chronica* 9–10 (2009–2010), pp. 55–66.

⁵⁵ Odo of Deuil, *De profectione Ludovici VII in orientem. The Journey of Louis VII to the East*, Virginia G. Berry ed. and transl. pp. 10–11 (New York: W. W. Norton, 1948).

⁵⁶ Zsolt Hunyadi, "The Hospitallers in the Kingdom of Hungary: commanderies, personnel, and a particular activity up to c. 1400," in *The Crusades and the Military Orders: Expanding the Frontiers of Medieval Latin Christianity*, Zsolt Hunyadi, and József Laszlovszky eds., CEU Mediaevalia vol. 1, pp. 253–68 (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001); Zsolt Hunyadi – András Ribí, *The Knights Hospitaller in Medieval Hungary* (Budapest: Centre for Humanities Research, 2023).

Cistercian monks, who were at the forefront of propagating the crusades. It was at this time that the Order of Hospitaller Canons Regular of King St. Stephen, the only knightly order founded in Hungary, was established.⁵⁷ Their first hospital was founded by King Géza II in the 1150s, with the steel to provide for the needs of pilgrims and other travelers. The order was based in Szentkirály (formerly Abony), near Esztergom, the center of the Hungarian church, but also included a church dedicated to the Hungarian king Stephen and Virgin Mary in Jerusalem. Géza's decision may have been linked to the re-establishment of the Hungarian church presence in Jerusalem. The foundation of the order was approved by Pope Urban III in 1187.

Most of the sources we have are about the Hospitaller Order of St. John. They also appeared during the reign of King Géza II, and their headquarters were established in Székesfehérvár on the pilgrim route. They founded here their first monastery dedicated to King Stephen, where they had already maintained a priory before 1187. They owed their donations to members of the dynasty, in particular to Queen Euphrosyne, wife of Géza II. As a widow, Euphrosyne was imprisoned after her confrontation with King Béla III and donated her royal estates to the order. Perhaps a donation made in 1166 by a certain Count (Hung. *ispán*) Wid to the brothers of Jerusalem (*fratres Iherosolimitanes*) may be connected with the Hospitallers.⁵⁸ It is rightly thought that, on returning from a pilgrimage, they felt the need to support the Order, including with a church.⁵⁹ By the end of the thirteenth century they had nearly twenty houses. Later, a papal charter of 1252 tells of a multitude of guests (*multitudo hospitum*) in their house of Székesfehérvár.⁶⁰

In addition to the Hospitallers, the Templars also settled in the country in the second half of the twelfth century.⁶¹ They received major grants under kings Béla III and his sons Emeric (Imre) and Andrew II. Most of their estates came into their possession in the second half of the reign of King Andrew II, connected with the Fifth Crusade (*Fig. 3*). They were also given a monastery in Esztergom, but still settled mainly in the areas near the Adriatic Sea. The later

⁵⁷ Károly-György Boroviczény, 'Cruciferi Sancti Regis Stephani'.

⁵⁸ *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis*, ed. Georgius Fejér ed., vol. 2, pp. 174–75 (Budae: Typogr. Regiae Universitatis Ungaricae, 1829); *Cartulaire general de l'ordre des Hospitaliers de Saint-Jean de Jerusalem*, Joseph Delaville le Roulx ed., vol. I, pp. 252–53 (no. 368) (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1894).

⁵⁹ Zsolt Hunyadi, 'Queen Euphrosyne and Princess Elizabeth: Hospitaller consorores or donate in the 12th century?', in *Ordines militares* 28 (2023) pp. 41–62.

⁶⁰ András Ribi, "propter multitudinem hospitum" A fehérvári keresztes (johannita) konvent mint ispotály a középkorban [The Hospitallers' Convent of Székesfehérvár as a Hospital in the Middle Ages], *Fons: Forráskutatás és történeti segéd tudományok* 22 (2015) no. 1, pp. 71–89, esp. 77.

⁶¹ Balázs Stossek, 'Maisons et Possessions des Templiers en Hongrie', in *The Crusades and the Military Orders*, pp. 245–51.

center of the Order, Vrana in Dalmatia (now Croatia), was already in the possession of the Order in 1169, and the town of Zengg (now Senj, Croatia) was donated to them by King Béla III in the second half of the century. According to the sources, the Templars had fourteen monasteries and fifty estates in the territory of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary, mainly south of the Drava River, until the abolition of the Order.

By the last decades of the twelfth century, the Hungarian-Byzantine conflict had eased. King Géza II's son, the future Béla III, was raised as a prince at the Byzantine court, where he was regarded as heir to the throne and son-in-law of the emperor. However, Emperor Manuel changed his mind after the birth of his son, and in 1170 Prince Béla married Agnès (Anne) of Châtillon, half-sister of Manuel's wife Mary of Antioch, in place of his daughter. Béla, still a Byzantine prince under the name of Alexios, supported the Hospitallers in the Holy Land: he gave 10,000 Byzantine golds to buy estates, with a stipulation that a sufficient portion of the endowment be set aside for an intended journey to Jerusalem by Béla and his wife. The Grand Master of the Order, Gilbert d'Assailly indicated to Béla/Alexios that they had found a suitable estate in Acre.⁶² Already as King of Hungary, Béla III was at peace with the Emperor Isaac Angelos II (r. 1185–95), and Isaac had married one of Béla's daughters in 1186.

The troops of the Third Crusade were preceded by the armed pilgrimage of Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony and Bavaria (r. 1156–80), in January 1172. They arrived at the border from Vienna by boat, where they were welcomed by the Hungarian king's envoy. From there they continued their journey on the Danube, while at Visegrád the duke was shipwrecked and had to be rescued by the Hungarians. The army was large, but did not engage in battle in the Holy Land, from where they returned to Bavaria via Hungary.⁶³

Little did they know that at the Battle of Hattin in July 1187, the Crusader army would suffer a decisive defeat, and on 2 October the Christians would lose the Holy City. Later that month, Pope Gregory VIII issued his crusading bull, the *Audita tremendi*, which led to the organization of the Third Crusade.

During the reign of Béla III, sources on the relationship between Hungary and the Holy Land proliferated. A letter sent to the Hungarian king from Tyre

⁶² *Cartulaire général de l'ordre des Hospitaliers*, 1: p. 222–23 (nr. 309); Martin von Walterskirchen, 'Béla III. schenkt den Johannitern Land bei Akkon: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des internationalen Zahlungsverkehrs im 12. Jahrhundert,' *Annales de l'Ordre Souverain Militaire de Malte* 33 (1975), pp. 104–5; Anthony Luttrell, 'The Hospitallers in Twelfth-century Constantinople', in *The Experience of Crusading*, Marcus Bull, and Norman Housley, vol. 1 Western Approaches, p. 228 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁶³ *The Chronicle of Arnold of Lübeck*, Graham A. Loud, trad., pp. 39 (1: 1–12) (London–New York: Routledge, 2019).

in 1188 by Margrave Conrad of Monferrat, on behalf of the Knights Templar and the Hospitaller Order, urging him to participate in the campaign, has survived. *“To whom shall we cry? To whom shall we implore among the reigning kings? [...] Is Jerusalem calling to you, is Bethlehem calling to you, to deliver them from the power of the Gentiles?”*⁶⁴ The English king, Henry II sent an envoy, Richard Barre, to the German and Byzantine emperors and to the king of Hungary, and it is thanks to the envoy that the documents of the diplomatic correspondence have survived. The English king asked for free passage and a market for his army, and the Hungarian king agreed. King Béla supported their request: *“Be assured that we approve of and adopt your royal majesty’s plan, whereby we believe and trust that the Church of God and the pillaged Holy Land shall, by virtue of your excellence and piety, and through your endeavors, receive comfort and assistance for the honor of God and your eternal glory. It is with the greatest clamor of joy that we hope for and anticipate the forthcoming opportunity to be of service and pay our respects to you.”*⁶⁵ The English and French armies later reached the Holy Land by sea.

From the German Emperor Frederick I, his envoy, the archbishop of Mainz, Conrad, arrived in the country ahead of the army to negotiate the march with King Béla. The journey of the German army is recorded in detail in the German chronicles. Frederick left Regensburg (Ratisbon) with his army on 11 May 1189, from where he sailed on the Danube to Vienna, followed by his army of 15–20,000 men on the mainland. There he met his cousin, Duke Leopold V the Virtuous, who, however, did not follow the emperor to Hungary because of the deteriorating Austro-Hungarian relations.

The emperor reached the borders of the Kingdom of Hungary on 24 May, celebrating Pentecost in Bratislava. King Béla sent his envoys to accompany the emperor to Esztergom, where he was received by the Hungarian monarch on 4 June. The Hungarian king favored his guest with numerous gifts and provided the army with the necessary goods for the enterprise. *“He [King Béla] received the army of Christ hospitably, he rushed gladly to meet it, he accompanied it kindly, and by the display of his actions he proved the fervor of his devotion. A great many locals, kindled by his excellent example, saw the holy army and desired to fight alongside”*.⁶⁶ In Esztergom, among other things, the emperor received two large warehouses of flour as a gift, around which there was such a crowd that three crusaders were buried in flour. The king instructed that everywhere the route be made easy, whether this be over rivers, streams, marshes or bridges. The sources also

⁶⁴ Anton Chroust, *Tageno, Ansbert und die Historia peregrinorum. Drei kritische Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Kreuzzuges Friedrichs I*, pp. 199–201 (Graz: Styria, 1892).

⁶⁵ Ralph of Diceto, *The Historical Works of Master Ralph de Diceto*, William Stubbs ed., *Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores* 68, vol. 2. pp. 53–54 (London: Logman, 1876).

⁶⁶ *The Latin Continuation of William of Tyre*, James H. Kane, and Keagan J. Brewer eds., p. 117 (Abingdon–New York: Routledge, 2025).

mention a gift from the queen: a beautifully decorated tent. This “*magnificent tented house was covered in scarlet cloth and with a carpet as long and as broad as the house itself. There was also a bed and pillow magnificently decorated and with precious coverings, and an ivory throne with a padded stool placed before it, extensively ornamented and carefully worked.*”⁶⁷ The emperor took part with the king in a four-day hunt, presumably on the Great Island near Buda, today’s Csepel.⁶⁸ The Hungarian king received Frederick with such splendid hospitality that his visit to Hungary was later commemorated on a fresco in the palace of Palermo.

King Béla released his brother Prince Géza, who had been a prisoner for a decade, a pretender to the throne who had previously enjoyed German support, at the emperor’s request, and dismissed him with the imperial army. No source has survived as to whether the prince played a role in the campaign later. He later settled and married in the Byzantine Empire, and his descendants were still a nuisance to the army of King Andrew II, who returned from the Holy Land in 1218. King Béla betrothed his daughter Constance to the emperor’s son, Frederick, the duke of Swabia, a betrothal that was ultimately thwarted by the German duke’s unexpected death in 1191.

For the first time in the crusades, Hungarian military involvement was truly significant. According to the chronicler Arnold of Lübeck, a Hungarian contingent of 2,000 joined Frederick’s army.⁶⁹ The march through Byzantine territory was extremely difficult due to the rebellious Serbs and Bulgarians. The Hungarians were in the same army as the Czechs, and their local knowledge meant that it was up to the Hungarians to secure the route. They did so, although the Hungarian king’s close family ties to the Byzantines made them suspect in the much-deprived German army, and the Hungarian king was accused of many things. The feud between the German emperor and the Byzantines may have been behind the Hungarian king’s decision to call back the Hungarian contingent. To avoid conflict with the Emperor Isaac II Angelos, Béla III sent a messenger to follow the crusading army. The king’s orders caught up with the army at Plovdiv, from where the Hungarians turned back in November 1189, which the other crusaders naturally regarded as treason. It was then that we learn of the size of the Hungarian army, which returned under the leadership of the bishop of Győr and six counts. However, three counts and their troops remained with the main army. It is therefore understandable that in the battles around Acre, a brave and famous Hungarian count (*vir magnae probitatis et famae*) is mentioned, who is captured during a

⁶⁷ Graham A. Loud, *The Chronicle of Arnold of Lübeck*, pp. 148–9 (London and New York: Routledge, 2019).

⁶⁸ John Freed, *Frederick Barbarossa: The Prince and the Myth*, p. 488 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016).

⁶⁹ Graham A. Loud, *The Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa*, p. 149.

breakout.⁷⁰ His name is Nicholas, and he is probably the same as the former Count of Szatmár, who became later palatine in 1205. The English chronicler mentions many Hungarians (*quamplurimi*) in his entourage, which again suggests that Nicholas may have fought with an entourage of circa hundred men.

It is well known that the English king, Richard I the Lionheart, was shipwrecked in the Adriatic Sea in the autumn of 1192 on his return from the Holy Land and then continued his voyage on land. Near Vienna on 21 December, he was captured by the duke of Austria and later by the king of Germany. Richard's route is debated, but it is almost certain that he did not pass through the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary. A later source associates him with the town of Ragusa (now Dubrovnik, Croatia), where he was to make a donation towards the rebuilding of the local cathedral.⁷¹

The first of the Hungarian kings to take a vow of crusade was Béla III. Under Béla III, the census of royal and ecclesiastical revenues may also have been linked to the preparations for the crusade.⁷² But it is difficult to pin the king's vow to a date or an event, which is usually placed between the date of the German Emperor Henry VI's vow of the cross in April 1195 and the death of the Hungarian king in April 1196.⁷³ Of course, it cannot be ruled out that it was made much earlier, in connection with the visit of Emperor Frederick in 1189, or with the canonization of King Ladislav (Ladislaus, Hung. László) in 1192. What is certain is that King Béla took the cross together with Archbishop Job of Esztergom. Later, Pope Innocent III allowed the archbishop of Esztergom and twelve knights to postpone their obligations in order to restore order in the country.⁷⁴ There are also records of pilgrim vows from these decades, such as the donation of land and money to the Cistercian Abbey of Heiligenkreuz in 1194–95, by Dominic, related to the king, governor (*banus*) of Slavonia, in redemption for his cancelled pilgrimage to the Holy Land, with the consent of

⁷⁰ *Chronicle of the Third Crusade: A Translation of the Itinerarium peregrinorum et Gesta regis Ricardi*, Helen J. Nicholson transl., pp. 82, 234 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997); James Ross Sweeney, 'Hungary in the Crusades, 1169–1218', *The International History Review* 3 (1981), no. 4, pp. 467–81, esp. 471–72.

