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## KING ST LADISLAS, CHRONICLES, LEGENDS AND MIRACLES

The pillars of Hungarian state authority had crystallized at the end of the twelfth century, namely, the cult of the Hungarian saint kings (Stephen, Ladislas and Prince Emeric), especially that of the apostolic king Stephen who organized the Church and state. His cult, traditions, and relics played a crucial role in the development of the Hungarian coronation ritual and rules. The cult of the three kings was canonized on the pattern of the veneration of the *three magi* in Cologne from the thirteenth century, and it was their legends that came to be included in the Hungarian appendix of the *Legenda Aurea*<sup>1</sup>. A spectacular stage in this process was the foundation of the Hungarian chapel by Louis I of Anjou in Aachen in 1367, while relics of the Hungarian royal saints were distributed to the major shrines of pilgrimage in Europe (Rome, Cologne, Bari, etc.). Together with the surviving treasures, they were supplied with liturgical books which acquainted the non-Hungarians with Hungarian history in the special and local interpretation. In Hungary, the national and political implications of the legends of kings contributed to the representation of royal authority and national pride.

Various information on King Ladislas (reigned 1077–1095) is available in the chronicles, legends, liturgical lections and prayers<sup>2</sup>. In some cases, the same motifs occur in all three types of sources. For instance, as to the etymology of the saint's name, the sources cite a rare Greek rhetorical concept (*per peragogen*), which was first incorporated in the Chronicle, as the context reveals, and later transferred into the Legend and the liturgical lections. Similarly, in all cases, the king's height and stature are mentioned as indisputable signs of inner excellence and fitness for rule. If Stephen's figure and coronation with the holy crown served as the basis for succession according to *ius legitimum*, then the figure of Ladislas

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<sup>1</sup> G. Klaniczay, E. Madas, *La Hongrie*, in : *Hagiographies: Histoire internationale de la littérature hagiographique latine et vernaculaire en Occident des origines à 1550*, G. Philippart (ed.), Turnhout 1996 ; Vol. 2, p. 103-160 ; Gy. Poszler, *Az Árpád-házi szent királyok a Magyar középkor századaiban*. [The holy kings of the Árpád dynasty in the middle ages] in: *Történelem - kép: szemelvények múlt és művészet kapcsolatából Magyarországon*, Á. Mikó, K. Sinkó (edd.), Budapest 2000, p. 170-187.

<sup>2</sup> For the edition of *Legenda S. Ladislai regis*, in : *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum*, I. Szentpétery (ed.), Vols. 1-2, Budapest 1937-1938 (further *SRH*) 2: p. 507–528, see also the recent critical edition of I. Hajdú, *Vita sancti Ladislai confessoris regis Hungariae*, “Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-Âge Grec et Latin” (Université de Copenhague) 77/2006, p. 36–66. For the complicated, and hotly debated borrowings between these sources see J. Gerics, *Legkorábbi Gesta-szerkesztéseink keletkezésrendjének problémái* [Problems of the order of creation of our earliest gesta-compositions], Budapest 1961 ; Idem, *Textbezüge zwischen den ungarischen Chroniken und die Sankt-Ladislau Legende*. „Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae“, 19/1973, p. 273-304.

introduced *ius idoneitatis* or suitability, aptitude for the throne, as a source of authority<sup>3</sup>. This tradition, of course, partly derives from the sources on St Stephen, since Stephen's king's mirror discussed the ideal of the rex *idoneus* fit for rule, and its elements also appear in St Ladislav's Legend.

The descriptions of St Ladislav's stature may indeed have a real foundation, as after having visited Hungary ca. 1113, the Polish Gallus Anonymus testified<sup>4</sup>, "Ladislav...who was conspicuous for his piety as he was tall in stature". Later sources, such as that of Richardus (Fitznigel) of London (bishop of London 1189–1198) reveal that the same characteristics also particularly fit the king who had him canonized in 1192, King Béla III (r. 1172–1196). As it happens, Béla is the only king of the Árpád House whose skeleton has survived, proving that the king was truly tall. He was proud of it, and in consequence, his anonymous court chronicler also recognizably modelled the ancient Hungarian chiefs after him in a historicizing context<sup>5</sup>, "For Álmos himself was handsome of face, but dark, and he had dark eyes, but big ones; tall and lean in stature, he had indeed large hands, and wide fingers..." (chap. 4.)

