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The Crusade of Andrew II, King of Hungary, 1217-1218

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Resumen: Las relaciones entre los cruzados y el Reino de Hungría en el siglo XIII son tratadas en la presente investigación desde la perspectiva de los húngaros. Igualmente se analiza la política del rey cruzado magiar Andrés II en el contexto de los Balcanes y del Imperio de Oriente. Éste parece haber pretendido al propio trono bizantino, debido a su matrimonio con la hija del Emperador latino de Constantinopla. Ello fue uno de los móviles de la Quinta Cruzada que dirigió rey Andrés con el beneplácito del Papado. El trabajo ofrece una visión de conjunto de esta Cruzada y del itinerario del rey Andrés, quien volvió desengañado a su Reino.

Summary: The main subject matter of this research is an approach to Hungary, during the reign of Andrew II, and its participation in the Fifth Crusade. To achieve such a goal a well supported study of king Andrew's ambitions in the Balkan region as in the Byzantine Empire is depicted. His marriage with a daughter of the Latin Emperor of Constantinople seems to indicate the origin of his pretensions. It also explains the support of the Roman Catholic Church to this Crusade, as well as it offers a detailed description of king Andrew's itinerary in Holy Land.

PRECEDENTS

Before the age of King Béla III (1172-1196) Hungary got in touch with the crusaders as a peaceful - or, for that matter, vicissitudinous - passageway. As it is well known, the troops of King Coloman Beauclerc (Hung. Kálmán Könyves, 1095-1116) crushed parts of the crusading western army in 1096, and only the passage of the mainstay led by Godfrey of Bouillon was undisturbed. What cultural and political contacts were established between the crusaders and the Hungarians during these campaigns can only be guessed. The great turn came under King Béla III, when the Third Crusade headed by the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa passed through Hungary in 1189 with the aim to retaliate the Arab occupation of Jerusalem. Legends suggest that the personal meeting with Frederick, canoniser of the legendary Jerusalem pilgrim Charlemagne, profoundly influenced the Hungarian court. As King Béla's chroniclers inform us, it was the first intensive encounter for the country with knightly culture, chivalrous customs, tournaments. The German crusaders were not in a hurry, the historiographers accompanying them had time to identify King Attila's centres of rule known from the Nibelungenlied with Hungarian towns. Béla yielded 2000 soldiers under the commandership of the Bishop of Győr and six county bailiffs (Hung. *ispán*) to accompany the Germans, but when the relationship between the Emperor Frederick and Emperor Isaac II of Byzantium deteriorated, Béla III, who had always watched carefully to keep on good terms with Byzantium, ordered the Hungarian contingents from Adrianople - today Edirne. Some of them however, including the bailiffs, persisted in their original plan¹.

Why eventually Béla III made the pledge to go on a crusade is not known. It must have been in connection with the canonisation of King Ladislas (Hung. László) I in 1192. This must have been crucially important for the King because as a consequence of his lengthy education in

¹ For the whole period see *A History of Hungary*, ed. Peter F. Sugar, Péter Hanák and Tibor Frank (London and New York, 1990), pp. 1-83; Zoltán J. KOSZTOLNYIK, *Hungary in the Thirteenth Century*. (Boulder, Col. 1995), pp. 60-76. Pál Engel, *The Realm of Saint Stephen. A History of Medieval Hungary* (London and New York, 2000).

Byzantium, he was considered to be the heir to the throne of Byzantium for some time and also has the nickname "Greek" '*graecus*' in Hungary. Through the canonisation and joining the crusades to the Holy Land, he wished to turn his reign more latinized. His decision - pledging to crusade - must have been also encouraged by his wives, Anna Chatillon (queen from 1170) and Margaret Capet (queen from 1186): Anna was the daughter of a princess of Antioch and a French crusader, Raynald Chatillon, Margaret was the daughter of King Louis XII of France and Constance of Castile, who after her husband's death, went to the Holy Land and died there. It is a fact that the pledge was made between the vow of Emperor Henry VI to go on a crusade in April 1195 and the death of the Hungarian King on April 23, 1196, and - as is accepted by research².

The first crusader's vow by a Hungarian King had special importance for canon law as well: Pope Innocent III used it as reference in his decree "*Licet universis*" to decree that an oath to conduct a crusade could be inherited, e. g. the obligation would be passed from father to son. From his two sons, Béla intended Emeric (Hung. Imre) to be his heir and Prince Andrew to complete the crusade, bequeathing to him the necessary resources. The struggle between Emeric and Andrew for the throne, however impeded the crusade, although the Pope had made several attempts to mobilise the Hungarian monarch from 1198. King Emeric (1196-1204) and Andrew made several promises but a row of hindrances - e. g. the seizing and sacking of Zadar (Zara under Hungarian suzerainty at that time) by the crusaders in 1202 among others debarred them in acting upon their father's pledge. Notwithstanding a Hungarian bailiff - palatine Móg who had made his pledge with King Béla III - might have been fighting in the Holy Land in the fourth crusade.