⁷¹ Ivica Prlender, 'An Eastern Adriatic merchant republic (Dubrovnik) facing the temptations of the Crusades', in *The Crusades and the Military Orders*, pp. 173–86, esp. 173–74.

⁷² Lecture by Dániel Bácsatyai, Béla III and the survival of the income register of the Hungarian high priests (BNF lat. 2638). Budapest, 30 April 2025.

⁷³ Thomas C. Van Cleve, 'The Fifth Crusade', in *A History of the Crusades*, Kenneth M. Setton ed., vol. 2 *The Later Crusades 1189–1311*, Robert Lee Wolff, and Harry W. Hazard eds. pp. 386–94, esp. 386–87 (Madison-London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969); James M. Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade, 1213–1221*, p. 127 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986); Florin Curta, *Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages (500–1300)*, Brill's Companions to European History 19, 1: p. 546 (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2019).

⁷⁴ *Die Register Innocenz III*, vol. 1, Othmar Hageneder and Anton Haidacher eds., nr. 10 (Graz, Köln: Böhlau, 1964).

the pope and the king.⁷⁵ There is a mention that a certain Andrew, son of Scerben, divorced his wife and allowed her to remarry, as he had left for Jerusalem in 1216 with the intention of never returning.⁷⁶

An exciting and mysterious chapter of medieval Hungarian historiography tells of how King Ladislas I (r. 1077–95), canonized in 1192, was asked to lead the First Crusade.⁷⁷ The story appears in the legend of the king, and in a similar contemporary version of the Hungarian Chronicle. According to the legend of Ladislas: “He vowed to go to Jerusalem in order that where the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was shed for our redemption, he might himself fight against the enemies of Christ’s cross at the cost of his own blood. And the leaders of the Franks, of the Lothringians, and of the Alemanni, who were about to set out on the same way with the army of the Lord, all together and of one accord decided to elect the pious King Ladislas rightly as their proper leader and commander. However, before the army of the Lord from France and from Germany and from the other Western region came together in Hungary, the pious king... he was seized by a sudden illness...departed to the Lord”.⁷⁸ The text of the Hungarian Chronicle even added that “When he was celebrating Easter at Bodrog, behold, there came to him messengers from France and from Spain, from England and Brittany, and especially from William, the brother of the king of the Franks, and they divulged to him their intention to avenge the injury done to the almighty God and to free the Holy City and the most Holy Sepulchre from the hand of the Saracens. Therefore they asked the glorious king that on their behalf he should be their leader and commander of the army of Jesus Christ. When the king heard this, he rejoiced with a great joy, and at the same feast he took his leave from the Hungarian nobles”.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ *Urkundenbuch des Burgenlandes und der angrenzenden Gebiete der Komitate Wieselburg, Ödenburg und Eisenburg*, 1: *Die Urkunden von 808 bis 1270*, Hans Wagner ed., Publikationen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, VII. Reihe, 1, p. 28 (nr. 55) (Graz–Köln: H. Böhlau Nachf., 1955); Tamás Kádár, ‘Egy régi keletű genealógiai talány a 12. század végéről: Miskolc nembeli Domonkos bán rokonsága a magyar királyi családdal’. [An enigma of old standing from the end of the 12th century: relationship with the Hungarian royal family of the Domonkos banus of the Miskolc kindred], *Turul*, 92 (2019) no. 2, pp. 49–58.

⁷⁶ János Karácsonyi – Samu Borovszky, *Az időrendbe szedett váradi tűzesvas-próba-lajstrom* [The chronological list of the Várad ordeals by fire], p. 210 (nr. 160) (Budapest: Várad Káptalan, 1903).

⁷⁷ László Veszprémy, “Dux et preceptor Hierosolomitatorum”. König Ladislaus (László) von Ungarn als imaginärer Kreuzritter’, in *The Man of Many Devices, Who Wandered Full Many Ways: Festschrift in Honor of János M. Bak*, Marcell Sebők, and Balázs Nagy, pp. 470–77 (Budapest: CEU Press, 1999); Id., *History Writing and Historians in Hungary of the Árpáds*, pp. 309–38.

⁷⁸ ‘De Sancto Ladizlao rege Ungarie / On Saint Ladislaus King of Hungary’, Cristian Gașpar transl., in: *The Sanctity of the Leaders*, pp. 415–44, esp. 428–31.

⁷⁹ *Chronica de gestis Hungarorum e codice picto saec. xiv. Chronicle of the Deeds of the Hungarians from the Fourteenth-century Illuminated Codex*, János M. Bak, and László Veszprémy eds., Central European Medieval Texts, vol. 9, p. 261 (Budapest–New York: CEU Press – Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, 2018); Attila Bárány relates the figure of Britannia in the Hungarian chronicle to Brittany, and refers to the Norman princes, especially Alan IV, who himself took part in the crusade. Attila Bárány, “Nyugati követek Bodroiban. Wylermus, a francia király frateré”

Considering that King Ladislas died months before the crusade was announced, on 29 July 1095, the report can in no way be considered contemporary. Similarly, it is an anachronism that, according to the chronicle, before the invitation to the crusade, the king is unanimously invited by the German leaders to become their emperor, which he refuses out of piety. The news of Ladislas's election as emperor is chronologically absurd, since the German emperor Henry IV (d. 1106) survived Ladislas.⁸⁰

It is very likely that the fictitious tradition of Ladislas' crusading role was developed in the Hungarian royal court in preparation for his canonization. After the defeat of Hattin in 1187, it was rightly thought that the link between the reign of Ladislas and the memory of the First Crusade might support the granting of papal permission. The Hungarian king's envoys may have arrived in Rome as early as 1189 with the request and the text of the proto-legend, and Pope Celestine III's reply – presumably supportive – may have reached the Hungarian royal court in 1191.⁸¹ The contemporaries may not have been aware that King Ladislas had died before the Council of Clermont, so the claim may have seemed plausible to them. But not only to contemporaries, but also to posterity. Given that the memory of King Andrew II, the leader of the actual crusade of 1217–18, remained controversial in Hungary, King Ladislas became the Hungarian crusader par excellence, even blurring the memory of Andrew's crusade, celebrated in historical literature and the visual arts right up to the early twentieth century.

Both Béla III and his son Andrew II were keen to make King Ladislas their role model, and proclaimed themselves to become crusaders in the footsteps of the holy king. This is not, of course, unique in medieval historiography, since sources from the fourteenth centuries sought to link the memory of Zvonimir, the Croatian king who died in 1089, with the crusades. The events were reconstructed in such a way that the king wanted to join the campaign, but was prevented from doing so by the murder of his own nobles.⁸²

[Western envoys in Bodrog County. Wylermus, the frater of the King of France], in *Hadi és más nevezetes történetek. Tanulmányok Veszprémy László tiszteletére*, Katalin Mária Kincses ed., pp. 66–72 (Budapest: HM Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum, 2018).

⁸⁰ Emperor Henry IV died only in 1106, of the rival kings Rudolf in 1080, Herman in 1088 and Conrad in 1101. In the Latin Empire, Peter II of Courtenay was elected emperor from 1216, but he never reached the city until his death in 1219.

⁸¹ László Solymosi, 'Szent László király sírja, kultusza és szentté avatása' [Grave, cult and canonization of St. Ladislas], in: *A Szent László-berma- és a koponyaereklye vizsgálatai*, Lilla Alida Kristóf, et al. eds., pp. 16–41, esp. 29–35 (Győr: Győr Hittudományi Főiskola, 2017).

⁸² Borislav Grgin, 'Impact of the Crusades on Medieval Croatia', in *The Crusades and the Military Orders*, pp. 167–71; Péter Rokay, 'Das Motiv des unverwirklichten Kreuzzuges in den Biographien der mittelalterlichen Herrscher', in *900 Years from Saint Ladislas Death. Proceedings of the International Historical Conference (Oradea, June 16–18, 1995)*, Alexandru Sasianu, and Georg Gorun eds., pp. 78–82 (Oradea: Christian Research Center, Oradea: Pelikan Publishing House, 1996).

THE FOURTH CRUSADE

After the death of King Béla III, the direct participation of the Hungarian kingdom in the campaigns was greatly hindered by the rivalry between his two sons, Emeric (r. 1196–1204) and Andrew (r. 1205–35), which often took on an armed character. From 1198, regardless of this rivalry, the pope expected King Emeric to take part in the next crusade, the only one of the crowned monarchs to do so. Although the Pope rejected Emeric's request to postpone his participation on 9 November 1202, the Hungarians nevertheless stayed away from the Fourth Crusade. The crusade took a tragic turn, perhaps precisely because of the absence of the Hungarians. In 1202, the crusaders led by the Venetian doge arrived by sea at the Dalmatian trading town of Zara (now Zadar, Croatia), then under Hungarian rule, on the Adriatic coast. Zara, like the whole of the Dalmatian coast, lay in the collision zone between the two powers that had traditionally held the territory, Byzantium, then in decline, and Venice, now on the rise. They were joined at the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries by the Kingdom of Hungary. Although the Hungarian kings had taken Dalmatia as their dominion, Hungarian rule was already very precarious from the 1110s, even though the Hungarians managed to temporarily take possession of the coastal region. Now the Venetians, with the help of the crusaders, captured and sacked Zara after a bloody siege.⁸³ Though protested to the pope, who condemned Venice and called on them to make reparation to King Emeric, the Hungarians made no attempt to liberate the city, which remained largely under Venetian rule throughout the century.⁸⁴ Later in 1217, King Andrew II had no choice but to recognize the status quo in a treaty to be presented later.

The Venetian argument was that "*the king of Hungary had taken the city of Zara from them*", and it was also implied that the Hungarian king had taken up the cross only to snatch Zara from them under the legal protection of the crusaders, as the doge's letter to the pope in 1204 literally reads. A few of the French crusaders were reluctant to take part in the violent action, they marched to the Hungarian royal court in protest, but this did not change the course of events.

It is at this time that the sources mention a certain Hungarian count called "Moncia", who may be the same as the nobleman Móg who took up the cross during the reign of King Béla III. Though he was allowed to postpone his vow,

⁸³ Michael J. Angold, *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context* (Harlow–New York: Longman, 2003).

⁸⁴ *Die Register Innocenz III*, vol. 5, Othmar Hageneder, and Sommerlechner Andrea eds., pp. 315–17 (nr. 160/161), 318–20 (nr. 161/162) (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2001).

the events of the Hungarian civil war between the brothers Emeric and Andrew prompted him to go to the Holy Land after all. The fact that he is mentioned in the company of the Hospitaller Master, and an envoy from Montferrat suggests that during the Fourth Crusade Count Móg may have joined the French crusaders who then passed to Acre.⁸⁵

It was in these years that a new crusader order appeared in the Kingdom of Hungary. The Order of Saint Samson that took its name from the hospital of Saint Samson I of Constantinople, which the Latins continued to use after the fall of the city in 1204.⁸⁶ The Order was certainly in existence by 1208, probably founded between 1206 and 1207 by the Latin emperor Henry of Flanders. The Order may have acquired its houses in Hungary when in 1215 King Andrew II of Hungary married Yolanda of Courtenay, daughter of Peter II of Courtenay, Byzantine Emperor from 1216. Thanks to the charity of Andrew II and his sister, Princess Margaret,⁸⁷ the order settled in Székesfehérvár as well as Esztergom. Among the hospital orders in Hungary, the Hospital Brothers of St Antony with half a dozen houses and the Order of the Holy Ghost with nine houses should be mentioned. The Canons Regular of the Holy Sepulchre acquired estates especially under King Andrew II, who in 1207 granted them the privileges already enjoyed by the Templars and the Hospitallers.⁸⁸

THE FIFTH CRUSADE

King Béla III's eldest son, Emeric, inherited the throne, while it was left to his brother Andrew (later King Andrew II) to fulfil his father's vow of the crusade and King Béla provided him with the necessary funds.⁸⁹ Pope Innocent III's (1198–1216) decretal *Licet universis* ensured that King Béla's vow would

⁸⁵ *The Deeds of Pope Innocent III*, James M. Powell transl., p. 222 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004); James R. Sweeney, 'Hungary in the Crusades', p. 477.

⁸⁶ *Dániel Bácsatyai*, 'From Samson to James: Two Minor Military Orders in Thirteenth-Century Hungary', in *Bridge of Civilizations*, pp. 302–8.

⁸⁷ A Byzantine Empress by marriage to Isaac II Angelos, and Queen of Thessalonica by marriage to Boniface of Montferrat, later regent, died after 1229 in Hungary.

⁸⁸ Beatrix F. Romhányi, 'Az ispotályos és lovagrendek helye a középkori magyarországi szerzetességben belül' [The place of the monastic and knightly orders within the medieval Hungarian monasticism]; Mihály Kurecskó–Balázs Stossek, 'A Szent Sír Kanonokrend Magyarországon' [The Order of the Holy Sepulchre in Hungary], in *Magyarország és a kereszties háborúk*, pp. 177–82; 211–23.

⁸⁹ The treasury in the Cistercian monastery of Pilis, two thirds of which would have been given to the Knights Templar and the Hospitallers, is associated with this. *Die Register Innocenz III*, vol. 8, Othmar Hageneder, and Sommerlechner Andrea et al. eds., pp. 62–63 (nr. 37) (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2002).

not be forgotten. In his decision, the pope, referring to the Hungarian example, declared that the oath of the cross was hereditary, and that obligations were passed from father to son.⁹⁰ The struggle for the throne between Emeric and Andrew postponed the start of the campaign for a long time, although the pope made several attempts to mobilize the Hungarian monarch from 1198 onwards. Emeric and Andrew repeatedly promised to fulfil their father's vow, but they did not dare to go.

Despite the precedents, generations of historians have puzzled over why Andrew, as prince (1197–1204) and later king (r. 1205–35), delayed the launch of the crusade. A wide variety of explanations have been put forward, most of which have sought to answer the question by attributing negative qualities to the king. A more nuanced explanation is the reference to the alleged unpopularity of the crusades in Hungary, which on the basis of events, is more likely to be refuted.⁹¹ In fact, there were few Hungarian monarchs whose families were more strongly influenced by the crusades than those of Béla III and his son Andrew II.