In his youth, King Béla was educated in Constantinople as the designated heir to the Byzantine throne, his first wife was Agnes of Antioch, daughter of Raynald of Châtillon, and the second was Margaret of France, widow of Henry, the Young king of England. As the adopted son of the Byzantine emperor, King Béla had to fight for the throne and at first failed to have himself crowned. Later his Byzantine past was compensated for, but in addition to his 'legitimacy' for the throne, his political program could not do without a stressed *idoneitas*<sup>6</sup>. Of course, one cannot believe that the very similar stature was the reason for King Ladislav's canonization. It was rather the local cult of Ladislav in the churches and monasteries founded or donated by him, above all in the bishopric of Várad (today Oradea, Romania), or the Somogyvár Benedictine monastery near Lake Balaton dedicated to St Giles. In fact, there are sources testifying that his fame, his tomb, and relics in Várad played a role in the local ordeals, attracting large crowds by the end of the 12th century, though surviving fragments of the ordeal register came from 1205 the earliest<sup>7</sup>. King Béla undoubtedly had long-term goals with the canonization, proved by the fact that Ladislav's *historia* follows the French

<sup>3</sup> Gy. Kristó, *Legitimitás és idoneitás. Adalékok Árpád-kori eszmetörténetünkhöz*. [Legitimacy and suitability. Contribution to our intellectual history in the age of the Árpáds], "Századok", 108/1974, pp. 585–621.

<sup>4</sup> Anonymus Gallus I.27, pp. 96–97: "Wladislaum, sicut eminentem corpore, sic affluentem pietate".

<sup>5</sup> K. Solyom, *Trois portraits du Moyen Age, "Études Finno-Ougriennes"*, 17/1982–83, p. 151; K. Szóvák, *The Image of the Ideal King in Twelfth-Century Hungary (Remarks on the Legend of St Ladislav)*, in: *Kings and Kingship in Medieval Europe*, Anne J. Duggan (ed.), London 1993, p. 255: "Erat enim ipse Almus facie decorus sed niger, et nigros habebat oculos sed magnos, statura longus et gracilis, manus vero habebat grossas et digitos prolixos."- about the ancient Hungarian duke, Álmos, the forfather of the Árpád dynasty.

<sup>6</sup> K. Szóvák, *The Image of the Ideal King in Twelfth-Century Hungary (Remarks on the Legend of St Ladislav)*, in: *Kings and Kingship in Medieval Europe*, Anne J. Duggan (ed.), London 1993, pp. 241–264; G. Klaniczay *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe*, Cambridge 2002, pp. 173–194.

<sup>7</sup> L. Solymosi, *Szent László király somogyvári sírjának legendája* [The legend of the tomb of St Ladislav in Somogyvár], in: *Magyar történettudomány az ezredfordulón. Glatz Ferenc 70. születésnapjára*, L. Gecsenyi, L. Izsák (edd.), Budapest 2011, pp. 125–142; Regestrum Varadiense 1903, R. Bartlett, *Trial by Fire and Water: The Medieval Judicial Ordeal*, Oxford 1986, pp. 128–129; K. Szóvák, *A váradi írásbeliség hagyománya* [Literacy in the Chapter of Várad], in: *Nagyvárad és Bihar a korai középkorban*, A. Zsoldos (ed.), Nagyvárad (Oradea) 2014, pp. 129–146.

model of the St Victor's sequence in style and music; and the laws of the 11th-century kings, including Kings Ladislas and Coloman, might have been collected in King Béla's times<sup>8</sup>.

On the other hand, the contemporary crusading spirit may have contributed to the revival of the cult of King Ladislas in the 1190's. It was well known that before the arrival of the famous Godfrey Bouillon, the first ruler of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, several crusader armies marched through the country. Most of them came into open conflict with the Hungarian royal army under King Coloman for different reasons, some of them were expelled by force or even annihilated<sup>9</sup>. The combination of the figure of Ladislas, the immediate predecessor of Coloman on the throne, with the preparations of the first crusade, the most prosperous of all, did not require an elaborate story. It was really a great success that impressed both the contemporaries and modern scholars as well. Some twentieth-century scholars still gave credit to these reports propagating Ladislas as a crusader, accepted by all genres of medieval sources, chronicles, legends, and sermons. In fact, the king's presumed crusading role may have been a persuasive argument in the letters sent to the Pope and in the official discussions concerning the saintly life of Ladislas. Unfortunately, these letters did not survive.