THE CAMPAIGN

More than twenty years have passed since the oath, and there was probably a group of reasons that made King Andrew II of Hungary

² VAN KLEVE: *Fifth Crusade*, pp. 386-87. POWELL: *Anatomy*, pp.127

(1205-1235) participate in the crusade in person. Apart from being compelled by ecclesiastic law, Andrew probably saw it as a potentiality for promoting the Hungarian expansion on the Balkans towards Byzantium and was also possibly stimulated by joining his relatives. In the organisation of the crusading armies, kinship was admittedly of great significance. Andrew wanted to set out for the 5th Crusade with his cousin, Duke Leopold VI Babenberg of Austria, and they set the date for a start in 1217 in February 1213³. They must have taken into account that King John of Jerusalem, concluded an armistice with Sultan al-Adil for five years which was to expire in July 1217. The Holy See made the undertaking secure, too: when the crusade was launched, a letter was sent to the Sultan justifying the righteousness of the crusade⁴. A great exponent of the historiography of crusades, Joshua Prawer, regarded Innocent as a representative of "Realpolitik", who acknowledged the possibility of co-existence between Christianity and Islam with this letter⁵. For King Andrew II, the crusade was apparently a corollary to his expansive foreign policy, a powerful assertion of the Hungarian supremacy in the surrounding countries, first of all in Galicia (Halic), Dalmatia and towards the Balkans. Such hopes were probably expressed by the resettling of the Teutonic Order in the Barcaság (Țara Bîrsei, Burzenland, South Transylvania) for the defence of the southern frontiers of the country and to support his southward expansion. The dream of the Byzantine throne arose in Andrew's head after his marriage to daughter of Peter of Courtenay, the Latin Emperor of Constantinople. He strove to seize the vacated throne of Constantinople especially in 1216-1217, though he had little chance. The 3 January, 1217 letter of Honorius III reveals that the Pope knew Andrew would start at the planned date, and at that time it was Andrew who urged on the campaign⁶. The Holy See hailed the Hungarian King's decision and issued legal protection for the cursaders on 11 February. The pope's letter, named the Hungarian King

³ See Sweeney, J. R.: Magyarország, p. 123., J. Powell: *Anatomy*, pp. 67-88.

⁴ J. POWELL: *Anatomy*, p. 28, edited in *Patrologia Latina* 216 col. 832, ep. 34.

⁵ PRAWER: *Histoire*, pp. 132-133.

⁶ PRESSUTTI 1:51, 284.

and the Austrian duke as leaders and proposed Cyprus as the place of gathering for the crusaders in a letter of 24 July⁷. Although earlier, still in summer 1217 the bull "*Ad liberandam*" – issued at one of the greatest councils of all times, the IVth Council of Laterano, in November 1215 – fixed the ports of Brindisi and Messina in southern Italy as destination for the crusaders.

King Andrew II chose the marine route although with his Byzantine plans on his mind, he must also have considered the overland action. This route in Hungary is well known: through Székesfehérvár and Zagreb to the port of Split (Spalato), where the crusaders arrived on 23 August. The ecclesiastic and secular leaders of the town received the King with great pomp who started his stay with a mass at St Domnius' church converted from the mausoleum of Emperor Diocletian⁸. Both contemporaries and later-day scholars are at variance about the size of his army. The archdeacon and chronicler of Spalato, Thomas wrote about 10,000, but he failed to add that their number was also increased by the "Saxon" crusaders - possibly the German-speaking warriors of the Austrian Duke - who had arrived in town before the Hungarians⁹. He noted, with the credibility of an eye-witness, that many could not get on the ships and had to return home or wait for the next spring. It is no wonder Thomas felt there were too many crusaders, taking into consideration how narrow the streets of Spalato are. The high-born members of the King's retinue are mostly known by name, including the bishops of Győr and Eger, the Abbot of Pannonhalma - later Archbishop of Kalocsa - as well as the Lord Chief Treasurer and the Grand cupbearer.

The other available source also confirms what Thomas of Spalato says, namely that the envoys of the Hungarian King, the Prior of the Hospitallers in Hungary, Pontius de Cruce and Alexander, Transylvanian provost signed an agreement with the Doge of Venice, Pietro Ziani, to

⁷ PRESSUTTI 1:330, 58, 672-673, 117-118., with a reference in Buenger Robbert: *Venetican Participation*, p. 21.

⁸ For the king's stay at Spalato see the chronicle of Thomas of Spalato, *Gombos Vol. III.* 2229-2231.

⁹ Analyzed this way by Komél SZOVAK: *Szent László alakja, Századok* 2000, p. 136. As Saxons from Transylvania, suggested by Röhricht: *Die Deutschen*, p. 112.

hire ten large transport ships¹⁰. Under the contract, the displacement of the ships was minimum 143 tons, with 50 sailsmen to every 500 "milliaria" or 269 tons, and the rent was 550 Marks of silver per 500 "milliaria", in Venetian currency. The amount was large, further increased by the one month on demurrage in Spalato and the immediate costs of the campaign. The payment of the rent was stipulated in minute details, in three instalments from 14 May 1217, and the ships were to have been in Spalato by the feast of St. James 25 July. Ships of this type could carry some 500 men or 150 horses. Consequently the King could ship not more than one or two thousand mounted troops and as many auxiliary troops even when he rented a lot of smaller capacity ships¹¹.