Pope Innocent had already sent a letter to Andrew in 1198 about the planned crusade.⁹² He threatened to disqualify him from the succession to the throne, and that if his brother Emeric died, he would be succeeded by another brother instead of himself. The deadline for launching the campaign was 14 September, the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

The political situation at home, the opposition to Emeric, explains why Andrew did not want to take advantage of the opportunity offered by the campaign. Yet, in addition to the prestige, the vow of the crusade came with considerable privileges and ecclesiastical protection, and Andrew wished to enjoy it.⁹³ The memory of 14 September, however, may have lingered in Andrew's mind, and he may have waited until that feast in 1217 to set out.

Family tradition may have played just as much a role in his attraction to the crusades. King Andrew's grandparents, King Géza II and his wife, were benefactors of the Hospitallers, the founders of the Order of the Stephanites. The

⁹⁰ James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader*, p. 78 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969); Florin Curta, *Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages*, 1: p. 554; James Ross Sweeney, 'Hungary in the Crusades', p. 473–76.

⁹¹ Attila Zsoldos, *II. András., az Aranybulla királya* [Andrew II, the King of the Golden Bull], pp. 396–99. (Székesfehérvár: Municipal Archives and Research Institute, 2022).

⁹² György Szabados, 'Egy elmaradt keresztes hadjáratról. Magyar–szentszéki kapcsolatok 1198–1204 között' [On a crusade that failed. Hungarian–Papal relations between 1198 and 1204], in „Magyaroknak eleiről”. *Ünnepi tanulmányok a hatvan esztendősk Makk Ferenc tiszteletére*, Ferenc Piti ed., pp. 476–77 (Szeged: Szegedi Középkorász Műhely, 1999).

⁹³ In March 1215, in the midst of internal political struggles and in the grip of rebellious barons, the English King John Lackland took up the cross without seriously considering the possibility of doing so.

Hungarian court was no less influenced by the kinship of Andrew's mother, Agnès (Anne) de Châtillon. The queen was the child of the well-known crusader Renaud of Châtillon and Constance of Antioch. The tragic story of Agnès's father, already well known among her contemporaries, may have been told also at the Hungarian court. Renaud was taken prisoner in 1187 after the fatal battle of Hattin, and was beheaded by Saladin. Agnès of Châtillon was brought up in Byzantium from a young age, as her half-sister Mary was the wife of the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Comnenus. It was thanks to this Byzantine connection that Agnès became the wife of Prince Béla, at that time called Alexios. Later, Béla as king maintained close links with the Orthodox world. In 1193/6 in a charter in Greek, Béla donated the Orthodox monastery of Száva-szentdemeter (now Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia) with all its appurtenances, together with the Church and hospital of St Julian in Constantinople to the Lavra of St Theodosios in Jerusalem, founded on the site where the Biblical Magi had rested.⁹⁴ The Theodosios Lavra confirmed the donation with the Pope on 29 January 1218, after the monks had travelled from Jerusalem to the Hungarian king, Andrew for his confirmation.⁹⁵

No less important is King Andrew's kinship with Margaret (Hung. Margit) Capet, the second wife of his father Béla III, since in 1192 Margaret's nephew Henry of Champagne became King of Jerusalem. Margaret as a widow, went to Jerusalem and died there in 1197, with her body resting in the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Tyre.⁹⁶ Thanks to his first wife, Agnès, King Andrew became related to most of the dynasties of the Holy Land, a relationship he exploited during his crusade.⁹⁷

THE CAMPAIGN

More than twenty years had passed since the solemn vow, it was obviously a combination of domestic and foreign policy considerations that prompted the Hungarian king to actually participate. Andrew was preparing to embark on the campaign together with his cousin, the Austrian Duke Leopold VI of

⁹⁴ György Györffy, *A szávaszentdemeteri görög monostor*, 2: p. 81

⁹⁵ György Györffy, *A szávaszentdemeteri görög monostor*, 2: p. 86.

⁹⁶ Denys Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom*, vol. 4: p. 184. The queen's entry into Jerusalem – leading the Hungarians on a crusade, painted by Édouard Pingret, can be viewed in the third room of the *Salles de croisades* in the Château de Versailles.

⁹⁷ Attila Bárány, 'II. András balkáni külpolitikája' [Foreign policy of King Andrew II in the Balkans], in: *II. András és Székesfehérvár*, Terézia Kerny, András Smohay eds., *A Székesfehérvári Egyházmegyei Múzeum kiadványai* 12, pp. 129–73, esp. 147 (Székesfehérvár: Székesfehérvári Egyházmegyei Múzeum, 2012).

Babenberg.⁹⁸ They certainly took into account that King John of Jerusalem had concluded a five-year truce with Sultan al-Adil, which would expire in July 1217. The pope had addressed a letter to the Arab sultan at the start of the campaign, justifying its legitimacy.⁹⁹ For Andrew, the prospect of a campaign was apparently accompanied by a strong foreign policy opening, with a more vigorous assertion of Hungarian supremacy, above all in Halych (Galicia, now in Ukraine), Dalmatia, and the Balkans. The death of Emperor Henry of Flanders (r. 1206–16) in June 1216 offered King Andrew the opportunity to intervene in Byzantine internal affairs, as he married in 1215 the daughter of the Latin emperor of Constantinople, Peter II of Courtenay (r. 1216–17/1219). Though there is no evidence from any source that he himself aspired to the Byzantine throne, his supposed claims to the throne being more of a tactical move.¹⁰⁰ A letter from Pope Honorius III of 30 January 1217 reveals that the pope knew that Andrew would set out for Constantinople by land on the scheduled date, having been approached by envoys from the Latin Empire.¹⁰¹ Only the pope's letter, and the legend of St. Ladislav, probably revised during the reign of Andrew II, can prove that Andrew was somehow involved in the Byzantine succession.¹⁰²

The date of the start of the crusade in 1217 was already decided before February 1213. Since 1213, and especially after Pope Honorius' accession to the papal throne in August 1216, we cannot speak of the Hungarian king's delay. Andrew was all the more likely to undertake this task, since his correspondence with the pope showed that he would be the only Western crowned monarch in the campaign and that he enjoyed the pope's full confidence. This is evidenced by the fact that the pope wrote eight letters to King John of Jerusalem and twenty-three to the Hungarian king.¹⁰³ More recent historiography,

⁹⁸ Leopold VI was son of Duke Leopold V and his wife, Helena, daughter of the Hungarian king, Géza II.

⁹⁹ James Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade*, p. 28.

¹⁰⁰ Attila Bárány, 'II. András és a Latin Császárság' [King Andrew II and the Latin Empire], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 126 (2013), pp. 461–80.

¹⁰¹ *Vetera monumenta historica Hungariam sacram illustrantia*, 2 vols., Augustino Theiner ed., 1: p. 4 (nr. 5), (Romae: Typis Vaticanis, 1859–1860).

¹⁰² It may be that during the negotiations with Venice for the lease of a ship, the claim to the Byzantine throne was floated by the Hungarian court to strengthen the Hungarian position, with little success given the price negotiated, Stefan Albrecht, 'Das Griechische Projekt Andreas II', in *Philopation: Spaziergang im kaiserlichen Garten. Schriften über Byzanz und seine Nachbarn. Festschrift für Arne Effenberger zum 70. Geburtstag*, Neslihan Asutay-Effenberger, and Falko Daim eds., pp. 252–72 (Regensburg: Verlag Schnell and Steiner, 2013).

¹⁰³ Thomas Smith, 'The Role of Pope Honorius III in the Fifth Crusade', in *The Fifth Crusade in Context: The Crusading Movement in the Early Thirteenth Century*, E. J. Mylod, Guy Perry, Thomas W. Smith and Jan Vandeburie eds., pp. 15–26 (London: Routledge, 2017); Id., *Curia and Crusade. Pope Honorius III and the Recovery of the Holy Land 1216–1227*, pp. 103–26 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017); Guy Perry, *John of Brienne. King of Jerusalem, Emperor of Constantinople*

especially Thomas Smith, strongly believes that the pope based the Fifth Crusade on the Hungarian king, and refutes that the pope saw the leader at that time in Frederick II, who was also a crusader. Indeed, the Hungarian Chronicle was not mistaken when it mentioned Andrew as the leader of the campaign: “*He thus fulfilled and redeemed the vow made by his father. In the Holy Land he was appointed captain and leader of the army of the Christians against the Sultan of Babylon, and soon he won a glorious victory.*”¹⁰⁴

Honorius III, on 15 July 1216, asked the archbishops of Spalato (now Split, Croatia), Esztergom and Kalocsa to pray for the success of the campaign. On 21 November, this was followed by further letters to the prelates, in which the pope called on them to pay one-twentieth of their church’s income to the Templars and the Hospitallers as crusade aid.¹⁰⁵ In January 1217, the pope wrote to the crusaders in Cologne that King Andrew was preparing for the crusade. In a letter of 11 February, he granted papal protection to Andrew, his family, kingdom and possessions, and arranged for his succession in the event of his death. Several others, including Bishop Robert of Veszprém, Archbishop John of Esztergom and the king’s brother-in-law, archbishop of Kalocsa, Berthold were granted papal dispensation to participate.¹⁰⁶ In the meantime, the latter had become patriarch of Aquileia, and under his protection the king’s son, Prince Béla (later King Béla IV), awaited the return of his father, while the archbishop of Esztergom was given the task of governing the kingdom in the absence of the monarch. The domestic political risk of the campaign is shown by the fact that the archbishop had to leave the country during the crusade because of the threat of revolts.

The papal letter of 24 July already deals with the planned meeting of the crusaders in Cyprus on 8 September, which did not take place. If the fleet did stop in Cyprus, it was only to refresh their supplies. Among the possible leaders, the pope names only Andrew and Duke Leopold VI of Austria in a letter to King John of Jerusalem and the leaders of the Templars and Hospitallers. The proposed meeting point in Cyprus is perhaps an indication that the pope was trying from the outset to relegate King John to the background.

The Hungarian king did not choose the land route in the end, if he had seriously considered the possibility. He turned to Venice to secure the ships and concluded a contract in the first half of the year. The contract for the charter of ships is not only an important source of military and maritime

c.1175–1237, pp. 97–8 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

¹⁰⁴ *Chronica de gestis Hungarorum*, pp. 323–25.

¹⁰⁵ Gábor Barabás, *Das Papsttum und Ungarn in der ersten Hälfte des 13. Jahrhunderts* (ca. 1198 – ca. 1241), pp. 191–92 (Vienna: Institut für Ungarische Geschichtsforschung in Wien et al, 2014).

¹⁰⁶ Gábor Barabás, *Das Papsttum und Ungarn*, p. 136.

history, but also the earliest surviving international trade treaty in Hungary.¹⁰⁷ The treaty is the first to contain the Hungarian king's renunciation of his claim to Zara, which he had already lost in 1202, followed by the trade agreement and the contract. The treaty was omitted in the Hungarian tradition by *damnatio memoriae* because of the renunciation of Zara, but it was copied several times in Venice over the centuries as a document securing rights.

The two Hungarian negotiators who concluded the treaty enjoyed the king's confidence, although it is doubtful whether they had full authority over the question of Zara. One of them was the prior of the Hospitaller Order in Hungary, '*prior domus hospitalis totius Hungariae*', whose identification was uncertain, as his name was marked with a 'P' sigil in the charter. He was identified by Kornél Szovák with the former Hospitaller prior of Saint-Gilles, Pierre de Faucon, who may have had the necessary diplomatic experience and linguistic skills.¹⁰⁸ Not much is known about the other ambassador, the Transylvanian prelate Alexander, who may be the same as Bishop Alexander of Várad (now Oradea, Romania) between 1219 and 1230. However, there is also evidence of the king's commitment to the Templars. During his absence, he made Pontius de Cruce governor of Croatia and Dalmatia, and on his departure he donated the castle of Clissa (now Klis, Croatia) near Spalato to the Order, and on his return the estate of Gacka, presumably in return for their support.¹⁰⁹ It is known that Pope Honorius III asked the Hungarian Templars and Hospitallers in the autumn of 1216 to collect the twentieth part of the tithe (*vicesima*), and also to manage the money from the conversion of the vows of the cross and to deliver it from Hungary to the Holy Land.¹¹⁰ It is known that in 1220, after the collection of the sum, the extraordinary papal tithe collected in the Kingdom of Hungary was used to pay 1,711 marks of silver and 38 marks of gold.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ *Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum meridionalium*, Šime Ljubić: ed., vol. 1, pp. 29–31 (no. 38) (Zagreb: apud Fr. Zupan, 1868); Árpádkori Új Okmánytár [Charters from the Árpád era, New series], vols. I–XII, Gusztáv Wenzel ed., 6: pp. 377–79 (no. 233) (Pest-Budapest: Eggenberger Ferdinánd Akadémiai Könyvtársulás, 1860–1874); Dénes Huszti, *Olasz-magyar kereskedelmi kapcsolatok a középkorban* [Italo-Hungarian commercial relations in the Middle Ages] pp. 12, 30–32 (Budapest: Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1941).

¹⁰⁸ *Uros apát és műve – Egy tevékeny élet Szent Márton szolgálatában* [Abbot Uros and his work – An active life in the service of Saint Martin], Kornél Szovák, Imre Takács eds., pp. 81–83. (Pannonhalma: Pannonhalmi Főapátság, 2024).

¹⁰⁹ Miha Kosi, 'The Age of the Crusades in the South-East of the Empire: between the Alps and the Adriatic', in *The Crusades and the Military Orders*, pp. 123–65., esp. 137.

¹¹⁰ *Cartulaire général de l'Ordre des Hospitaliers*, 2: pp. 194–95 (no. 1483).

¹¹¹ Gábor Barabás, *Das Papsttum und Ungarn*, p. 138. Zsolt Hunyadi, 'Szent János ispotályos testvérei: A johanniták Magyarországon a 12. század közepétől a konstanzi zsinatig' [The hospital brothers of St. John. The Hospitallers in Hungary from the middle of the 12th c. until the Council of Constance], *Máltai tanulmányok* 1 (2019) no. 1–2, pp. 1–116, esp. 46–49.