According to the latest results of the research of László Solymosi, the application for the canonization may have been sent to Rome by King Béla at the turn of 1188 and 1189, and the positive written answer may have arrived from Pope Celestin III in the year 1191<sup>10</sup>. Papal legates did visit Hungary three times at that time: bishop cardinal Theobaldus as a legate of Pope Urban III at the end of 1186 or at the beginning of 1187, and deacon cardinal Gregory as a legate of Popes Clement III and Celestin III twice, between February 1189 and May 1190, later between January and November 1192. The charters concerning their stay in Hungary did not mention the crusades or the canonization among their immediate goals, but it may be assumed that both were in the background, at least in the case of cardinal Gregory. These dates may reveal the secret of the rapid success of the canonization process. The tragic and devastating defeat of the crusaders at the battle of Hattin took place in the summer of 1187, the Muslim siege of Jerusalem lasted till October 2nd, when Balian of Ibelin surrendered the city to Saladin. These events, especially the fall of the Holy City shocked the whole Christian world and by the end of October Pope Gregory VIII issued the bull of the next crusade "Audita tremendi", even before hearing about the fall of Jerusalem. As the land route to the Holy Land crossed Hungary, the country's military and political importance immediately strengthened, and the Hungarian king's presumed application may have been met with a favorable reception in Rome. Unfortunately, no sources survived concerning the preparations, with the exception of two letters sent to the Hungarian king,

<sup>8</sup> L. Dobszay, *Az ország patrónusainak liturgikus tisztelete a középkori zsolozsmában* [Liturgical cult of the country's patron saints in the prayers], in: *Magyar szentek tisztelete és ereklyéi* [Hungarian saints' cult and relics], P. Cséfalvay, I. Kontsek (ed.), Esztergom 2000, pp. 99–100; G. Míkó, *A "szent királyok törvényei". A kora Árpád-kori törvények fennmaradásának története.* [The laws of the Holy Kings'. The history of the survival of laws from the early Árpád period] Századok 150/2016, pp. 319–340.

<sup>9</sup> L. Veszprémy, *The Military History of Hungary from the first Contacts with Europe until the Battle of Mohács*, in: *Illustrated Military History of Hungary*, R. Hermann (ed.), Budapest 2012, pp. 23–24; J. France, *Victory in the East. A Military History of the First Crusade*, Cambridge 1994, pp. 90–95.

<sup>10</sup> L. Solymosi, *Szent László király sírja, kultusza és szentté avatása* [The tomb of St Ladislas, his cult and his canonization], in: *Szent király, lovagkirály. A Szent László-herma és a koponyaereklye vizsgálatai*, L. A. Kristóf, Z. Lukácsi, and L. Patonay (edd.), Győr 2017, pp. 29–35.

one by King Henry II and the other by the margrave of Monteferrato<sup>11</sup>. It is well documented that the German Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa took up the cross at Mainz on March 27, 1188, and he was the first to set out for the Holy Land in May, and soon crossed the Western borders of Hungary. His enormous army was given a warm reception by the Hungarian court, an exchange of gifts between the royal couple and the emperor impressed the contemporaries, the army had the possibility of buying anything they needed<sup>12</sup>. A considerable Hungarian detachment even joined the German army, though they soon returned because of a foreseeable Western-Byzantine confrontation. Anyway, King Béla took up the cross at an unknown date, but probably had no deliberate intention of personally marching to the Holy Land via the Byzantine Empire, where once he had been elected as an heir to the throne and had close family ties. Probably this crusading vow inspired his second wife, Margarete of Capet after her husband's death to fulfill a pilgrimage, and she eventually met her death there in 1197.

### The crusader king

An interesting motif in the story of King Ladislas is his fictitious crusade vow. Posterity has an easy task here, first of all because King Ladislas had died in 1095, a few months before Pope Urban proclaimed the first crusading campaign at the Council of Clermont, which simply shifts the minutely elaborated story into the realm of fiction<sup>13</sup>.

“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 sepulcher 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; and all Hungary grieved thereat.”

We have two versions of this story, one in the National Chronicle, and one in the Legend, excerpts of which were incorporated in the lections. The more credible version appears in the Chronicle, which says that the envoys of the Frankish, Lorraine, and German

<sup>11</sup> *Codex diplomaticus* II: pp. 245–246., and *ÁÚO* I: pp. 83–84.

<sup>12</sup> S. Painter, *The Third Crusade*, in: *A History of the Crusades*, K. M. Setton (ed.), Philadelphia, 1962. For the sources see Arnoldus IV.8., and the so-called Ansbertus ad annum 1189. For the contemporary historiographical reception of the exchange of gifts see *Der 'Rithmus de expeditione Ierosolimitana' des sogenannten Haymarus Monachus Florentinus: ein Augenzeugenbericht über die Belagerung Akkons (1189–1191) während des dritten Kreuzzugs*, S. Falk (ed.), Florence 2006, p. 24, and *Kölner Königschronik*, MGH Script. rer. Germ. 18, Hannover 1880, p. 144.