Thomas of Spalato also recorded that they hired ships from Ancona and Zara as well, but no details are known. The contingent of Ancona also included ships of Pisa¹². If we believe the Hungarian chronicler from the end of the 13th century, Simon of Kéza, who is usually trustworthy on Székely matters, King Andrew II was also accompanied by Székely light cavalry. However, the phantom of the Hungarian King's enormous cavalry of some ten thousand mentioned by Jacques de Vitry must be shattered¹³. This holds true even in the knowledge of the fact that the fifth crusade was the first "levée en masse" and the participation and zeal of the masses was immense. On the other hand, it remained the crusade of the periphery, West Europe hardly moved a finger¹⁴. The latest monographer of the fifth crusade, James Powell does not estimate the joint

¹⁰ GUYOTJEANNIN, Olovier-Nori: Venezia. The editions of the contract: *Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum meridionalium*. Vol. 1. Zagrabiae, 1868. Nr. 38. 29-31., Gusztáv WENZEL (Ed.): *Árpádkori íjokmánytár*, Vol. 6. Pest, 1867, Nr. 2333, 380-383.

¹¹ Abu Shama (*Livre de deux jardins*) mentions 15 000 (p. 162), but referring for the army leaving Acre. William of Tyros mentions 2000 knights, 1000 sergeants and 20 000 infantrymen.

¹² R. RÖHRICHT: "Testimonia minora", p. 270. His source: *Scriptores rerum italicarum* 1, 490 col., with a reference in Buenger Robbert, p. 21

¹³ Röhricht suggests 15 000, Van Cleve, p. 386. 10 000 knights, Powell accepts 4000, as estimated by the "History of the Egyptian Church", though this source doesn't seem to be very reliable as well. In general this "History" has no special information about the Hungarians. The pope expected much more Hungarian crusaders, see Joseph P. Donovan: Pelagius, pp. 29-33. For a general overview of the size of the crusader armies during the 5th Crusade see in J. Powell: *Anatomy*, p. 168

¹⁴ J. POWELL: *Anatomy*, p. 20.

Hungarian and Austrian cavalry at over 4000. I agree with this opinion: there were probably financial barriers to boosting the troops without limitation and extending the stay away from home. This is also confirmed by the loans Andrew had to contract from Italian business houses and the jewels he had to sell. He seems to have taken some treasures with him instead of cash: he could sell the crown of the first Hungarian queen, Gisela's (Hung. Gizella), containing 12 marks of pure gold and gems¹⁵, for 140 silver Marks in the Holy Land, together with a goblet, "*scyphus*" from Tihany Abbey¹⁶. It is also known that on the way home from the campaign, he borrowed 200 Marks from banus Ochuz (Agyasz).

There is information from 1224 of the repayment of Italian loans, the Hungarian King paying 201 silver Marks to the Ghisis, John and Natalis¹⁷. Another fact in support of the above is the king's relinquishing Zadar, (Zára, Lat. Jadra) to the Venetians as he had lost it anyway in 1202, and the consent to trading allowances in exchange for the payment. This term was also laid down in the affreightment and it is this aspect that explains why it was copied in Venice several times as a legal certificate. The contract was mentioned by several Venetian historiographers such as Lorenzo de Monaco, Flavio Bindo, Sabellico, Marin Sanudo the Younger¹⁸.

The Fifth Crusade began in 1213 when Innocent III convened a council for 1215 to prepare the next crusade. The first troops set out for the East from the port of Vlerdinger in the Netherlands on May 27, 1217 and from Dartmouth, England in early June, in some 300 ships¹⁹. Most surprisingly, however, they landed in Acre (Akko) well after the Austrian and Hungarian crusaders, in late April 1218. There was a set of causes to delay them: partly they took their time, they whiled away in Compostela in Spain, and some of them, the crusaders from the Rhineland, joined in the fights of the Portuguese Reconquista near Lisbon and did not manage to take the castle of Alcácer da Sol before mid-October. Actually

¹⁵ RA Nr. 340, 383, 386.

¹⁶ RA Nr. 508.

¹⁷ BUENGER ROBERT: *Venice*, p. 431

¹⁸ BUENGER ROBERT: *Venetian participation*, pp. 17-18

¹⁹ VEN CLEVE: *Fifth Crusade*, p. 395

they did not leave Europe when they had lost ten percent of their ships. The Papal Legate Pelagius, chosen as the commander-in-chief of the army failed to show up in the Holy Land in time. He only arrived in Acre in mid-September 1218²⁰.

Both the Austrians and Hungarians gathered in Spalato from where the Austrians were the first to set sail and reached Acre after 16 days at sea. Then came the Hungarians who arrived sometime in late September. The voyage itself was not too long, lasting some 16-30 days. It is certain that the Hungarian crusaders were in Acre in early October, meaning that they missed the original point of gathering on Cyprus for pressure of time. Those convening in Acre, the announced place of gathering, were greeted by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Ralph. Other participants in the campaign included Leopold VI, Duke of Austria, Hugh, King of Cyprus, John, King of Jerusalem as well as dozens of princes and bishops. The first major war council in Acre was attended by the (grand) masters of the three orders of knighthood and the rest of the Christian dignitaries, in the tent of King Andrew²¹. It must be ascribed to the tendentious chronicles and the probably erroneous presentation of Abu Shama that King Andrew II is remembered as the leader of the Christians. In spite of the fact that Andrew was the only European king present in the campaign in person, the leader of the early phase of the crusade was more probably John, King of Jerusalem, while King Andrew II kept spectacularly aloof of the martial events, at least after the first reconnaissance manoeuvres. By this time, of course, the Frisian and Rhenish forces ought to have arrived, but the Austrian and Hungarian rulers launched military actions without them. They met John, King of Jerusalem, and reinforced with the Cyprian and Antiochian troops, started an offensive to enhance the security of the Christian state of Acre²².