The mention of the Hospitaller Master in the contract is noteworthy, as he could help the king with the transfer of instalments. However, it is surprising that not once during the campaign is there any mention of members of the knightly orders being part of the king's entourage, though the knights were sometimes in the Holy Land in person, as Martin, the first known provincial superior of the Hungarian and Czech provinces (1186–93) in Tyre in 1188.¹¹² However, the king's confidence in the Templar leaders proved to be lasting, as the Hungarian master, Rembald (Raimbault) de Voczon visited Rome as the king's envoy in 1232.¹¹³

The estimation of the number of ships is ultimately related to the interpretation of two sources: the contract with the Venetian Doge Pietro Ziani (1205–29) and the information in the chronicle, entitled “*Historia Salonitana*” by Thomas of Split.¹¹⁴ The contract was for the lease of ten large transport ships.¹¹⁵ The contract specified the size of the ships as a minimum of 143 tonnes, and the text stated that 50 seamen would be provided for every 269 tonnes, or 500 *milliaria*. Thus, for each 269 tonnes, the hire price is 550 marks in silver, in Venetian currency. The sum was very substantial, increased by the cost of waiting the ships for a month in Spalato. The payment of the fee was meticulously regulated in three instalments, starting on 14 May 1217. The ships were to arrive in Spalato on the feast of St James on 25 July. Ships of this type could carry about 500 soldiers or 150 horses, which means that the king had to hire several other smaller ships to transport several thousand horsemen and, of course, at least a few thousands on foot. We also know from Thomas of Split that ships were chartered also from other towns, but the exact size of these is not known. Something else may have influenced the departure, as the usual sailing dates were April–May and September–October. This shows that the departure of the Hungarian army was not only due to delays, but also to the waiting for the right time to sail.¹¹⁶ According to the Venetian regulation of 1233, ships had to arrive

¹¹² Zsolt Hunyadi, *The Knights Hospitallers*, pp. 75–76.

¹¹³ Zsolt Hunyadi, ‘Cruciferi domus hospitalis per Hungariam et Sclavoniam. A johanniták Magyarországon a 14. század végéig’ [The Hospitallers in Hungary until the end of the 14th century], *Aetas* 17 (2002) no. 4: pp. 52–57, esp. p. 66, Hunyadi: *The Hospitallers* pp. 70–71, 92–93.

¹¹⁴ Thomas of Split (Hung. Tamás Spalatói) archdeacon, *History of the Bishops of Salona and Split*, Olga Perić, Damir Karbić, Mirjana Mattjević Sokol, James Ross Sweeney eds., pp. 158–59 (Budapest - New York, Central European University Press, 2006); László Veszprémy, ‘II. András magyar király kereszteseinek létszáma’ [The number of crusaders of King Andrew II of Hungary], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 107 (1994), pp. 113–16.

¹¹⁵ *Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum meridionalium*, Šime Ljubić: ed., vol. 1, pp. 29–31 (no. 38); Olivier-Nori Guyotjeannin, ‘Venezia e il trasporto dei crociati. A proposito di un patto del 1219’, *Studi medievali* 30 (1989), pp. 309–21.

¹¹⁶ Louise Buenger Robbert, ‘Venetian Participation in the Crusade of Damietta’, *Studi Veneziani*. N.S., 30 (1995), pp. 15–34, esp. 21–22; John H. Pryor: *Geography, Technology and War. Studies in*

in Acre no later than 8 May, or 8 October in the autumn, in order to be able to return before the onset of the inclement season.¹¹⁷

Thomas of Split was probably personally present at the king's arrival, so his description of the events is an eyewitness account: "...[the king] hired large vessels from Venice, Ancona, Zadar, and other cities along the Adriatic coast. He directed them all to set their course for the harbor of the city of Split. Moreover, he sent ahead all the equipment, arms, and provisions on a great number of carts and pack-animals. So when they arrived they filled the entire city to overflowing. In advance of the king and the Hungarians a huge crowd of Saxons arrived... There were then said to have been more than 10,000 horsemen in the royal retinue, not including a host of commoners, who were almost without number... King Andrew delayed his departure for some time as the fleet was being readied, meanwhile the king boarded ship and set out on his prearranged journey... Yet, as the king had been unable to obtain a sufficiently large fleet to transport all the crusaders, some were compelled by necessity to return home, while others were obliged to wait until the following year."¹¹⁸

The sources agree that the Hungarian king's army was considerable, but we are forced to confront the phantom of the ten thousand knights mentioned by Thomas of Split, and followed by modern researchers.¹¹⁹ What is certain is that the army that arrived in Acre was considered considerable, and their numbers tended to be overestimated. "The History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria" also records the arrival of Andrew II. According to the text, they came in 160 ships and the review held after the landing saw four thousand knights and 90,000 foot soldiers.¹²⁰ William of Tyre wrote of 2,000 knights, 1,000 retainers and 20,000 infantry, while the Arab chronicler Abu Shama wrote of 15,000 men.¹²¹

the Mediterranean 649–1571, pp. 87–89 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988).

¹¹⁷ David Jacoby, 'A Venetian Sailing to Acre in 1282. Between. Private. Shipping and Privately Operated State Galleys', in *In laudem Hierosolymitani: Studies in Crusades and Medieval Culture in Honour of Benjamin Z. Kedar*, Iris Shagrir, Ronnie Ellenblum, Jonathan Riley-Smith et. al. eds.), pp. 395–410, esp. 404 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

¹¹⁸ Thomas of Split archdeacon, *History of the Bishops of Salona and Split*, pp. 158–59.

¹¹⁹ Thus, Thomas C. Van Cleve, 'The Fifth Crusade', p. 386, writes of 10,000 horsemen. Powell considers the number of four thousand estimated by the 'History of the Egyptian Church' to be realistic, James Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade*, p. 168.

¹²⁰ *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church, known as the History of the Holy Church, by Sawirus ibn al-Mukaffā', Bishop of al-Asmunin* (édition bilingue arabe-anglais), vol. 5: pp. 200–15 (Le Caire: Société d'archéologie copte, 1943–74).

¹²¹ Abu Shama (Abou Chamah, d. 1267), *Le Livre des deux jardins, ou Histoire des deux règnes: celui de Nour Ed-Dîn et celui de Salah Ed-Dîn*, A.-C. Barbier de Meynard, transl., p. 162. *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Historiens orientaux*, vols. 4 and 5 (Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 1898, 1906). His figure refers to the army that withdrew from Acre.

The proportion of Hungarians and foreigners, especially Austrians and Germans, among the assembled is unclear. This is significant because, if the Hungarians were in the minority, their departure did not substantially weaken the crusading army remaining in the Holy Land.

The known costs of the campaign were considerable, and the king took with him, in addition to cash, valuables and loans from Italian bankers and the Knights of St. John. Thus, in the Holy Land, he sold the jeweled crown of the first Hungarian queen, Gisela, wife of Stephen, containing 12 marks of pure gold, which had been kept in the cathedral of Veszprém,¹²² and a chalice decorated with precious stones known as “*scyphus*”, from the Benedictine abbey of Tihany, for 140 marks of silver.¹²³ He borrowed on several occasions, as we know, and Andrew himself refers to this in a letter to the pope in 1219. The Venetian pledge in favor of the Ghisi merchant house in Italy in the 1220s was probably intended to settle the unpaid debts of the Hungarian king. In 1224, the Hungarian king repaid 201 silver marks to the Ghisi bankers, John and his son Natalis.¹²⁴ We also know that on his return from the campaign, the king borrowed 200 marks from the Hungarian Count Atyusz.

The question of where the Austrian duke Leopold VI marched his army is disputed. It would be logical that he would also have hurried to the Dalmatian coast, as suggested by modern historians following Reinhold Röhricht's work.¹²⁵ The duke's itinerary, however, suggests a different route, since Leopold celebrated his departure from Klosterneuburg on 24 June with the consecration of the altar two days later at the Cistercian abbey of Lilienfeld, which he had founded.¹²⁶ He was in no hurry to leave, evidently waiting for his vassals and ministers, and on 9 July he had only reached Gemona in Friuli, 30 kilometers from Udine. Here he signed a treaty with the Patriarch of Aquileia, witnessed by his later crusader comrades-in-arms, including Henry IV of Andech, margrave of Istria. It is very likely that he embarked in Venice with his entourage. If this was indeed the case, Nicholas Morton may be right in assuming that he

¹²² *Regesta regum stirpis Arpadianae critico-diplomatica*, 1: pp. 112–3, 127–8 (nrs. 340, 383, 386.)

¹²³ *Regesta regum stirpis Arpadianae critico-diplomatica*, 1: p. 163 (nr. 508).

¹²⁴ Louis Buenger Robbert, ‘Venetian Participation’, p. 31.

¹²⁵ Reinhold Röhricht, ‘Die Kreuzzugsbewegung im Jahre 1217’, in *Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte* 16 (1876), pp. 137–56, esp. p. 143, where he writes that Leopold left Spalato before Andres's arrival. For the new itinerary see Miha Kosi, ‘The Fifth Crusade and its Aftermath: Crusading in the Southeast of the Holy Roman Empire in the First Decades of the Thirteenth Century’, *Crusades* 17 (2018), pp. 91–113, esp. 98–9.

¹²⁶ Johannes Preiser-Kapeller, ‘From Ostarrichi to the Bosphorus. Ein Überblick zu den Beziehungen im Mittelalter’, in *Pro Oriente Jahrbuch* 2010, pp. 66–77 (Vienna: Phoibos, 2011); Ilse Schondorfer, *Die Babenberger und die Kreuzzugsbewegung. Zur Beteiligung des österreichischen und steirischen Adels an den Kreuzzügen des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts*. PhD dissertation (Vienna, 1992).

arrived in the East earlier. This could be justified by the duke's attempt to interfere in the succession to the Cypriot throne.¹²⁷ We have no record of the Venetian ship contract by Leopold, but the *Klosterneuburg Annals* says that he reached Acre in 16 days, perhaps as early as the beginning of August, well ahead of the Hungarians. What is certain is that no source from Spalato has yet been found about the duke's arrival there, which would be expected given his distinguished entourage. Surprisingly the Armenian chronicler Sempad le Connétable, who followed the events until the 1270s, says that the Austrian duke arrived with a large army, the Hungarian king with a smaller one.¹²⁸ True, there were some who went to the original assembly point at Brindisi, such as Friedrich II Ellinger, the provost of Berchtesgaden, but died there before he left.¹²⁹

The route of the Hungarian Crusade army led from Székesfehérvár via Veszprém and Zagreb – presumably passing through the Cistercian abbey of Topusko (var. Toplica), a favorite foundation of Andrew II – via Knin, Muc and Clissa to Spalato. We can follow the route exactly from Zagreb (*Fig. 4*). The King attended the re-consecration of the cathedral founded by St. Ladislav, and from there he marched to the coast, accompanied by the bishop of Zagreb, Stephen, to Spalato, where he arrived on 23 August. The city's ecclesiastical and secular dignitaries received the king with great pomp, and on his arrival he began his stay with a mass in the church of St Domnius, converted from the mausoleum of the Roman Emperor Diocletian. The most notable names of the Hungarian king's entourage are those of the nobility, including the bishops, Uros, the abbot of Pannonhalma, Ugrin, later archbishop of Kalocsa, and of the lay dignitaries, Denis, master of the treasury and Laurence, the master of cup-bearers, whose names we learn from a charter issued to the Hospitallers in the Holy Land. Perhaps accompanying Andrew II's crusade was also the Count Turul, who made an arrangement with the bishop of Zagreb that if he did not return home or died childless, he would leave an estate to the bishopric of Veszprém.¹³⁰ If we are to believe the chronicler Simon of Kéza, who is generally

¹²⁷ Nicholas Morton, *Leopold VI, Duke of Austria, and His Claim to the Cypriot Throne*, ΕΙΕΘΗ-ΡΙΑΔΑ 34 (2008), 19–35, esp. 29–30; Van Cleve also argues that Leopold set out before Andrew, Van Cleve, *The Fifth Crusade*, p. 388.

¹²⁸ *La chronique attribuée au Connétable Smbat*, Gerard Dedeyan ed., p. 90 (ch. 48) (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1980).

¹²⁹ The deadline announced by the Pope in his bull "*Ad liberandam*" was 1 June 1217, and the ports of Brindisi and Messina were the locations. The bull was attached to the decisions of the Fourth Lateran Council. In July 1218, the Pope still knew that the Crusaders would meet in Cyprus on 8 September, Petrus Pressutti, *Regesta Honorii papae III*, vol. 1 pp. 117–8 (nrs. 672, 673), (Rome: typ. Vaticana 1888).

¹³⁰ *Regesta regum stirpis Arpadianae critico-diplomatica*, 1: part 1: pp. 105, 172 (nrs. 320, 554), 1: part 2: p. 180 (nr. 586).

well informed on Szekler affairs, Andrew II was accompanied by Szekler horsemen in the campaign.

The first Crusader troops set sail from the port of Vlerdingen on 27 May 1217 and from Dartmouth in England in early June 1217 on some 300 ships.¹³¹ Surprisingly, however, they landed in Acre long after the Austrian and Hungarian crusaders, only in the spring of 1218, at the end of April. The reason for the delay was complex, they were on a tight schedule, stopping at Compostela in Spain. Others, such as the Rhine troops, joined the Portuguese Reconquista fighting near Lisbon, but they did not take the castle of Alcácer da Sol until mid-October. The first marchers had not even left Europe when they had already lost ten percent of their ships. Likewise, the papal legate Pelagius, who had been chosen to lead the armies, did not arrive in the Holy Land until mid-September 1218.¹³²

In Acre, the announced meeting place of the Crusaders, the gathering was welcomed by Rudolf, Patriarch of Jerusalem. The Patriarch of Jerusalem also presented a remaining piece of the relic of the Holy Cross, lost in the Battle of Hattin in 1187, and the king and the duke went barefoot to the relic, knelt down and kissed it. Meanwhile, the priests prayed aloud to the heavens for the success of the campaign. The first major council of war was held on 3 November in the Hungarian king's tent in Acre, with the participation of church leaders and the heads of the three orders of knights.¹³³

They met with King John of Jerusalem and, with reinforcements from Cyprus and Antioch, launched an attack to increase the security of the Acre (Akko) Crusader state. The November campaign was led by King Andrew, apparently with the help of local Latins. The Latin chroniclers write less about the actual fighting of the Hungarians, and one of them, Oliver of Paderborn, was not even personally in the Holy Land at the time.¹³⁴ The Arab and Coptic sources provide essential information and, surprisingly, they are highly praiseworthy of the crusade, with the chronicler Abu'l Muzaffar (known as Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, c.1185–1256) describing Andrew as a 'brave and excellent warrior'. Abu Shama emphasizes that Andrew was at the head of his army.¹³⁵

¹³¹ Van Cleve, 'Fifth Crusade', p. 395.