<sup>13</sup> *IC* ch. 139, *SRH* 1: pp. 416–418.: „Cumque celebrasset Pasca Domini in Bodrog, ecce nuncii de Francia et de Ispania, de Anglia et Britania ad eum venerunt, et precipue de Wyllermo fratre regis Francorum, et ei omnipotentis Dei iniuriam se ulcisci manifestaverunt, et sanctam civitatem et sanctissimum sepulchrum de manu Sarracenorum liberare pensaverunt. Unde gloriosum regem rogaverunt, ut eis rector et gubernator in exercitu Iesu Christi existeret. Rex autem hoc audiens gavisus est gaudio magno, et in eadem festivitate a nobilibus Hungarie licentiatius est, tristaturque tota Hungaria propter eum.” For the details see L. Veszprémy, *Dux et praeceptor Hierosolimitanorum. 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*, B. Nagy, M. Sebök (ed.), Budapest-New York 1999, pp. 470–477; G. Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers* op. cit. pp. 186–188, see also *Legenda S. Ladislai regis*, ch. 7, *SRH* 2: pp. 521–522.

princes – and not the princes personally, as the Legend has it – came to Ladislav to ask him to be the commander of the crusading army. Very probably this story served to support the possible and expected Hungarian contribution to the crusades after 1187, and offers the background for the rapid canonization of King Ladislav.

It is one of the possible explanations of the crusading story that the chronicler wished to pay tribute to King Béla III, who pledged a crusading vow, but his death prevented him from keeping it. Similarly, according to our sources Ladislav was also prevented from acting on his oath by his sudden death. The highly influential canonization of Charlemagne in 1162 may also have left its imprint on the figure of the king deciding to lead a crusade. In the sixteenth century, a Franciscan preacher, Osvat (Oswaldus) Laskai, who also attributed a similar intention to St Stephen, must certainly have been influenced by the widespread story relating to King Ladislav<sup>14</sup>.

Important for the liturgical lection was Ladislav's pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the crusading oath, as they proved the sanctity and suitability of the hero and represented a high degree of royal majesty. It is possible that the fictitious story of the crusade was meant to replace or offset what were by that time the popular, orally-disseminated stories of King Ladislav<sup>15</sup>.

The popular variant of the fights against the nomads came close to the realm of legends in the fourteenth century, especially in the pictures of the *Hungarian-Angevin Legendary*. Often different from the Chronicle variant, these stories served as the basis for fresco painting in Hungarian churches for centuries (about fifty cycles). Some elements of the stories must have appeared very early as they referred to circumstances that would not have been included in narratives after the 1100s. By contrast there is a section in the Chronicle, repeated by the Legend and the liturgical lections, that narrates the fight against the Pechenegs, during which, upon Ladislav's prayer, a horde of animals miraculously appeared on his army's path so that they could avoid starvation. Obviously, this has nothing to do with the above-mentioned heroic *gesta*.

Besides, the story of the crusade appears in the Chronicle embedded in a broader historical perspective, that is Ladislav's election by the 'German' princes as Roman emperor, an honor which he rejected due to his natural modesty and moderation:<sup>16</sup>

“Therefore, on the death of the emperor of the Romans the dukes and princes of the Germans and all the barons and nobility asked him with one heart and mind to take upon him the imperial power”.

Of course, there are different explanations for the unbelievable story of electing a Hungarian king as an emperor. It was suggested that King Béla III tried to become the Byzantine emperor after Manuel's death, but there is no evidence for it from the 1090s. It is a widespread opinion in recent studies that King Andrew II considered becoming a Latin emperor in 1215 based

<sup>14</sup> The author of the Gerhard Legend adduced a similar motif, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to explain St Gerhard's arrival in Hungary, as he was invited to the royal court from the Adriatic coast in Dalmatia. As for the Gerhard Legend, the motif causes no dating problem, since there was ample time for the enlargement of the Legend until the 1360s (until its supposed final edition), see A. T. Jotischky, *St Gerard of Csanád and the Carmelites: Apocryphal Sidelights on the First Crusade*, in: *Autour de la première croisade*, M. Balard (ed.), Paris 1996, pp. 143–155.

<sup>15</sup> G. Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers* op. cit. pp. 190–194.