²⁰ J. P. DONOVAN: *Pelagius*, p. 46.

²¹ *Estoire de Eracles XXXI*, 10 (322-323): "un jor a parlement en la tente dou roi de Hongrie", Johann Friedrich BÖHMER: "Regesta imperii", vol. V. Innsbruck, 1894, Nr. 15049a, 2153. O., with a reference in BUENGER Robbert L.: *Venice*, p. 358.

²² The most often used sources are Oliver of Cologne (+1227): "Historia Damiatina". Edited in *Gombos*, Catalogus. Budapest, 1937-38. Vol. 3. 1745-47. and Jacques de VITRY (Jacobus de Vitriaco): "Historia orientalis". Edited in *Gombos* vol. 2. 1218-1220, and his *Epistolae ad Honorium III papam*. Edited also by *Gombos* vol.2. 1217-1218.

The first manoeuvres were meant for scouting and alleviating the distressing shortage of food. A large crusading army on the move could only be supplied locally and, owing to the droughts of the previous years, it was not without hardships, as clearly verified by the letter of William of Chartres written to Pope Honorius²³. That was why the crusaders first headed for the southern plain, to Riccardana (Tel Kurdana) next to Acre where they set up a camp. On November 3, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Ralph and Jacques de Vitry, Bishop of Acre came to King Andrew and Leopold, Duke of Austria, with a particle of the Holy Cross, lost in the battle of Hattin in 1187. The King and the Prince approached the relic barefoot, prostrated themselves and kissed it. Allegedly, at that moment the cross, believed to have been lost, appeared again²⁴. In the meantime, the priests were praying loud for the success of the campaign. The son of Sultan al-Adil, al-Mu'azzam kept watch on the movements of the Christians from Nablus, but his father did not allow him to attack them but rather retreated to Ajlun. A fictitious dialogue between the Sultan and his son in the invaluable French source of the campaign, the *Éracles*, also suggests that the Muslims overestimated the strength of the Christians²⁵.

In my view, King Andrew II must have realised that the Christian forces were incapable of upsetting the balance of forces or waging a major field battle. On November 4 they set out, explored the vicinity of the fortress on Mount Tabor, on November 10 they crossed the River Jordan near the Sea of Galilee and turned north along the shore. Then crossing again at the ford of Jacob, they returned to Acre. They had seized a wealth of booty: the sacking of Beisan and the treasures captured there are stressed by the sources. They had also lived up to their pledge of pilgrimage, bathing in the Jordan and visiting such holy places as Caphernaum, a place of great fame for Christ's miracles and preachings.

After a brief rest, the actual war events began with the attack on Tabor Castle on Mount Tabor, a manoeuvre included in the Christian plans from the beginning²⁶. The Moslem fortress had worried the papal

²³ FEJÉR: CD III/1, pp. 230-232.

²⁴ PRAWER: *Histoire* vol. 1, p 136.

²⁵ *Éracles* 324.

²⁶ J. POWELL: *Anatomy*, p. 19.

court, where it was also known that al-Adil and his son al-Mu'azzam held different opinions about the erection of Tabor castle. As the outcome of the events revealed, the papal plan, built on the variance between the sultan and his son, had not been unfounded. The huge fortress was built on a rocky plateau, 600 metres above sea level, protected by 77 towers and by a garrison of two thousand. It controlled the routes from Acre to the Sea of Galilee, hence violating the elementary interests of the Christian state.

The crusaders, probably without King Andrew II, arrived under the castle defended by Badr ad-Din Mohammed al-Hakkari, on 30 November. With the help of a local renegade guide, they found a hidden path to the fortress, approached it unnoticed in misty weather, but they do not appear to make capital out of surprise attack because the commanders, including King John, ordered back the troops instead of breaking in. This move was criticised by contemporary, in part first-hand, Western chroniclers such as Oliver and Jacques de Vitry, and they seemed to know about disputes between the Master of the Hospitallers and the Count of Tripoli about the continuation of the siege²⁷. Perhaps the attackers were indeed too few to complete the action successfully. Two days later, they tried scaling ladders, and failed again. King John and Bohemund of Antioch feared that the army, engaged so deeply in a siege, would be easy prey to a Muslim attack. Time, however, verified this decision: a few months later the Muslims gave up the fortress, destroyed and deserted Tabor, presumably because they did not find it worth to defend in the long run. The Christians eventually started back to Acre on 7 December. As the *Éracles* says, King Andrew II remained in Acre for the period of the last two campaigns "for convenience's sake", and indeed, no mention is made of the Hungarian king in sources about the front-line²⁸.