¹³² Joseph P. Donovan, *Pelagius and the Fifth Crusade*, p. 46 (Philadelphia-London: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950).

¹³³ 'L'Estoire de Eracles empeureur', in *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Historiens occidentaux*; vol. 2., Auguste-Arthur Beugnot, ed., pp. 322–23 (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1859): "un jor a parlement en la tente dou roi de Hongrie".

¹³⁴ Oliverus Scholasticus, *The Capture of Damietta*, John J. Gavigan transl., pp. 51–6 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1948)

¹³⁵ Balázs Major, 'A magyar keresztesek arab szemmel' [Hungarian crusaders through Arab eyes], in József Laszlovszky, Judit Majorossy, József Zsengellér eds., pp. 113–18, 299–301 (Gödöllő, Máriabesnyő: Attraktor, 2006). The events of the battle were reconstructed in the

The first maneuvers were partly a reconnaissance operation and a combined training exercise to weld together troops from different countries, and partly to alleviate the pressing food shortages. The crusaders first set out with the relic of the Holy Cross on 4 November for the southern plain, considered fertile, towards Riccardana (Tell Kurdana, modern Tel Afek) not far from the city of Acre, where they set up camp. Sultan Al-Adil (al-Malik al-Adil, r. 1200–1218), was joined by his son al-Mu‘azzam (Sharaf ad-Dīn al-Mu‘azzam ‘Īsā, d. 1227), at Nablus, with troops brought from Syria. The crusaders reached Ain Jalut, a strategically important place 60 km from Acre, which controls the road between Nablus and Damascus. A fictional dialogue between the sultan and his son in the *Éracles*, a valuable French source on the campaign, also suggests that the Muslims may have overestimated the crusaders’ strength.¹³⁶

According to the Coptic Chronicle: “*Then he turned towards Syria, and he descended at Beisan unassembling his troops and his soldiers, and he stayed at it for a long time. And there reached the Franks a king from beyond the sea, known as the King Hankar. And it was said that they had assembled four thousand knights (horsemen) and a hundred thousand foot-men, and they came upon the troops of Al-Islam at Beisan. And they (the troops) did not stand against them, but they were routed, and the Franks pursued them for four or five days until they drove them away from the Litto-ral; and they pillaged the corn and arms, and they killed and they took captive a great many people.*”¹³⁷ The dispute between the sultan and his son over the conduct of the operation is recorded in Arab and Latin chronicles, for the father refused to allow his son to attack the crusaders, and instead retreated from them.¹³⁸ They took up positions in the defenses of Damascus, fearing a crusader attack, while he ordered his son to defend Jerusalem at Nablus.¹³⁹

On 7 November, they marched on from Beisan (Beit She’an), sacked the Sultan’s abandoned camp and crossed the Jordan River, where they took possession of the Roman bridge at the mouth of the Yarmouk River, where they bathed, as was the custom of the pilgrims. “Thence, crossing the Jordan on the vigil of St. Martin, we washed our bodies at leisure in it, and we rested throughout two days in the same place”.¹⁴⁰ From there, part of the army marched towards Damascus, without seriously confronting them. The Sultan reinforced

greatest detail by Attila Bárány, who is followed here, Attila Bárány, ‘King Andrew II of Hungary’s Crusade’.

¹³⁶ L’Etoile de Eracles empereur’, p. 324; Oliverus Scholasticus, *The Capture of Damietta*, pp. 51–56.

¹³⁷ *History of the Patriarchs*, p. 39.

¹³⁸ Abu Shama, *Le Livre des deux Jardins* 5. p. 162.

¹³⁹ Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī, *A History of the Ayyūbid Sultans of Egypt*, R. J. C. Broadhurst transl., Library of Classical Arabic Literature, vol. 5, pp. 164–66 (Boston: Twayne, 1980).

¹⁴⁰ Oliverus Scholasticus, *The Capture of Damietta*, p. 53.

the defenses of Damascus, by then overrun with refugees, and fled his court to Busra, with the other part of the army.

Returning to the other side, they followed the western coastline of the Sea of Galilee, visiting places familiar from the Bible. Bethsaida, where Jesus walked on the water, and Capernaum (Kfar Naḥūm), the city of Jesus, and of Mary Magdalene, Magdala (Migdál), and then they returned to Acre via Cana. All along the way, the sources point out that they obtained a lot of booty, which is a testimony to the success of the operation. It has been suggested that the incident mentioned in the Coptic chronicle of a Frankish king's cruelty to Syrian Christians could be linked to King Andrew, but Attila Bárány rejects this.¹⁴¹

After a short rest, the military action continued with the assault on Mount Tabor, which had been in the Christian war plans from the beginning.¹⁴² The huge fortress was built on a prominent rocky plateau 600 meters high, defended by 77 towers and a garrison of two thousand men. It controlled the roads from Acre to the Sea of Galilee, thus damaging the elementary strategic interests of the Christian state. The importance of the fortress is explained not only by its strategic importance but also by its role in the Bible. It is the traditional site of the Transfiguration of Christ, which was desecrated by the Muslims in the eyes of the Crusaders. The attack may have been deliberately timed to coincide with the first Sunday of Advent, 3 December, when the liturgy read: '*Go into the fortification which is over and against you*' (Matthew 21:2), reminding them of Christ's entry into Jerusalem.¹⁴³ The papal court was also concerned that a Muslim stronghold was being erected. The fortress was called a provocation and a *casus belli* by Pope Innocent III in his bull *Quia maior* in 1213, and again in 1215 at the Fourth Lateran Council. (Fig. 5)

On 30 November the Crusaders arrived under the castle, without King Andrew, according to the sources. According to the Éracles, Andrew stayed in Acre for the last two campaigns for 'convenience', and we do not hear of the Hungarian king at the front during this time.¹⁴⁴ On 3 December, King John led a successful attack on the castle's troops, but they failed to take advantage of the initial surprise, and the leaders ordered the attacking troops back. This move was criticized by contemporary historians, Oliver and Jacques de Vitry.¹⁴⁵ The crusaders finally returned to Acre on 7 December. Time proved this move

¹⁴¹ Attila Bárány, 'King Andrew II of Hungary's Crusade', pp. 175–76.

¹⁴² J. Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade*, p. 19.

¹⁴³ Jessalynn Bird, 'Preaching and Narrating the Fifth Crusade: Bible, Sermons and the History of a Campaign', in *The Uses of the Bible in Crusader Sources*, Elizabeth Lapina, and Nicholas Morton eds., pp. 316–41, esp. 322–3 (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2017).

¹⁴⁴ L'Estoire de Eracles empereur', p. 325.

¹⁴⁵ *Lettres de Jacques de Vitry (1160/1170–1240)*, Robert B. C. Huygens ed., pp. 98–100 (Leiden: Brill, 1960).

right, for within a few months the Muslims had voluntarily abandoned it, destroyed it and emptied it. The chronicle Éracles mentions a Hungarian nobleman named Denis ('Dionise'), who may be the same as King Andrew's dignitary.¹⁴⁶

In contrast to the local leaders, who were prudent and well acquainted with the cruelty of the Holy Land, there was an adventurous core among the crusaders. Their action may have been the attack with half a thousand cavalrymen in mid-December through the Lebanon mountains towards the castle of Beaufort. In the cold, snowy, damp weather, the local Arabs had no difficulty in surprising the horsemen in the mountains as they reached Mashgara in southern Lebanon, and forcing them to turn back at great loss. According to the Arab chronicler Abu Shama, who describes the events in detail, the Hungarians were defeated at a place called Jakout: only three out of 500 managed to escape, their leader being King Andrew's nephew, which is obviously a misunderstanding.¹⁴⁷

Even in the short time available, Andrew II had gained sufficient combat experience to realise that the military force at his disposal was insufficient to launch decisive operations, and that there was no immediate threat from the Muslims. The heavy military defeat he suffered in the winter of 1217–18, his illness, which could be regarded as certain, and, as Thomas of Split notes, his poisoning, and the uncertain internal political situation in Hungary, strengthened his resolve to lead his army home.

In late 1217, King Andrew went to Tripoli ahead of his army. The occasion was the marriage of Bohemond IV (Prince of Antioch, r. 1201–16, 1219–33) to Melisende, sister of King Hugh of Cyprus (r. 1205–18), which took place around 10 January. The visit was justified by Andrew's family ties, being a cousin of the prince of Antioch. He visited the most important fortifications of the Order of the Knights of St. John, the castle of Margat (Marqab) and the castle of Crac des Chevaliers, built halfway between Antioch and Tripoli. The first castle of Crac was captured by crusaders in 1109, and in 1142 Raymond II of Tripoli gave it to the Hospitallers. The castle of Margat was taken by Roger at the end of the First Crusade in 1117, and was then taken by the Order in 1187.

The king made several donations to the Hospitallers, such as the toll of the Babót gate in Sopron, and 500 and 100 silver marks per year from the salt revenues of Szalacs, with the agreement of the lords present and listed by name.¹⁴⁸ Other crusaders, such as Duke Leopold, made one-off donations of 50 gold marks to the Knights Templar and 6,000 silver marks to the Teutonic Knights

¹⁴⁶ L'Estoire de Eracles empereur', p. 325.

¹⁴⁷ Abu Shama, *Le Livre des deux Jardins* 5: p. 164.

¹⁴⁸ *Regesta regum stirpis Arpadianae critico-diplomatica*, 1: pp. 108–9 (nrs. 328–30).

for the purchase of land. The subsequent assessment of the campaign was influenced by the king's charters of donation, rich in biblical references, which have survived in papal transcription. In his charters, King Andrew was not sparing with words of praise, just as the annual revenues he promised were considerable. Thus we read: *'As we devote ourselves to the service of God in the Holy Land, full of the pilgrim duty we have undertaken, we have seen for ourselves what we have long known by hearsay, that the community of the most holy hospital house of St. John the Baptist in Jerusalem is redolent of the abundant practice of the virtues. We are convinced that the alms of our donation must go nowhere else but to the support of this house. For we have seen day after day that the brethren of the aforesaid house, like Job Tobiah, refresh the multitudes of the poor who flock to them by providing food, and bury the bodies of the dead in Christ with the respect due to them. Moreover, as Macabees reborn in Christ, they not only plant their well-fortified fortresses on the frontiers of the heathen, but, by the sacrifice of their own men for Christ's sake, repel the attacks of the Amalekites and multiply the seed of the Christian faith.'*¹⁴⁹

In another document he linked his donation to his admission to the Order of St. John: *"And it is not only for the love of this consecrated college, but also for the desire to belong to their ranks, to share in their fate and to deserve to be partakers of their prayers and good deeds, that we have devoutly committed ourselves to their fraternal communion, that, that for the spiritual salvation of ourselves and our descendants and ancestors of both sexes, we will annually at Easter, for the service of the poor of the said house, give in perpetuity five hundred marks of silver from our salt revenues in Szalacs, for the benefit of the poor."*¹⁵⁰ Fortunately for Andrew, his close relationship with the Hospitallers had a greater impact on posterity than the outcry over his early departure. Andrew was the first of the crowned monarchs to join the Hospitallers. A painting by Leonello Spada in the Grand Master's Palace in Malta has commemorated Andrew's crusade since the 1610s, where in the fresco series he is accompanied by Emperor Frederick II and King St Louis.¹⁵¹ (Fig. 6) In Paris, in the third room of *the Salles des croisades* in the Palace of Versailles, a painting by Gillot Saint-Evre from 1844 depicts the same scene.

The relationship of the Hungarians with the Order of St. John is confirmed by the fact that in Acre, King Andrew was hosted by the Knights of St. John in their central house, restored and enlarged after the devastation of the earthquake of 1202, between the gates of the Virgin Mary and St. John, and even more so in their palace 700 meters away, in the northern part of Montmusard.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Theiner I: pp. 15–16, (nr. 24)

¹⁵⁰ Theiner I: pp. 14–15, (nr. 23)

¹⁵¹ Attila Bárány, 'King Andrew II of Hungary's Crusade in 1217. New Insights', in *Continuity and Change in Medieval East Central Europe. Social, Ruling and Religious Transformations*, Dušan Zupka ed., pp. 163–90, esp. 164 (London, Routledge, 2025).

¹⁵² Jonathan Riley-Smith, 'Further thoughts on the layout of the Hospital in Acre', in *Chemins*

Later, on 25 January 1218, Barc's son Nicholas borrowed 1,500 gold bezants from the Grand Master of the Hospitallers, as pointed out by Zsolt Hunyadi and Kornél Szovák, apparently at the king's request.¹⁵³ One gold bezant was approximately one month's pay for a soldier, so it was not a small sum. But the proportions become clearer when we know that before his return, Duke Leopold VI borrowed 50,000 bezants from Guido of Byblos, a member of the wealthy Genoese Embriaco family.¹⁵⁴

After the loss of Jerusalem in 1187, the church and the pilgrimage house of the Hungarians could be relocated to Acre, where their situation could be settled after the recapture of the city in 1191. King Andrew probably visited the house in Acre, but he chose the house of the Hospitallers as his lodging. The monastic house of Acre (*domus ipsorum transmaritine in Acon*) was supported by the monasteries of Hungary, and our sources date from between 1233 and 1286. In 1286 we learn the name of a brother, Attila, who bore the name of the Hungarian king, and was sent to Acre.¹⁵⁵ Denys Pringle, on the basis of a description from 1250, located the site of the institution (*domus Ungarorum*) north of the walled garden of the Genoese, which was adjacent to the arsenal of the Hospitallers towards the coast.¹⁵⁶

The Hungarians could gain military experience not only by studying the fortress system in the Holy Land, the combined use of cavalry and infantry, or the great practical usefulness of the crossbowmen. At this time, crossbowmen were already established in long-distance navigation on the Mediterranean, and were appearing more and more frequently in financial records. The experience of the Holy Land certainly had an indirect influence on the development of military affairs in Hungary, even if it is difficult to find concrete references or written evidence of this. It has been suggested that the development of the law in Jerusalem also influenced the Hungarian Golden Bull of 1222, a privilege that the Hungarian nobility had invoked for centuries, but this

d'outre-mer. Études sur la Méditerranée médiévale offertes à Michel Balard, D. Coulon et al ed., 2: pp. 753–64 (Paris: Sorbonne, 2004), (reprint: in Id, *Crusaders and Settlers in the Latin East*, essay XVII (London–New York: Routledge, 2016).