<sup>16</sup> *IC* ch. 139, *SRH* 1: pp. 416–417: „Unde mortuo Romanorum imperatore duces et tetrarche Theutonicorum cunctique barones et optimates communiter et concorditer rogaverunt ipsum, ut susciperet imperium.”

on his marriage with Yolanda de Courtenay, the daughter of Count Peter II of Courtenay, later Byzantine emperor and Yolanda of Flanders, the sister of Baldwin I and Henry I, the Emperors of Constantinople, but again the authentic evidence is missing for this theory, only a papal letter hints at it<sup>17</sup>. To become an emperor could not have been a serious option for him; at best he blackmailed the Venetians with this possibility to get more favorable terms for hiring the transport ships for his crusade of 1217–18<sup>18</sup>. To make matters more complicated, Emperor Robert de Courtenay, with the active support of the Hungarian court, travelled through Hungary to Constantinople in 1220–1221<sup>19</sup>. It seems that King Andrew was deliberately building a new Hungarian sphere of influence towards the East, instead of becoming an emperor himself<sup>20</sup>.

There is another interesting sentence in the Legend of Ladislas indicating to the reader the similarity between a lion and the king, citing the *Analytica priora* of Aristotle<sup>21</sup>. In addition, in some variants the figure of Priam is mentioned with reference to the imperial power<sup>22</sup>. This citation is again classical, going back to *Isagoge* of Porphyrius, an introduction to Aristotle's "Categories" from the 3rd century, translated into Latin by Boethius. It is a minor problem that in the original text there was not "Priami" but "primum" or "prima" (primum/ prima/Priami quidem species digna imperio), going back in some way to a play of Euripide, Athenaeus 13, 20 (7)<sup>23</sup>. The translation is dependent on the wording, "form is first worth of imperial sway", or "the beauty of Priam is worth of kingship/imperial power". In the Middle Ages, the form "Priami" became accepted. This phrase became widespread from Pier della Vigna (Petrus de Vineia, †1249) of Neaple<sup>24</sup>, St Thomas Aquin (†1274), Albert the Great (†1280)<sup>25</sup>, to Giles of Rome (†1316), William of Ockham (†1347), Nicholas of Lyra (†1349). It is highly probable that the author responsible for the insertion of the "Priami" form recognized the Aristotelian origin of the lion-metaphor, and deliberately added another Aristotelian phrase mentioning "Priam". It was adopted by some legend manuscripts, and also by some breviaries, and one sermon, but in some manuscripts the word "imperial"

<sup>17</sup> „de oblato Orientis Imperio gratulatur: „quod universitas Latinorum... commorantium, ad te suos nuncios destinarunt, in imperatorem Constantinopolitanum te, vel nobilem virum, Comitem Antissiodorensem, tuum socerum, electuros”, cited by A. Bárány *II. András balkáni külpolitikája [The Balkans in the politics of King Andrew II]*, in: *II. András és Székesfehérvár*, T. Kerny, A. Smohay (ed.), Székesfehérvár 2013, p. 477.

<sup>18</sup> S. Albrecht, *Das griechische Projekt Andreas II*, in: *ΦΛΑΟΙΙΑΤΙΟΝ Spaziergang im kaiserlichen Garten. Beiträge zu Byzanz und seinen Nachbarn. Festschrift für Arne Effenberger zum 70. Geburtstag*, Neslihan Asutay-Effenberger, and Falko Daim (ed.), Mainz 2012, pp. 257-272.

<sup>19</sup> A. Bárány, *King Andrew II of Hungary in Philippe Mouskés 'Chronique rimée'*, in: *Byzance et l'Occident: rencontre de l'Est et de l'Ouest*, E. Egedi-Kovács (ed.), Budapest 2013, pp. 27–45.

<sup>20</sup> A. Bárány, *II. András balkáni külpolitikája* op. cit.

<sup>21</sup> „secundum phisionomiam leonis magnas habens extremitates” K. Szovák, *The Image* op. cit., pp. 255–256., referring to the edition of L. Minio-Paluello, *Aristoteles latinus*, III,1-4. Bruges-Paris 1962, pp. 139, 191.

<sup>22</sup> For general summary of former literature see Madas 2000. For the contemporary use of the lion metaphor see S. Spencer, 'Like a Raging Lion': *Richard the Lionheart's Anger during the Third Crusade in Medieval and Modern Historiography*, "The English Historical Review", Issue 556, 132/2017, pp. 523-527.

<sup>23</sup> Busse 1887, p. 28. (Priami), Boethius trans. *Porphyrii Isagoge*, L. Minio – Paluello (ed.), *Aristoteles Latinus* I, 6–7, Bruges–Paris 1966, p. 8.

<sup>24</sup> Fulvio Delle Donne, *Una disputa sulla nobiltà alla corte di Federico II di Svevia*, „Medioevo Romano” 23/1999, p. 17.