In opposition to the sober and judicious local leaders who knew the cruelties of fighting in the Holy Land, there must have been a handful of hot-headed, adventure-hungry crusaders as well. It was probably they who, despite the wise advice of Balian, lord of Sidon launched an attack

²⁷ VAJAY: *Dominæ reginæ milites*, p. 400

²⁸ ÉRACLES, 325.

towards the castle of Beaufort across the Lebanese Mountains with half a thousand horsemen in mid-December. The weather being cold, snowy, damp, it was not hard for the Arabs to ambush the horsemen in the mountains who came as far as Mashgara in South Lebanon, and they drove them back with great losses. In Abu Shama's view, the nephew of King Andrew II was their leader, but since no other historical records make mention of him, probably a Hungarian nobleman was meant by the Arab chronicler. The *Éracles* mentions a nobleman called Denis ("Dionise"), presumably the Lord Chief Treasurer of Hungary, but it was in connection with the Mount Tabor action²⁹. Abu Sama appears to know of an Arab called "Bison" who lured the Hungarians toward the mountains of Sidon where they were defeated at a place called Jakout, only 3 out of 500 to escape³⁰.

After the separation of the Hungarians in early 1218 some of the troops remained in Acre and two units set out towards the south. They took part in reinforcing the fortresses in Caesaria and Château Pélerin (Atlit). These forts were assigned significance during a planned southern offensive. In the castle of Pilgrims they erected a new tower called Destroit to control the seaside road.

In half a year's time, King Andrew II gathered enough martial experience and had to realise that the military force at his disposal was inadequate to launch a decisive manoeuvre, and that no immediate danger was looming large from the Muslims. He must also have been aware that the main aim of the crusade was to attack Egypt, and in the knowledge of this fact, he probably felt even more redundant there. The considerable war loss sustained in winter 1217-18, as well as his illness in December - in Thomas of Spalato's view, he was poisoned - must have strengthened his decision to take his troops home. The epidemic killed the King Hugh of Cyprus, too. Andrew himself did not stay on the front all the time. Probably ahead of his army, he went to Tripolis. A golden opportunity to do so was the wedding of Bohemund IV and Melisende, the sister of Hugh, King of Cyprus, on 10 January. The visit was justified by his kinship ties - he was a cousin to the Prince of Antioch. He visited

²⁹ *ÉRACLES*, 325; *OLIVER*, 167; *ABU SHAMA*, p. 164.

³⁰ *ABU SHAMA*, p. 164.

the most important fortresses of the Knights of Saint John of Jerusalem at Marget and Krak from there. Thank to these visits, the aristocratic retinue of Andrew is known. In late 1217, the King made several grants to the Hospitallers, e.g. the toll of Babót gate in Sopron County (in North Hungary), 500 and 100 silver Marks from the salt trade of Szalacs (Sălacea in Transylvania), with the consent of the barons present³¹. The Hospitallers, having been asked by the pope to collect a twentieth of the ecclesiastic revenues appropriated for the campaign in Hungary, received other gifts from King Andrew II, too. For example, he promised to give them 1000 Marks for accompanying him home, but even Pope Alexander was still waiting for this payment by the Hungarian king - then already Béla IV in vain³².

The Hungarians could accumulate military experiences not only by studying the network of fortifications in the Holy Land, but they could witness the combined deployment of cavalry and infantry and experience the great practical use of crossbowmen, who were already customary on long-distance Mediterranean sea journeys as well, appearing with increasing frequency in financial registers. The experiences gained in the Holy Land must have had at least indirect influence upon the development of military affairs in Hungary, even though no material or verbal records can be adduced. It has been suggested that jurisdiction in Jerusalem also influenced the Golden Bull, the famous privilege of the Hungarian nobles of 1222, but more recent researches have discarded this presumption³³. A more palpable group of the legacy of the Holy Land campaign is a set of coins that went to the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest in 1982. The bulk of 32 oriental medals contain various coins from Jerusalem, Antioch, Tripoli, etc. from the mid-12th century. It is not too far-fetched to assume that it was brought home by one of the Hungarian crusaders who kept arriving from the Holy Land after 1217³⁴.

³¹ RA Nr. 328, 329, 330. "Werböczy also mention a royal donation at the Mount of Tabor", in *Tripartitum* IIr, 14tit, 13par.

³² REISZIG, E.: *Johanniták*, pp. 34-35

³³ DIVEKY, A.: *Aranybulla*; KMTL pp. 55, 304, written by István Petrovics és Enikő Csukovits.

³⁴ GEDAI, I.: Éremlelet.

The evaluation of the first phase of the campaign is not unambiguously negative. The cautious politics of the Christian leaders and King John preserved the military strength of the earlier arriving troops until 1218, which united with the newcomers, could be a real match to the enemy. The passage of the Hungarian army through North Palestine was not ineffectual. It enhanced the security of the Christian states, contributed to the recapture of the castle of Tabor and prepared a combined offensive against Syria and Egypt later. The protraction of the Egyptian offensive was not Andrew's fault but the delay of the Frisian-Rhenish troops. As soon as they had arrived, the march began and in the first days of May 1218 they were in North Africa, at Damietta. Not all of the Hungarians returned home. The Patriarch of Jerusalem wanted to persuade King Andrew II to stay without success, but royal permission was granted for those who wanted to remain. Sources confirm that when the crusaders marched against the Sultan of Babylon, e. g. the Sultan of Cairo, some Hungarian high priests were also killed in the siege of the fort of Damietta (Dimjat) at the river-head of the Nile. It is true, however, that only the 14th century *Annales Reinhardsbrunnenses* knows of two people killed³⁵. As in 1218 two Hungarian dioceses received new leaders, the two victims must have been the Bishops of Győr and Várad (today Rom. Oradea.) The Bishop of Eger stayed on and only returned from Damietta in 1219. This suggests that the Hungarian prelates did not necessarily agree with the king's decision – apparently for reasons of conscience – and continued the fighting in Northern Egypt with their retinues.