¹⁵³ *Uros apát és műve*, pp. 81–83. Barc's son Nicholas of the Szák kindred, from 1219 palatine of the country. Later he had a plan for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1222, approved by the pope. He finally died in a battle against the hostile Cumans during the Mongol conquest in 1241. Theiner, *Vetera monumenta* 1: pp. 36–37 (nr. 75)

¹⁵⁴ *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Babenberger in Österreich*, Bd. 4.2, *Ergänzende Quellen 1195–1287*, Oskar von Mitis ed., p. 99 (nr. 1049) (Vienna, Munich: Oldenbourg, 1997); 'L'Estoire de Eracles empereur', p. 332.

¹⁵⁵ Károly-György Boroviczény, 'Cruciferi Sancti Regis Stephani', p. 17, *Monumenta diplomatica civitatis Budapest*, Albert Gárdonyi ed., vol. 1 (1148–1301), pp. 226–7 (nr. 212) (Budapest: Székesfőváros kiadása, 1936.)

¹⁵⁶ Denys Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom*, vol. 4: pp. 160–61 (no. 445).

has been rejected by recent research.¹⁵⁷ A more tangible group of the Holy Land heritage is a hoard of coins that was transferred to the National Museum in Budapest in 1982. This includes various coins from Jerusalem, Antioch, Tripoli from the mid-twelve century onwards. It is not unreasonable to suppose that one of the Hungarian crusaders returning from the Holy Land after 1217 may have brought them with him.¹⁵⁸

The assessment of the first phase of the campaign is basically positive. The march of the Hungarian army into northern Palestine was not ineffective, it increased the security of the Christian states, contributed to the later retaking of the fortress of Tabor without bloodshed, and prepared the way for a later combined attack on Syria and Egypt. The delay in the attack on Egypt was not due to Andrew himself, but to the delay of the Rhine-Friesian troops.

The assessment of the premature return of the Hungarians is nuanced by an examination of the other Crusader troops' stay in the Holy Land.¹⁵⁹ Duke Leopold, who arrived with Andrew, returned a year later, in May 1219, and Count of Holland, William I, who arrived in the spring of 1218, also returned within a year, in the autumn of 1219. The view that the crusaders fought for many years is therefore unfounded. King Andrew spent only half a year less overseas than the average crusader. There were obviously several motives for returning home, such as fear of political crisis at home during their absence, or limited financial resources, or the need to adapt to periodic shipping periods. It is understandable, however, that those who remained in the Holy Land felt let down and betrayed by each major returning unit.

Not all of the Hungarians returned home. The patriarch of Jerusalem wanted to persuade Andrew to stay, and the king allowed those who wished to stay to do so. Thus, during the siege of Damietta, Hungarian prelates lost their lives, although two of the dead are mentioned only in a fourteenth century source.¹⁶⁰ Given that in 1218 there was a change in two Hungarian dioceses, the dead were probably the bishops of Győr and Várad. It has been speculated that the later bishop of Várad, Alexander, one of the negotiators of the leasing contract, followed his king, perhaps accompanied by his former bishop who died

¹⁵⁷ Dániel Bácsatyai, 'From Magna Carta to the Assizes of Jerusalem: The Golden Bull in European Context', in: *Andreae II Regis Hungariae decretum anni 1222 Bulla Aurea roboratum: The Golden Bull of King Andrew II of Hungary. Critical Text and Studies*, Dániel Bácsatyai, Gyula Mayer, György Rác, Kornél Szovák eds., pp. 101–118 (Piliscsaba: Makovecz Campus Alapítvány, Collegium Professorum Hungarorum et al., 2024).

¹⁵⁸ István Gedai, 'Éremlelet a keresztes hadjáratok korából' [Coin treasure from the crusader period], *Folia Archeologica* 43 (1994) pp. 243–50.

¹⁵⁹ James Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade*, pp. 116–17.

¹⁶⁰ 'Cronica Reinhardsbrunnensis', in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores* 30, Oswald Holder-Egger ed., pp. 490–656, esp 592 (Hannover: Hiersemann, 1896).

during the campaign. Today, the gold ring of the later Bishop Alexander is known only from descriptions and drawings. It contains an excellent quality sapphire stone from the heyday of Greek gemstone cutting of the Constantinian period, which he may have acquired during the campaign. It is certain that the bishop of Eger remained on the Egyptian front, returning from Damietta only in 1219. All this suggests that the Hungarian prelates, for reasons of conscience, could not agree with the king's decision and stayed with their entourage.

Thietmar, a German pilgrim, probably from Saxony, was on his way from Acre to the monastery of St. Catherine in Sinai in 1218 when he was intercepted by Muslims and escorted to Jerusalem. He was accompanied by a Hungarian pilgrim, a count, perhaps someone from King Andrew's army. As he writes: "*I had with me a noble Hungarian count (comes nobilis), who knew that certain of his Saracen Hungarian compatriots were living in Jerusalem for the purpose of study.*"¹⁶¹ It is reasonable to assume that so did the count's entourage, who stayed in Acre in early 1218 to fulfil their pilgrim vows. It is not clear from the text whether the Hungarians followed Thietmar on his onward journey from Jerusalem.¹⁶² Another interesting aspect of the text is that Muslims from Hungary could have been encountered in the Holy Land. Indeed, in twelfth century Hungary, there was a Muslim community in the southern part of the country, protected by royal privileges and subject to military service. Their life here is described by Arab travelers.¹⁶³ In 1220, the traveler Yaqut al-Hamawi met Hungarian students studying Islamic law in Aleppo. Benjamin Kedar speculates that they might be the same group of students who were in Jerusalem until 1219 and fled the city in fear of a Latin attack.¹⁶⁴

ON THE WAY HOME

On his way home from Antioch, Andrew was able to follow the ancient Pilgrim's Way across Asia Minor, which from Daras (now Oğuz, Turkey) on the old Byzantine-Persian border to Chalcedon (now Kadıköy in Istanbul) was

¹⁶¹ *Pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, 1187–1291*, Denys Pringle ed., *Crusade Texts in Translation*, p. 112 (Abingdon-New York: Ashgate, 2012).

¹⁶² Philip Booth, *Thietmar. Person, Place and Text in Thirteenth-Century Holy Land Pilgrimage*, p. 138 (PhD dissertation, University of Lancaster, 2016).

¹⁶³ Ivan Hrbek, 'An Arabic account of Hungary: Abū Hāmid al-Andalusī *al-Ġarnāṭī*, 1080–1170', in *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 5 (1966), pp. 205–12.

¹⁶⁴ Benjamin Z. Kedar, 'Hungarian Muslims in Jerusalem in 1217', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 40 (1986), pp. 325–27.

about 1,700 km, and from Acre a few hundred kilometers more. In 551, the Persian embassy covered the entire distance in 103 days, travelling in convoy, with daily stages of 16.5 kilometers. However, in the Middle Ages they did not follow this exact route, but also passed through Iconium (now Konya). It cannot be ruled out that King Andrew might have travelled by boat from Antioch to an Armenian port, and from there to Tarsus, the birthplace of St. Paul the Apostle, and possibly on to Sis (now ruins in Turkey), the center of the Armenian principality. The army must have reached Cilicia by land, through the 600-metre pass of Belen, the Syrian Gate. From there, they continued through the Cilician Gate, the thousand-meter Gülek Pass, towards Cappadocia and Konya. At the end of the Asia Minor road, they reached the end point of the journey, Nikaia (Nicaea, now İzmit). After crossing the strait, from Constantinople, they travelled on the *Via Militaris*, a further 1,300 kilometers to the Hungarian border.

However, the Hungarian king also had an unpleasant encounter at Nikaia when he was attacked by the exiled sons of his uncle, Prince Géza.¹⁶⁵ The marriages also marked the route home, which coincided with the crusaders' usual route. Surprisingly, there is no source from Constantinople about the Hungarian crusaders passing through. We then meet King Andrew, who crossed the Bosphorus, in the Balkans, as the king later rewards his followers Gregory and Posa for having gone ahead of him across the Balkans to Tirnovo.¹⁶⁶

The choice of the mainland route home must have been deliberate on the part of the Hungarian king, as he was remarkably active in diplomacy. True, he could not have found a ship in January that would have undertaken the journey home, but if he had waited, he would have been home much sooner than by land. He behaved as one would expect of the head of a European middle power: negotiating with the leaders of the states, established dynastic links. One can agree with Szabolcs Vajay that Andrew had a vision of a Hungarian empire, an '*archiregnum Hungariae*', building a system of allies and alliances, but can at least act as a stabilizing factor.¹⁶⁷ His plan may also have been encouraged by the political détente between the Latin Empire and Nicaea, the Bulgarians and Konya. As a result, the land route through Asia Minor was reopened and made safe from 1213–14.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ András Borosy, 'A keresztes háborúk', p. 40.

¹⁶⁶ *Regesta regum stirpis Arpadianae critico-diplomatica*, 1: pp. 123, 127 (nrs. 370, 382).

¹⁶⁷ Szabolcs Vajay, 'Dominae Reginae Milites. Árpádházi Jolánta magyarjai Valencia visszavétele idején' [The Hungarians of Queen Jolánta of the Árpád dynasty during the reconquest of Valencia], in *Mályusz Elemér Emlékkönyv*, Éva H. Balázs, Erik Fügedi, and Zoltán Maksay eds., pp. 395–414 (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1984).

¹⁶⁸ Filip Van Tricht, *The Latin Renovatio of Byzantium: The Empire of Constantinople (1204–1228)*, p. 364, *The Medieval Mediterranean* vol. 90 (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

In Tarsus, in Cilician Armenia, King Leo of Armenia (Levon I Metsagorts, r. 1187–1219) betrothed his daughter to Prince Andrew, the Greek Emperor of Nicaea, Theodore I Laskaris, (r. 1205–21) betrothed his daughter Mary to his son Béla, and Andrew's daughter Mary was betrothed to the Bulgarian tsar, Ivan Asen II (r. 1218–41). Apart from the Armenian betrothal, the marriages were consummated, with the Bulgarian wedding taking place in 1221. There are no credible sources to suggest that the Bulgarian marriage was forced on Andrew by the tsar.¹⁶⁹ A letter from the king also suggested that the king's niece might have married the Seljuk sultan of Rum, Kaykaus I (r. 1211–20). King Andrew wrote that “*in the course of our mission, the Seljuk Sultan of Iconium [i.e. Kaykaus I] also sent us an envoy who said that if any of our daughters or relatives married him, they would be converted to Christianity and baptized, putting aside their infidelity.*”¹⁷⁰ In fact, there are sources about the Sultan was close to the Crusaders and had a strong anti-Ayyubid policy, and in 1218 he attacked the Syrian territories.

The king's letter to the pope in 1219 is not simply a pathetic explanation and defense, but rather a boast that he is related to everyone from Armenia to Bulgaria, which of course could also have been a veiled message of papal intervention in the region.

IMPACT AND CONSEQUENCE

Following the long internal political struggles, King Andrew may have deliberately timed and linked the consolidation of his power to the launch of the Fifth Crusade, planned for 1217. Meanwhile, 1217 can be considered an important year in other respects as well. The king modified his much-criticized estate policy and made a spectacular reconciliation with Archbishop John of Esztergom. Perhaps similarly, his bold – but ill-fated – decision after his return home to count his reign from his appointment as governor would have promoted consolidation in domestic politics. The king was right to assume that the fulfilment of the crusade oath, a successful campaign, would create a public mood in favor of his political and economic reforms, not only among those who were with him, but also among the ecclesiastical and secular elites who remained behind in his kingdom. But the king was wrong about

¹⁶⁹ John V. A. Fine Jr, *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest*, p. 129 (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994).

¹⁷⁰ *Regesta regum stirpis Arpadianae critico-diplomatica*, 1: p. 118 (nr. 355); *Vetera monumenta historica* 1: p. 20 (nr. 32).

that. Despite the spectacular marriages he had arranged during the campaign and the unparalleled wealth of relics he had brought home from the Holy Land, opposition to his policies had not abated in the country. In fact, the engagement of his son, the future Béla IV, to Mary, daughter of the Nicaean emperor,¹⁷¹ and later his subsequent attempt to annul the marriage, became a source of further unpleasant conflict with the Hungarian clergy and the Holy See.

Surprisingly, there is hardly any reference to heroic military service during the Crusade in the documents of the Hungarian king, with the exception of one document issued to a member of the Ják kindred. The appointment of Laurence of the Atyusz kindred to the position of cup-bearer, who had taken a pilgrim's vow (*peregrinationis votum*) with the king in 1217, can be seen as part of the preparations.¹⁷² The lack of charters may have been due to the fact that the campaign did not fulfil the political expectations. The lack of rewarding charters was then made up for by later forged charters, some medieval, some modern. These may, of course, have had an oral source close to the time of the events, but this is now unclear. It is almost certain that King Andrew was not personally present at the siege of Mount Tabor, yet in Hungarian tradition the Palásthy family attributed their royal donation to King Andrew, who fought at Mount Tabor.¹⁷³ This is all the more interesting as the name of Mount Tabor was not mentioned in the Hungarian narrative sources, but only in foreign chronicles. A charter of the Báthory family, also issued at Mount Tabor, which mentions the defeat of a Saracen general, appears at the earliest in 1583.¹⁷⁴ According to a forged document for Tivald Meletei in 1226, he saved King Andrew from an attack by a buffalo.¹⁷⁵ The Croatian Babonic kindred also

¹⁷¹ Maria Laskarina, d. 1270, mother of St. Margaret of Hungary.

¹⁷² *Regesta regum stirpis Arpadianae critico-diplomatica*, 1 p. 110 (no. 334).