<sup>25</sup> Alberti Magni, *Opera omnia vol. 7. Politica*, A. Borgnet (ed.), Paris, 1891, Lib.I, cap.3.

was changed for “royal crown” (regio diademate dignum)<sup>26</sup>, reminding that Hungary was a kingdom, and there was no hint in the Legend to the imperial election. It is possible that the Priam phrase and the fictive story of the imperial election in the Chronicle reinforced each other in some way.

The addition of this motif is logical from the chronicler’s point of view. It is only the Chronicle that reveals the background of Ladislás’s behavior: his rebellion against the lawful king, Solomon or, more precisely, the permanent justification for his questionable behavior. The motif of the imperial election could serve as a counterpoint to his earthy ambitions: he rejects not only the Hungarian crown, but the imperial one as well. Our chronicler is not alone in formulating such a story: King Ottakar II behaved the same way refusing his imperial election according to “Annales Otakariani” (1271)<sup>27</sup>. Ladislás’ election as emperor sank into oblivion later, as at first sight it was totally fictive – there was no vacancy on the German imperial throne at that time. The Legend and the liturgical lections are also silent about it, though it was discovered by fifteenth-century historians, like the Austrian Jacob Unrest, and adopted into their narratives<sup>28</sup>. Very probably the omission of this passage from the Legend may be explained by the scholarly argumentation that this passage did not belong to the early Chronicle text used as a source by the authors of the legend. Had it been otherwise, it would certainly have been included in the legend, since it would have been a spectacular proof of Hungarian royal authority, and the modesty of the holy king.

### Miracles around the battle of Mogyoród

There are significant differences between these genres of sources. The main problem is that in the legends of St Ladislás not a word is wasted on the miracles and miraculous fights against the pagan Cumans and against the lawful king Solomon. One may suppose that rebellious war against King Solomon may have been problematic, but why are his fights against the pagans omitted from the legends and liturgy?<sup>29</sup> At the same time there is only one miracle, mentioned already above, in the legend and liturgy – but missing from the chronicle – describing the unexpected appearance of a huge herd of cattle for his starving army as a result of his powerful prayers<sup>30</sup>. It is strange that the legend makes no mention of these fights, and the Chronicle points the reader to a certain ‘*gesta Ladislai*’ if they wish to learn more about Ladislás’s brave acts: “Whoever delights to know how many and how great were the good works wrought for his people by the blessed Ladislás, will find full account of his deeds”.(chap. 140)<sup>31</sup> That is the reason why the scholars are unsure about the meaning

<sup>26</sup> *SRH* 2: p. 517, Hajdú rec. III. 3.7, p. 46, Fodor, J. Adrienne, *László-legendák 15–16. századi magyarországi breviáriumban* [St Ladislás’s legends in 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> c. breviaries in Hungary], in: *Athleta patriae*, p. 65.; E. Madas, *Sermones de sancto Ladislao rege Hungariae: Középkori prédikációk Szent László királyról*. Debrecen, 2004. (Agatha; XV.), pp. 50–51.

<sup>27</sup> F. Graus, *Premysl Ottokar II. — sein Ruhm und sein Nachleben*, „Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung”, 79/1971, p. 65.

<sup>28</sup> Unrest, p. 492, he quoted it with some reservation “davon list man”.

<sup>29</sup> G. Klaniczay *A Szent László-kultusz kialakulása* [The origins of the St Ladislás cult], in: *Nagyvárad és Bihar a korai középkorban*, Attila Zsoldos (ed.), Nagyvárad (Oradea) 2014, pp. 21–39.

<sup>30</sup> *Legenda Sancti Ladislai regis*, p. 519.

<sup>31</sup> „Si quem autem scire delectat, quot et quanta bona genti sue beatus Ladizlaus fecit, de gestis eiusdem plenam poterit habere notitiam” *SRH* 1: p. 420.

of the word ‘deeds’ (*gesta*) whether it refers to the Legend, or to other chronicle versions<sup>32</sup>. Despite the absence of these stories in the Legend, the Hungarian illustrated version of the *Legenda aurea*, the so-called *Hungarian-Angevin Legendary* of the early fourteenth century, depicted these scenes<sup>33</sup>.