So far as the hue and cry against the quick return of Hungarians is concerned, it is worth taking a closer look at the stay of other Christian armies in the Holy Land³⁶. Duke Leopold, who had come with King Andrew II, returned a year later, in May 1219; William, Duke of the Netherlands who arrived in spring 1218 also returned a year later, in autumn 1219; of those who landed in autumn 1218, the Count of La Marche returned in 1219, Dieter von Katzenellenbogen,

³⁵ Edited by Gombos vol. 1. 192.

³⁶ Used here J. Powell: *Anatomy*, pp. 116-117.

the Count of Nevers, the contingent of Lucca, the Duke of Chester left in 1220. The Count of Lesina, who arrived in late 1220, went back in 1221, Duke Louis of Bavaria and Duke of Malta, Henry returned from Sicily in the same year, in 1221. It is, therefore, quite unfounded to claim that all conscientious crusaders fought for the faith for many years.

This comparison makes it obvious that King Andrew II spent a mere half a year less overseas than the average crusaders. The Count of Nevers having spent the usual length of time in the crusade, was also harshly criticised because of leaving at a critical moment. A cleric of Cologne, Oliver, also criticised Diether von Katzenellenbogen although he almost stayed for one and a half years. When on his way home his ship was attacked by pirates by the shores of Cyprus and set on fire, Oliver saw it as God's punishment for the desertion. The time spent by the secular aristocracy in the Holy Land was hardly in excess of a year, and it was even shorter for the clergy. The continuity of military and political guidance was ensured by King John, the Papal Legate, the leaders of the knightly orders and the Patriarch of Jerusalem. They were aware of this, and that is why the patriarch levelled such hard words at the Hungarian King, and even excommunicated him, when he heard of the King's intention to leave. The weight of the knightly orders probably dawned on King Andrew II, and this recognition must have made him endow them with as many gifts as he could afford. It is not hard to imagine how adversely the final outcome of the war was influenced by the frequent change of the commanders who led the troops in practice. The army was constantly changing, too, those who had gained some war experience, went home. King John himself had to return home for domestic political reasons at an unduly early date, causing serious loss to the crusaders. Those who decided to return must have been motivated by several reasons: worry for losing their political influence at home in their absence, financial possibilities, accommodation to the periods of seafaring, access to ships, etc. – as contrasted with the Hungarians, most of them could not go overland. Andrew must also have been informed of the adverse state of law and order at home, which he also used as an excuse later in his self-justification to the pope. It is also understandable that those who remained in the Holy Land felt they were left in the lurch by those who were to leave.

ON THE WAY HOME

The route of return must have been deliberately chosen by the Hungarian King, since hot diplomatic activity accompanied his journey. True, in January no ships were to be found to take them. Andrew behaved as the head of a European Middle Power was expected to behave: negotiating with the leaders of the states on his way, making matches, weaving diplomatic alliances. One must fully agree with the historian Szabolcs Vajay who claims that Andrew was envisioning a Hungarian empire, an "*archiregnum Hungariae*" with especially strong bonds of alliance and suzerainty in the Balkans³⁷. As an epilogue to the crusade, this process was buttressed by the following new dynastic and diplomatic connections: in Tarsus of Cilician Armenia, he engaged the daughter of King Leo of the Armenia to Prince Andrew and the daughter of the Nicaean Greek Emperor, Theodore I Lascaris, Maria, to his son Béla, while he promised the hand of his daughter Maria to Asen Ivan II (John) Tsar of Bulgaria. Apart from the Armenian engagement, the weddings soon all took place. In Nicaea, however, there was some unpleasant meeting awaiting the Hungarian King, when the exiled sons of his uncle Géza (Geiza) attacked him. The weddings also signpost his route home, which tallied with the customary route of the crusaders³⁸. He crossed the Bosphorus, transgressed the Balkans which is known from his later grant to his subject Pósa, who had come to Greece to meet the King³⁹. From here, he took the road that can be discerned from the work of the Anonymous chronicler as the customary route of Hungarian delegations: Edirne, Plovdiv, the Gate of Traian, Sofia, Nis, Belgrade and Hungary.

The Hungarian historian, Szabolcs Vajay is however mistaken in his assumption that it was the Pope's outrage that made him refuse to anoint King Andrew II as Emperor of Byzantium. Actually Andrew, despite his dynastic relations had not much chance. It is true, King Andrew II engaged in 1215 Yolande of Courténay, the sister of the Latin Emperor. It

³⁷ VAJAY, Sz.: *Dominae reginae milites*.

³⁸ BOROSY, A.: *Keresztes háborúk*, p. 40.