¹⁷³ Their privilege was mentioned in the law book of Hungary, see *The Customary Law of the Renowned Kingdom of Hungary: A Work in Three Parts Rendered by Stephen Werbőczy (The 'Tripartium') (1517)/Tripartitum opus*, János M. Bak transl., p. 249 (Part II, title 14, 13§.) (Idyllwild, CA, Budapest: Charles Schlacks, Jr., Department of Medieval Studies, Central European University, 2005); Krisztina Tóth, 'A Palásthy család története a középkorban (vázlat)' [The history of the Palásthy family in the Middle Ages (an outline)], in *A magyarságtudomány műhelyei*. Budapest, 2005. augusztus 24–25. <http://real.mtak.hu/123209/> (accessed 1 of November 2022); István Bakács, *Hont vármegye Mohács előtt* [The County of Hont before the battle of Mohács], p. 35 (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1971).

¹⁷⁴ Tamás Kruppa, 'A Báthoryak szentkultusza és a pietas Batoriana' [The cult of saints by the Báthorys and the Báthory piety], *Magyar Könyvszemle*, 129 (2010) no. 3 pp. 337–40, esp. 338 (reprinted in Id., *Tradíció és propaganda keresztútján. Fejezetek Báthory Zsigmond udvarának kultúrájából*, pp. 37–38 (Budapest: Balassi, 2015).

¹⁷⁵ László Szabolcs Gulyás, 'Levéltári bölény-kalászat. Az európai bölény (Bison bonasus) a középkori Magyar Királyságban az írott források tükrében' [The European bison (Bison bonasus) in the medieval Kingdom of Hungary in the light of written sources], in: *Történeti Tanulmányok XXV*, Acta Universitatis Debreceniensis series historica 6, p. 110 (Debrecen:

claimed in a forged document that they had joined the king on the campaign with an entourage of 250 men.¹⁷⁶ The most beautiful description is that of the valiant battles of Count Alexander, son of Demeter of the Aba kindred, which was known in 1409.¹⁷⁷ In the 17th century, the chronicler Gergely Pethő believed – quite wrongly – that the King had issued the Golden Bull, a charter of noble privilege similar to the English Magna Carta, in 1222 to the lords and nobles who took part in the campaign for their bravery.¹⁷⁸

An iconography of the Holy Land appeared in the heraldry of the seals and coins of the Hungarian kings at the same time as the campaign.¹⁷⁹ One of the coins of King Andrew shows a domed building with a double cross, probably the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. On another coin, a wreathed isosceles cross appears on one side and a triumphal double cross on the other, twice, on either side of the king's effigy. The popularity of the double cross in the heraldic representation of the court in the second half of the thirteenth century not only continued unbroken, but was extended by the image of the crown of thorns (*corona spinea*). The innovation introduced by King Stephen V (r. 1270–72) and followed by his successors in the Árpád dynasty was the appearance of the crown of thorns on the lower part of the double cross on the royal seals.

The memory of the campaign lives on in the church tradition. A little-known result was the establishment of the relationship between the Franciscans and the Hungarian crusaders. Contact certainly took place, but only indirect sources are available.¹⁸⁰ The first meeting of the Hungarian prelates with the Franciscans, including St. Francis, took place at the Fourth Lateran Council. At the convention of the order in 1217, Franciscans decided to spread

Debreceni Egyetem, 2017).

¹⁷⁶ Hrvoje Kekez, 'Croats and the Fifth Crusade. Did two members of the Babonic noble family accompany King Andrew II of Hungary on his crusade?', in *The Fifth Crusade in Context*, pp. 205–17; *Regesta regum stirpis Arpadianae critico-diplomatica* 1: p. 116 (no. 351).

¹⁷⁷ *Regesta regum stirpis Arpadianae critico-diplomatica* 1: p. 253 (no. 840); Attila Szelestey P., A Jáák nembeli Alsó-Szelestei Szelestey család története dióhéjban [The history of Szelestey family of the Jáák kindred. An outline]. <https://www.szelesteyfamilia.hu/csaladtortenet.html> (accessed 27 June 2025); György Rácz, *A jáki apátság és kegyurai a középkorban* [The abbey of Jáák and its patrons in the Middle Ages] pp. 44, 56 (Budapest, Hungarian National Archives, 2022).

¹⁷⁸ Gergely Pethő, *Rövid magyar kronika* [A short Hungarian chronicle] p. 40 (Kassa, 1753), reprint Budapest: Dharma, 1993. On the fictitious crusader tradition of the Amade family see László Szörényi, 'Az Amade család keresztes lovag őseiről szóló genealógiai legenda' [A genealogical legend about the crusader ancestors of the Amade family], in *Lelkiség és irodalom. Tanulmányok Szelestei N. László tiszteletére*, Rita Bajáki et al., eds. pp. 424–27 (Budapest: MTA-PPKE Barokk irodalom és Lelkiség Kutatócsoport, 2017).

¹⁷⁹ Imre Takács, *Az Árpád-házi királyok pecsétjei/ Royal Seals of the Árpád Dynasty*, pp. 45–7 (Budapest: Hungarian National Archives, 2012).

¹⁸⁰ Kapisztrán Varga OFM, 'First contacts between Saint Francis and Hungary', *Acta Pintériana* 7 (2021), pp. 13–20.

the order, so it was a great opportunity for them to join the army that was marching east. They could have set sail from Venice on the Austrian duke's ship, but it is more likely that they found a place in the Hungarian king's fleet with Elias of Cortona, the first Franciscan minister in the Holy Land. If it is true that the Franciscans reached the cities on the Adriatic coast, such as Zara, as early as the 1210s,¹⁸¹ they could easily have reached the army's assembly point at Spalato. It is perhaps not unreasonable to think that the Hungarian bishop mentioned in a chronicle, who came to the aid of the returning Franciscans in 1219, may have been the only surviving Hungarian bishop, Thomas of Eger.¹⁸² On 14 September 1219, the bishop set sail from the Holy Land on a boat to meet the Franciscans in Italy.¹⁸³

Surprisingly, the crusade of the Hungarian king also appears in the tradition of the Order of St. Paul the First Hermit (*Ordo Fratrum Sancti Pauli Primi Eremitae*, commonly called the Pauline Fathers), founded in Hungary. Jean Zuallart (Giovanni Zuallardo, 1541–1634), a knight of the Holy Sepulchre described his journey to the Holy Land in 1586 in his popular travel guide. In it he describes Mount Tabor as follows: “*There was a great church built here by Empress Helena, with a monastery well endowed by the King of Hungary, and inhabited by many monks of the Order of St. Paul the First Hermit*”.¹⁸⁴ Some researchers have associated this with King Andrew, but this is wrong.¹⁸⁵ Zuallart himself does not claim this, and the Hungarian Order does not appear in the sources until the 1220s.

The memory of the Hungarian crusade was preserved mainly by the relics brought from the Holy Land, as the text of the Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle preserves: ‘*At the end of this time he [King Andrew] acquired on the expense of the royal treasury relics of divers saints: namely, the head of Stephen the Protomartyr, the head of the blessed Margaret, virgin and martyr, and the right hand of the blessed Thomas the apostle and of St. Bartholomew. He also bought a piece of Aaron's rod and one of the six vessels in which Christ changed the water into wine, and as many other relics as he could gather together at that time. With these precious relics of the saints he returned to Hungary.*’¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ János Karácsonyi, *Szt. Ferenc rendjének története Magyarországon 1711-ig* [History of St. Francis' Order in Hungary] vol. 1: p. 6. (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1923).

¹⁸² Codagnellus (Giovanni Codagnello), ‘Gesta obsidionis Damietae a. 1218–1219’, Oswald Holder-Egger ed., p. 493, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores* 31 (Hanover: Hantsche, 1903).

¹⁸³ Kapisztrán Varga, ‘First contacts’, p. 4.

¹⁸⁴ Giovanni Zuallardo, *Il devotissimo viaggio di Gerusalemme: fatto, e descritto in sei libri*, p. 279 (Roma: Zanetti F. & Gia Ruffinelli, 1587).

¹⁸⁵ Emil Kisbán, *A magyar pálosrend története 1225–1711* [History of the Hungarian Pauline Order], 1: p. 70 (Budapest: Pálos kolostor, 1938).

¹⁸⁶ *Chronica de gestis Hungarorum*, p. 323 (ch. 175).

The devastation caused by the Ottoman conquest in Hungary broke the continuity of the tradition, so that in many cases we can rely on conjecture. The patron saint of St Bartholomew parish church of Pécs can be most definitely linked to King Andrew. Given the fact that the king stopped in Zagreb in 1217, it is probable that the relics of the Holy Innocents were donated by him to the Croatian cathedral. The king may have donated the relics of St. Stephen the Protomartyr to the chapel of the cathedral in Esztergom.¹⁸⁷ St. Margaret of Antioch had a flourishing cult of in Hungary, and this may explain the acquisition of her relics and the supposed donation to the collegiate chapter of Szepeskáptalan (now Spišská Kapitula, Slovakia).¹⁸⁸ There is passage in the Hungarian legend of St. Margaret (1242–70), King Béla IV's daughter, which mentions a precious crucifix in the Dominican nunnery where she spent her life. This relic may also have been brought to the country by the crusaders and then donated to Margaret's monastery by the king.¹⁸⁹

King Andrew's international reputation was only temporarily tarnished. The pope continued to see Andrew as a potential crusader. The resentment of his contemporaries, and especially of the pope, was not directed at Andrew, but primarily at the Emperor Frederick II, who delayed the launch of his crusade from 1215 until 1229. He was not entirely unfairly blamed for the failure of the Fifth Crusade, even if he did regain the Holy City for ten years in 1229 through negotiation. The claim that Andrew had failed to fulfil his crusade vow was never made by a papal source. The Hungarian king himself argued in a letter of 1219: '*The purpose of our pilgrimage was to liberate the Holy Sepulchre with all our efforts and to make the way to and from it safe for all pilgrims.*' There is no reason to doubt the king's sincere enthusiasm and religious zeal for the campaign. For him and for all those who took part, the campaign was as much a pilgrimage as a crusade. There had already been a similar case when Henry the Lion, duke of

¹⁸⁷ Tibor Rostás, "Magyarország földjére küldtek" Villard de Honnecourt és az érett gótika megjelenése Közép Európában. A klosterneuburgi Capella Speciosa és Pannonhalma francia kapcsolata' ["Sent to the land of Hungary" Villard de Honnecourt and the emergence of the mature Gothic in Central Europe. The French connection between the Capella Speciosa of Klosterneuburg and Pannonhalma], pp. 132–39 (Budapest, 2014); Arnold Ipolyi, 'Magyar ereklyék' [Hungarian relics], *Archaeologiai Közlemények*, 3 (1863), pp. 65–125, esp. 123.

¹⁸⁸ László Koszta, 'Adalékok Antiochiai Szent Margit Árpád-kori tiszteletéhez' [Contribution to the cult of St. Margaret of Antioch in the Árpád period], *Acta historica* (Szeged) vol. 124 (2006), pp. 23–28, esp. 26.

¹⁸⁹ Etele Kiss, 'Árpád-házi Szent Margit vizuális világa' [The visual world of St. Margaret of the Árpád dynasty], in *Árpád-házi Szent Margit emlékezete*, Deák Viktória Hedvig, and Leonas Alex eds. pp. 46–76, esp. 69–70 (Budakeszi: Advocata Nostra, 2025). The pilgrims also brought with them precious relics. In 1205, a cleric of the bishop of Porto was robbed in Hungary, taking with him many valuables from the Holy Land, including a crucifix containing a relic of the Holy Cross. *Die Register Innocenz III*, vol. 8, pp. 233–34 (nr. 128/127).

Saxony and Bavaria, the opponent of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, marched with a large army to the Holy Land in 1172, through Hungary, and then returned the same way without a fight.

The Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle, though copied in 1370's, preserved centuries-old historical texts, and Simon of Kéza's chronicle in 1280's summarized the crusade in a terse but basically appreciative manner, acknowledging that Andrew, as the leader of the campaign, returned with many relics to his kingdom, which he found in a flourishing state. The latter remark indicates that the author intended to cosmeticize a contrary statement, which was known to contemporaries but was considered unworthy of the king's memory. The Latin chroniclers of the time were generally dismayed by the king's rapid return, and thus they have condemned the entire Hungarian involvement. Oliver of Paderborn, Jacques de Vitry, and later Austrian and German chroniclers, such as the Klosterneuburg annals and the tendentious depiction of the Hungarian king's guilty and shameful return by Vincent of Beauvais, one of the most influential encyclopedists of the Middle Ages, have influenced the way posterity has judged the events to this day. This critical approach, however, did not percolate into medieval and early modern Hungarian historiography.

Hungarian authors continued to be enthusiastic about the campaign for a long time. It is interesting that the Hungarian king's court historian Antonio Bonfini, a fifteenth century chronicler well versed in world history, ignores King Andrew's early return and records the Hungarian king in the Holy Land until the failure of the Egyptian venture in 1221.¹⁹⁰ Moreover, Bonfini does not give credit to the Italian chroniclers, who, knowing of the ship charter, did not forget that the Hungarian king had renounced Zara – a claim the Hungarian chroniclers self-consciously reject. Subsequent influential publications, such as Nádasdy's *Mausoleum* or the illustrated Hungarian *Corpus Iuris*, concerning King Andrew II recall the king's great enterprise with an image of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.¹⁹¹ The erroneous view that Andrew himself began to use the epithet 'King of Jerusalem' in his royal title, still persists, though it was King Louis I of Hungary who used it as a legacy from Naples between 1348 and 1352. Andrew began to be so called, as recorded by the chronicler János Thuróczy in his printed work of 1488, and by István Werbőczy in his legal codification of 1514, when he commemorates the king with warm words. *'be whom we style 'of Jerusalem', after his felicitous return from the expedition to*

¹⁹⁰ Antonius de Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum decades*, József Fögel, Béla Iványi, László Juhász eds., 4 vols. 2: pp. 151–60 (Decas II, lib. VII) (Leipzig–Budapest: Teubner, 1936–1941).