It is interesting that Ladislav is the first king whose battles and wars are registered in a lengthy way. The groundbreaking victory of St Stephen I against Emperor Conrad II in 1030 is not mentioned at all<sup>34</sup>, the Mongol invasion has only a laconic, annalist-like entry, and the Hungarian crusade of Andrew II has again a few lines, describing the relics the king has bought in the Holy Land. Let us have a look at the miracles mentioned in the chronicle: The decisive battle against King Solomon was fought at Mogyoród (not far from today’s Budapest) in 1074. Altogether three miracles indicate God’s favor towards the rebellious princes, Ladislav and his brother Géza, the future kings. In Ladislav’s vision, an angel puts a crown on the head of Géza, but only Ladislav was able to recognize and explain the divine scene:<sup>35</sup>

“Then the blessed Ladislav said further: ‘While we stood here in council, behold, an angel of the Lord came down from heaven bearing a golden crown in his hand, and he placed it upon your head, whence I know of a certainty that we shall be given the victory and that Solomon will flee from the kingdom as a defeated exile and that the crown will be given to you by the Lord.’”

The divine selectness of Ladislav is testified to again, a second time during the battle with the appearance of a mythical animal:<sup>36</sup>

”Seated on his tall horse, Duke Ladislav wheeled this way before his men to exhort and embolden them. As he touched a bush with his lance, marvelous to relate, an ermine of purest white sat itself upon his lance and then ran up it to his bosom.”

After the victory, the appearance of a stag made the former divine support obvious, combining it with foundation legend of the church of St Mary in Vác<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> J. Gerics – E. Ladányi, *Szent László „csodás” tettei krónikáinkban* [The ‘miraculous’ deeds of St Ladislav in the chronicle]. „Magyar Könyvszemle”, 117/2001, pp. 20-31.

<sup>33</sup> *Hungarian Angevin Legendary*, see also B. Zs. Szakács, *The Visual World of the Hungarian Angevin Legendary*. Budapest-New York, 2016.

<sup>34</sup> This campaign has a long chapter in the Middle High German Kaiserchronik, see D. Bagí, – L. Veszprémy, *Udvari és populáris regiszter a 11–12. századi magyar és német krónikákban. Korai magyar és német elbeszélő források érintkezési pontjai* [Courtly and popular register in Hungarian and German chronicles from the 11th and 12th c.]. „Hadtörténelmi Közlemények”, 130/2017, pp. 699-718.

<sup>35</sup> IC ch. 120, SRH 1: p. 388. „Tunc beatus Ladizlaus subiunxit: Dum staremus hic in consilio, ecce angelus Domini descendit de celo portans coronam auream in manu sua, et impressit capiti tuo, unde certus sum, quod nobis victoria donabitur et Salomon exul fugiet debellatus extra regnum.”

<sup>36</sup> IC ch. 121, SRH 1: p. 390. „Dux autem Ladizlaus ante exercitum suum super arduum equum residens gratia exortandi suos et animandi in girum flexit abenas. Cumque tetigisset veprem lancea, quedam hermellina albissima mirum in modum lancee eius insedit et super ipsam discurrendo in sinum eius usque devenit.” For the symbolism of the ermine (cf. Isidore, Etym. 12.7) to defeat the dragon serpent. A similar scene in a decisive moment is described by Paul the Deacon in his *Historia Langobardorum* (6.55, MGH SSrerLang, p. 184).

<sup>37</sup> IC ch. 124. SRH 1: p. 394. „Et dum ibi starent iuxta Vaciam, ubi nunc est ecclesia Beati Petri apostoli, apparuit eis cervus habens cornua plena ardentibus candelis, cepitque fugere coram eis versus silvam et in loco, ubi nunc est monasterium, fixit pedes suos. Quem cum milites sagittarent, proiecit se in Danubium, et eum ultra non viderunt. Quo viso Beatus Ladizlaus ait: Vere non cervus, sed angelus Dei erat. Et dixit Geysa rex: Dic michi, dilecte frater,



„As they were standing at a spot near Vác, where is now the church of the blessed apostle Peter, a stag appeared to them with many candles burning upon its horns, and it began to run swiftly before them towards the wood, and at the spot where is now the monastery, it halted and stood still. When the warriors shot their arrows at it, it leapt into the Danube, and they saw it no more. At this sight the blessed Ladislav said: “Truly that was not a stag, but an angel of God.” And King Géza said: “Tell me, beloved brother, what may all the candles signify which we saw burning on the stag’s horns.” The blessed Ladislav answered “They are not horns, but wings; they are not burning candles, but shining feathers. It has shown to us that we are to build the church of the Blessed Virgin on the place where it planted its feet, and not elsewhere.”