³⁹ RA Nr. 382.

drew him into the struggle for the Byzantine throne, especially after the 11 June 1216 death of the Byzantine Emperor Henry, relative of his wife. The Pope crowned Peter, Andrew's father-in-law in S. Lorenzo fuori le Mura in Rome on 9 April 1217⁴⁰. Peter knew that he had first to go to Rome with his warriors and from there to the East and, as one of the richest owners of the Frankish Land, he could afford it. After his unlucky fate and death in captivity, his wife, also called Yolande, ruled as Regent and was followed by her son Robert in 1219. King Andrew II's plan to be the Latin Emperor of Constantinople is revealed by his letter of late 1216 known only from the Pope's answer⁴¹. It has not been settled conclusively to this day to what extent Andrew's crusading plans were motivated by his hope for the Byzantine throne. Quite certainly, his decision to go by sea instead of land was influenced by his knowledge of the Pope's decision to his detriment. The Pope's letter of 30 January 1217 still mentions Andrew's overland route. It is, however, questionable whether the rapid sequence of events is reflected in the passage of the legend of St. Ladislav concerning the crowning of King Ladislav I of Hungary as "Emperor". If we accept this assumption, in agreement with a few historians of today, it was the Germans rallying in Spalato that elected Andrew Emperor of Byzantium. In his letter of January, Honorius III wrote about Andrew's imperial title as a realistic possibility, but since there is no historical record at all and today's scholars must be cautious about this issue.

It was also considered to give the King's niece in marriage to the Sultan of Ikonion⁴². Some reports of the campaign inform us of peaceful moments such as the purchase of valuable relics for a large sum, the skulls of St. Stephen, protomartyr, and St. Margaret of Antioch by the king. He also acquired the right hand of the Apostles St Thomas and St Bartholomew, a piece of Aaron's crook and a jug of the Kana wedding⁴³.

⁴⁰ SETTON, *Papacy*, 1: 44.

⁴¹ RA Nr. 312; Fejér, CD III/1, p. 187; K SZOVÁK: *Szent László alakja*, pp. 135-138

⁴² RA Nr. 355

⁴³ SRH I: 465-466, SRH 2: 206. Duke Leopold also was in hunt for precious relics, see Donovan: Pelagius, p. 56. For an overview of the Hungarian royal representation see MAROSI E.: *Reprezentáció*, p. 524.

Later Hungarian tradition also attributed the relic of the Holy Innocents kept in the treasury of the cathedral of Zagreb to Andrew⁴⁴. In that age, this interest was a perfectly natural ambition of collectors, upon which only the military failure or quick retreat brought some discredit. The tendentious accounts of the culpable and disgraceful return of the Hungarian king by contemporary chroniclers such as Cleric Oliver, Jacques de Vitry, and later by the Austrian and German historiographers including the Annals of Klosterneuburg or Vincentius Bellovacensis, one of the most popular encyclopaedists of the Middle Ages, influenced the retrospective evaluation of the events to our day⁴⁵. Of course, Andrew would have fared better with a spectacular military victory in both his foreign and domestic policies. The silence or laconism of Hungarian charters and narratives, and the events retraced by the history of politics all suggest that the campaign failed to reinforce Andrew's prestige at home and abroad – and failed to tilt the balance of political forces in Andrew's favour. From the ruler's point of view, the campaign was a fiasco, either in domestic or in foreign policy.

EVALUATION

The evaluation of the Hungarian crusade has been highly intriguing to this day. The contemporaries were apparently ashamed of what had happened, the Hungarians only devoting to it a word or two – true, those were mostly appreciative. Still, the eminent historian Joshua Prawer's worry that Andrew became a “national hero” after his return is unfounded.

Hungarian chroniclers did not leave it unmentioned that in that phase of the campaign the Hungarian king was the highest-ranking European ruler present, and as such, he was the “chief commander”, scoring successes; they list the relics he had acquired and describe his glorious return home⁴⁶. Having returned home, the King – despite his

⁴⁴ PAULER, Gy.: *Magyar nemzet története* 2: 499.

⁴⁵ “Continuatio Claustroneoburgensis”, edited in *Gombos* 1: 762, 764; see also T pp. 97-99.

⁴⁶ See the overview of BOROSY, A.: *Keresztes háborúk*, pp. 33-34.

proverbial generosity - did not reward the participants, also confirmed by the little number of forged documents for such purpose⁴⁷.

Contemporary western chroniclers were usually scandalised by the King's quick return and condemned the Hungarian participation entirely. The classical works on the Crusades, including Sir Steven Runciman's monumental endeavour, justify in succinct and pithy sentences why Andrew's venture was quite useless⁴⁸. Hungarian historiography appears to have enthused about the campaign a little in the Baroque Age, evaluating it as an ill-fated venture till our time⁴⁹. Interestingly enough, the most prominent Renaissance chronicler in Hungary, Antonio Bonfini, who had read the great histories of the world, did not note Andrew's untimely return and made him stay in the Holy Land up to the failure at Damietta, which view was also adopted by Count Miklós Zrínyi. It is also interesting that Bonfini did not believe the Italian chroniclers who appeared to know from the aftermath of the affreightment contracts that the Hungarian King had relinquished Zara⁵⁰. His figure earned Zrínyi's great esteem; the *Nádasdy Mausoleum*, a picture gallery of Hungarian Kings from the 17th century, and the *Corpus Iuris* engraving of Andrew II commemorate the King in front of the temple of the Holy Sepulchre at the time of his great martial undertaking⁵¹. On the island of Malta, in Palazzo Magistrale there is a 17th century fresco perpetuating King Andrew II of Hungary's reception by the leader of the Hospitaller Order upon his arrival. Strangely enough, it is a prevalent view in contemporary encyclopaedias that it was King Andrew II himself who began using the epithet "of Jerusalem" in his

⁴⁷ The most convincing one is the charter concerning the men of Vodics. J. Powell registered it in his catalogue and other authors also considered it to be authentic (see B. GREGIN: *Odjeci*, p. 146). Similarly forgery is the one in which a certain Demeter parades with killing the sultan's brother. FEJÉR: CD IV/1, p. 417, with a reference in A. BOROSY: *Keresztes háborúk*, p. 22. The theory of a possible Polish presence at this crusade is based on a forged charter: RA 843; J. OSSOWSKA: *Polish Contribution*.