¹⁹¹ *Mausoleum potentissimorum ac gloriosissimorum Regni Apostolici Regum et primorum militantis Ungariae Ducum* (Norimbergae: Fried, 1644); *Corpus juris Hungarici, seu, Decretum generale incltyti Regni Hungariae*, p. 155 (Buda: Typis Regiae Universitatis, 1779).

Jerusalem, which he undertook with a huge army of Hungarians against the Saracens in defense of the holy Catholic faith'.¹⁹²

The emergence of critical modern historiography, regardless of religious affiliation, at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, surprisingly “lifted the veil” on the previously much-appreciated campaign and its leader. The otherwise distinguished historians had read the contemporary chroniclers who were dissatisfied with the king’s untimely departure and were aware of the domestic crisis that awaited the returning king. In his great synthesis, the representative historian, Henrik Marczali, called Andrew “the operetta king”¹⁹³ and in another definitive synthesis, Bálint Hóman blames the Hungarian king for the failure of the campaign. It is also claimed among non-Hungarian historians as Stephen Runciman (1954), Van Cleve (1969) that the Hungarian crusaders achieved nothing.¹⁹⁴ James Ross Sweeney (1984), James Powell (1986), more recently Thomas William Smith (2017), Laurence Marvin (2024),¹⁹⁵ and in Hungary László Veszprémy and Attila Bárány have made the most important steps towards the rehabilitation of the campaign and King Andrew.¹⁹⁶

Ultimately, one can agree with those who see in the Hungarian crusade a sign that the Hungarian kingdom had become fully integrated into the community of Latin Christian kingdoms. As James Ross Sweeney formulated, the Andrew’s crusade “is striking evidence of the vitality and wide dissemination of the crusade ideal by the early thirteenth century”.¹⁹⁷ The participants in the crusades were a testimony to the political stability of the territory they represented, its economic strength and its commitment to the Church represented by the pope.

The modern era has embraced a positive assessment of the campaign. In 2019, on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the campaign, representatives of Hungarian political, ecclesiastical and intellectual life inaugurated the monument to King Andrew II in Miliya, Northern Israel (*Fig. 7*). According to

¹⁹² *The Customary Law of the Renowned Kingdom of Hungary*, p. 233 (part II, title 6).

¹⁹³ Henrik Marczali, ‘Magyarország története az Árpádok korában, 1038–1301’ [History of Hungary in the Árpád age, 1038–1301], in *A Magyar Nemzet Története*, Sándor Szilágyi ed., vol. 2 pp. 382–87 (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1896); Bálint Hóman, *Magyar történet* [Hungarian history], 1: pp. 441–43 (Budapest: Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda, 1935).

¹⁹⁴ Van Cleve, ‘Fifth Crusade’, p. 394., Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades. vol. 3 The Kingdom of Acre and the Later Crusades*, pp. 147–49 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954).

¹⁹⁵ James Ross Sweeney, ‘Hungary in the Crusades’; James M. Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade, 1213–1221*, more recently Thomas Smith, ‘The Role of Pope Honorius III in the Fifth Crusade’, and Laurence W. Marvin, *The Damietta Crusade, 1217–1221: A Military History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024).

¹⁹⁶ László Veszprémy, ‘The Crusade of Andrew II, King of Hungary, 1217–1218’, *Jacobus*, 13–14 (2002), pp. 87–110; Attila Bárány, ‘King Andrew II of Hungary’s Crusade’.

¹⁹⁷ James Ross Sweeney, ‘Hungary in the Crusades’, pp. 480–81.

local tradition, the settlement was settled by the descendants of the Hungarian crusaders. However, this tradition is obviously of later origin, probably a group of people settled in Ottoman times, but it shows the close connection of the Hungarians with the Holy Land.

A THIRTEENTH CENTURY OUTLOOK

King Andrew, although he may have taken another crusade vow, did not embark on another campaign, even though the idea of a new campaign was repeatedly raised in papal documents. It is uncertain whether the king actually took up the cross in 1223, since King Andrew also promised in 1235 to take up the cross and lead a war in the Holy Land.¹⁹⁸

The attention of the Hungarian political and ecclesiastical elite was occupied by other events from the 1220s onwards. The Mongol Invasion of the West in the 1230s played a major role in this. The Cumans, fleeing from the Mongols, had already settled along the south-eastern borders of the Kingdom of Hungary, in what later became the Wallachia, at the beginning of the century. In 1211, King Andrew granted the Teutonic Knights a “desolate and uninhabited” area of some 1600 square kilometers on the south-eastern border of Transylvania to defend the borders of the kingdom against the attacks of the pagan Cumans. In a charter granted to the Teutonic Knights in 1211, the king made the donation in the hope of his own and his parents’ spiritual salvation and of extending the kingdom’s borders.

The successes of the Teutonic knights, increasingly supported by the popes, led to clashes with the king and the Hungarian prelates. This also explains why Andrew II, returning from the crusade, praised only the Templars and Hospitallers, and did not even mention the Teutonic Knights. Finally, in 1221, the king withdrew his earlier donations for the first time, and then again in 1225, and now for good, and expelled the knights from the country by force of arms.¹⁹⁹ The following years were the heyday of the Cuman missions led by the Hungarian province of the Dominican Order and the archbishop of Esztergom. In 1227, a Cuman chieftain named Bortz and his son converted to Christianity with some 15,000 of their people.

In many ways, the conversion of the Cuman territories replaced the crusades to the Holy Land. Thus, in 1227, and again in 1231, the pope exempted

¹⁹⁸ Gábor Barabás, *Das Papsttum und Ungarn*, p. 195.

¹⁹⁹ László Pósan, *Hungary and the Teutonic Order in the Middle Ages*, pp. 27–84 (Budapest: Research Centre for the Humanities Budapest, 2021).

Archbishop Robert of Esztergom from his vow of crusade, in view of the importance of the Cuman conversion, since this activity promised greater benefits for the Church than a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.²⁰⁰ At this time we also read that many of the nobles of the Kingdom of Hungary had taken a vow of crusade, which they could now convert to aid the Latin Empire.²⁰¹ Among them are important dignitaries such as the bishops of Győr and Eger, current and former Master of the Treasury, Master of the Horse, the Banus of Szörény (Severin), or a certain Mojs, one of the participants in the 1217 campaign who later became palatine. Samuel, the former chamberlain, was excommunicated for not fulfilling his vow.²⁰² In 1232, 300 crusaders were reported ready to go, and the pope left it to the bishop of Győr to decide whether to go to the Holy Land or to the aid of the Latin Empire.²⁰³

The pope also wanted to win the support of the Hungarian king for the campaign of Emperor Frederick II in 1227. According to the pope's letter, the emperor would set out in August, while many Hungarians had already taken up the cross, and the letter also makes a special mention, in an encouraging way, of the fact that King Andrew had already visited the Holy Land. But we have no knowledge of the Hungarian preparations.²⁰⁴ After the death of Andrew II, the planned aid to the Latin Empire, the organization of a crusade, played the main role in papal-Hungarian relations.²⁰⁵ This was particularly true during the reign of King Béla IV (r. 1235–70), whom the pope had for many years sought to persuade to join a crusade to aid Constantinople, including the possibility of converting the Holy Land vows, but in vain. In the summer of 1239 Baldwin of Courtenay marched through Hungary with a crusading army, but King Béla did not join him.²⁰⁶

The Mongol Invasion put an end to the conversion of the Cumans, and in 1241 the Mongols attacked the Kingdom of Hungary, destroyed the royal army, and ravaged most of the country until they left for the Balkans in the spring of 1242. It was now the Hungarian king who asked the popes to declare a crusade against the Mongols. This was done several times, without the actual

²⁰⁰ *Erdélyi okmánytár: oklevelek, levelek és más írásos emlékek Erdély történetéhez I. 1023–1300*, Zsigmond Jakó ed., p. 272 (nr. 434) (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1997), nrs. 145, 159. *Vetera monumenta historica* 1: pp. 86–87, 93 (nrs. 154, 167).

²⁰¹ *Vetera monumenta historica*, p. 97 (nr. 1771); Mór Wertner, 'Megjegyzések Theiner archontológiájához' [Comments on Theiner's archontology], *Turul* 8 (1910), pp. 132–72.

²⁰² *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae* 3/2: pp. 295–98.

²⁰³ *Vetera monumenta historica*, 1: pp. 102–3 (nr. 177).

²⁰⁴ *Vetera monumenta historica* 1: p. 71 (no. 147)

²⁰⁵ Gábor Barabás, *Das Papsttum und Ungarn*, pp. 197–8.

²⁰⁶ Michael Lower, *The Barons Crusade: A Call to Arms and Its Consequences*, pp. 74–92 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

campaigns being organized. In 1248, a crusade was announced in the German Empire, and those who took up the cross were offered the same indulgence as those who fought in the Holy Land. This made the defense of the borders of Hungary and Poland an equal crusading territory.

However, the number of Hungarian pilgrims increased significantly after the crusade of Andrew II. The members of the army that accompanied the king to the Holy Land were able to make the wonders of the Holy Land known to a wide audience. Despite this, our sources are very few. We have only a few sources on pilgrimages to the Holy Land from this period. In 1288, the papal legate exonerates Mikod, formerly the Banus of Szörény (Severin) and the Count of Doboka, and his brother Emeric, who had died earlier, from the obligation to take the pilgrim's vow to the Holy Land at their father's request.²⁰⁷ Our source is the description of the German Dominican monk Burchard of Mount Sion, who was in the Holy Land between 1274 and 1284. He even includes Hungarians among the pilgrims who visited Acre.²⁰⁸

In the Pray Codex, the oldest Hungarian liturgical manuscript preserving a Hungarian text, the prayers for the recovery of the Holy Land were recorded in the first half of the thirteenth century.²⁰⁹ In 1213, Pope Innocent III ordered in his bull *Quia maior* that a monthly procession should be held to pray for the success of the Fifth Crusade. At the daily mass, after the kiss of peace, the faithful were to prostrate themselves while the priests sang Psalms 78 and 67. In November 1217, Pope Honorius III again called the faithful throughout Europe to prayer in spiritual support of the recent campaign: to pray to God for the success of the campaigns of King Andrew, dukes of Austria and Merania, who had entered 'Babylon' with a huge army.²¹⁰

In the year of the fall of Acre, King Edward I of England planned a crusade. King Andrew III (r. 1290–1301), then newly enthroned as king of Hungary, sent an envoy to Edward in 1291, offering 1,000 knights and mounted archers (*milites et sagittarii equites*) for the campaign. The English king thanked him for the offer and suggested they meet in the Holy Land, but the plan remained a plan.²¹¹

²⁰⁷ *Erdélyi okmánytár* 1: p. 272 (nr. 434)

²⁰⁸ *Pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, 1187–1291*, p. 12.

²⁰⁹ Polikárp Radó, *Libri liturgici manuscripti bibliothecarum Hungariae et limitropharum regionum*, pp. 40–76 (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1973).

²¹⁰ *Regesta Honorii papae*, pp. 149–50 (no. 88); Christoph T. Maier, 'Crisis, Liturgy and the Crusade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 48 (1997), pp. 628–57.

²¹¹ Attila Bárány, 'Anglia, Magyarország és a tatár veszély a 13. század második felében' [England, Hungary and the Tatar threat in the second half of the 13th century], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények*, 122 (2009) pp. 251–81; *Calendar of the Close Rolls, Edward I*, vol. 3, 1288–96, H C Maxwell Lyte, ed., pp. 266–67 (London Public Record Office, 1904).

It is also symbolic that in 1291, according to medieval tradition, angels “flew” the house of the Virgin Mary (*Santa Casa*) from Nazareth to Tersatto (Hung. Terszat, now Trsat), a mountain east of the city Fiume (now Rijeka, Croatia) in the Kingdom of Hungary. To commemorate the miracle, the Croats built an exact replica of the Holy House, which over the centuries has become the most important Franciscan shrine to Mary in Croatia.²¹²

At the end of this overview, we can understand why the mosaic of the chapel of the Austro-Hungarian pilgrimage house in Jerusalem, opened 166 years ago at the third station of the *Via Dolorosa*, features besides Emperor Francis Joseph I, and Duke Leopold V, the hero of the Third Crusade, the Hungarian king, Andrew II, and among the saints of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, King St. Stephen, whose memory still shapes the image of the Holy Land in Hungary, and the image of Hungary in the Holy Land. (Figs. 8-9)

²¹² Karin Vélez, *The Miraculous Flying House of Loreto: Spreading Catholicism in the Early Modern World*, pp. 3–5 (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2019) According to sources, Tersat has been visited by pilgrims since the fourteenth century, with the first pilgrimage privilege being granted by Pope Martin V (1417–31).

Belaj Vitomir, ‘Trsat és Loreto’ [Trsat and Loreto], in *Boldogasszony: Szűz Mária tisztelete Magyarországon és Közép-Európában*, Gábor Barna ed., pp. 58–68 (Szeged: Szegedi Tudományegyetem, 2001)



Fig. 2: The map of the first four crusades (1096-1189), all of which passed through the Kingdom of Hungary with royal permissions.



Fig. 3: The golden seal of King Andrew II, used between 1221 and 1233.



Fig. 4: The pilgrim and military route of the Hungarian royal army, led by King Andrew II during 1217-1218 that launched the Fifth Crusade. After arriving to the Holy Land by sea, they returned through the mainland to Hungary.



Fig. 5: Mount Tabor today, where according to the Christian tradition, Jesus Christ had his transfiguration. In 1217, still a huge Saracen fortress was standing on this prominent rocky plateau of 600 meters height, defended by 77 towers and a garrison of two thousand men. Within a few months after the siege of the Hungarian royal army, the Muslim defenders decided to voluntarily abandon, destroy and empty the mountaintop fortification.



Fig. 6: King Andrew II with the Hospitaller Grand Master Guérin de Montaigu. Leonello Spada (1576–1622), inside the Grand Master's Palace in Malta.



Fig. 7: Monument dedicated to the memory of the Hungarian crusade of 1217–18 in Miliya, Israel.



Fig. 8: Chapel of the former Austro-Hungarian Hospice in Jerusalem. Emperor Francis Joseph I (center) with the Hungarian King Andrew II (on the left with his coat-of-arms royal shield on his golden cloak).



Fig. 9: Above the apse of the altar, on the mosaic of the half-dome, the Hungarian king St. Stephen (3rd from the right) is standing next to St. Jerome (center).