⁴⁸ For a negative attitude see S. Runciman vol. 3., Donovan, Pelagius, p. 32.; Van Cleve, *Fifth Crusade*, p. 394.

⁴⁹ The modern Hungarian historians were very critical with Andrew's crusade, see. KRISTÓ GYULA: *Árpád-kor háborúi*, 104, BOROSY, A.: *Magyarország hadügye*, p. 40.

⁵⁰ Antonio Bonfini increased the number of the Hungarian crusaders, see P. KULCSÁR: *Bonfini*, p. 77, Zrínyi Miklós prózai művei, pp. 83, 114, 121

⁵¹ SZILAGYI, A.: *II. András*, pp. 339, 341

royal title. He did not, and could not, do so as he was not legally entitled to it. It was posterity's innovation, codified by István Werbőczy (*Decretum Tripartitum*, Triple Book, part II, 6) writing warmly about the King who issued the Golden Bull: "Then... victorious King Andrew... who we name Andrew of Jerusalem since he returned from his Jerusalem campaign he had launched with an immense army of Hungarians against the Saracens in defence of the Holy Faith and returned successfully..."⁵² The glorifying words of the historian Ede Wilczek about the "lustrous" role of King Andrew II - "the marine hero and conqueror" for the millenary celebrations were exceptional. The well known historian of the turn of the century, Henrik Marczali termed Andrew "the operetta king" in his major synthetic work, while in another summary Bálint Hóman put the blame on the Hungarian King for the failure of the campaign⁵³.

In foreign historical literature, the first to show some indulgence to King Andrew II's crusade was the noted French historian René Grousset. He went so far as to label the first phase of the 5th Crusade the "Hungarian campaign". In an article written for a Hungarian periodical, he mentioned "the moral victory of the Hungarians" over the Arabs, claiming that the presence of the Hungarians prepared the offensive against Egypt in 1218 and the liberation of Jerusalem by Emperor Frederick II.⁵⁴ In our days, it is primarily the work of James Ross Sweeney and James Powell whose evaluations mark a turn away from the traditional condemnation of King Andrew II for the campaign⁵⁵. They regard the Hungarian participation in the Holy Land of epochal significance for ideological and military and war historical considerations - which, in view of the negligible Czech and Polish participation in crusading campaigns, does not seem unfounded. Current monographs are far more balanced about the Hungarian Crusade than the earlier ones⁵⁶. The present author also shed new light on the campaign from an angle of war

⁵² *Corpus iuris*. Ed. by Sándor Kolosvári and Kelemen Óvári. Budapest, 1897, p. 233

⁵³ MARCZALI, H.: *Magyarország története*, 2: 382-387., B. HÓMAN: *Magyar történet*, 1: 441-443.

⁵⁴ BOROSY, A.: *A kereszties háborúk*, pp. 29-30.; R. GROUSSET: *Histoire des croisades*, pp. 196-207.; R. GROUSSET: *La Hongrie*, pp. 232-237.

⁵⁵ Ismertetésükre ld. BOROSY, A.: *A KERESZTES HÁBORÚK*, pp. 30-31, 32-33.

⁵⁶ RICHARD, J.: *Crusades*, pp. 294-299

history⁵⁷. Both geographically and numerically, it was the greatest venture of any Hungarian military force in the Middle Ages, carried out - barring minor losses - with excellent results. It is hard to explain why Hungarian and foreign historians claim King Andrew II and his well-equipped but relatively small forces ought to have recaptured Jerusalem and defeated the Muslim central forces. Although the crusaders were never so close to success as after the capture of Damietta, it is not the Hungarian King to bear responsibility for missing the chance.

It appears far more likely that those who regard the Hungarian crusade as a sign of the "full integration of the Hungarian kingdom reaching its zenith in the community of Latin Christian peoples" are right. Notwithstanding all its mistakes and contradictions, the supranational and all-European ideal was represented by the Pope of Rome, he alone disposed over the moral and legal power to launch a campaign. Those who took part in a crusade testified to the political stability and economic strength of their area and their commitment to the Church represented by the Pope. Andrew's failure lies in the fact that he was unable to exploit the propagandistic potential implied by the campaign⁵⁸, even though, in military terms, he had completed the task well. Quite astonishingly, today's historians judge the King's performance more positively than the participants themselves or their contemporaries did.

⁵⁷ VESZPRÉMY, L.: *Egy magyar király*, pp. 40-41.

⁵⁸ Though Andrew II's notary quotes Horace's *Ars poetica* (lines 180-181), referring to the king's crusade: "...verum quia segnius invitant animos demissa per aures, quam que sunt oculis commissa fidelibus, quum ad sanctae terrae liberationem in spe divinae consolationis accessimus..." RA Nr. 329.

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