In the chronicler’s accounts of St Ladislav’s deed, the central theme, apart from his fight against the pagans, is his struggle with the lawfully crowned King Solomon. Several miraculous elements here prove Ladislav’s eminence. An additional genuine martial episode happened a few years later when – after his brother’s death – Ladislav became the king, and Solomon with his followers was driven out to the western borders of the country with its center around the castle of Pressburg (Pozsony, today Bratislava, Slovakia). Solomon’s warriors feared Ladislav and when they were asked the reason, they had the following to narrate: they saw angels with drawn swords flying around Ladislav’s head, which convinced them of his invincibility. This story, based on Paulus Diaconus, appears in Hungarian historiography once again in the Chronicle of Simon of Kéza (ca. 1280), but in its proper context, in the account of the meeting of Attila and Pope Leo. The variant preserved in Ladislav’s story is closer to the original and draws on an earlier source than Simon of Kéza’s Chronicle<sup>38</sup>.

The story recalls the meeting of Pope Leo I and Attila the Hun at the river Mincio, narrated and painted many times in the Middle Ages:<sup>39</sup>

„Duke Ladislav besieged the castle of Pressburg, and Solomon’s warriors sallied forth and fought the warriors of Ladislav. Sometimes also Solomon and Ladislav laid aside their own coats of arms and came out to fight like other warriors. It happened that in the silence of noon Ladislav came to the castle, and Solomon saw him. He went out against him, not knowing who he was in his changed armor, nor did Ladislav recognize him. Solomon’s warriors watched them from the battlements, and Solomon thought that the other was a common warrior and therefore he had gone out to do battle with

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quid fieri volunt omnes candele ardetes vise in cornibus cervi. Respondit Beatus Ladizlaus: Non sunt cornua, sed ale, non sunt candele ardetes, sed penne fulgentes, pedes vero fixit, quia ibi locum demonstravit, ut ecclesiam Beate Virgini non alias, nisi hic edificari faceremus.”

<sup>38</sup> Simonis de Kéza *Gesta Hungarorum* (1999), pp. 61–63.

<sup>39</sup> *IC* ch. 129. *SRH* 1, pp. 401–402. „Dux autem Ladizlaus obsedit castrum Poson multis diebus. Milites vero Salomonis de castro exiebant et cum militibus Ladizlai decertabant. Salomon autem et Ladizlaus aliquando exiebant signa sua cambiantes et velut milites pugnabant. Contigit autem, ut Ladizlaus in meridionali silentio ad castrum veniret. Vidit autem Salomon venientem, mutatis armis ignorabiliter exivit ad eum, sed nec eum Ladizlaus agnoscebat. Milites vero Salomonis super castra sedentes illos aspiciebant, putabatque Salomon illum esse servientem et propterea iverat decertare cum illo. Statimque cum ad eum venisset et faciem eius respexisset, vidit duos angelos super caput ipsius Ladizlai igneo gladio volantes et inimicos eius minantes. Quo viso Salomon fugit in castrum. Cui milites sui dixerunt: Domine, quid est hoc, quod vidimus? Numquam te a duobus vel a tribus fugere vidimus. Quid ergo nunc? Quibus ipse dixit: Noveritis, quod homines non fugissem, sed iste non est homo, quia protegunt eum igneo gladio. Quo audito mirabantur. Unde ipsum magis timere ceperunt.” For Simon’s chronicle see Simon of Kéza ch. 17, pp. 60–63.

him. But as soon as he had come up to him and saw his face, he beheld two angels with a fiery sword flying above the head of Ladislás and menacing his enemies. At this sight Solomon fled into the castle. His warriors said to him: "Sire, what is this that we have seen? Never did we see you flee from two, nay, nor from three. Then why now?" He said to them: "You know well that I would not have fled from men, but he is no man, for they protect him with a fiery sword." Hearing this, they marveled; and they began to feel greater fear of him."

The mentioned story is also interesting from a different perspective. King Ladislás fights in disguise, changing the armorial weaponry with one of his soldiers to meet his arch enemy face to face (otherwise Solomon would flee from him). According to some opinions, to fight in disguise is not really chivalric, rather the sign of cowardice. But the goal of the King's behavior is not to flee but rather to lure into action his cowardly enemy who apparently is terrified of him. Such a motif is not too common, it is more usual is the situation when a vassal changes his armor with his lord to save the latter's life<sup>40</sup>.

Finally, in the most often narrated battle of the king, the battle of Kerlés against the pagan Cumans, there is no explicit mention of a miracle, but the whole story sounds miraculous<sup>41</sup>. The battle and the chase of the Cuman rider to free the abducted maiden is extremely bloody, yet this narrative scene or rather a series of battle actions found its way to the walls of dozens of Hungarian churches. It is a mystery how this story has developed in the courtly imaginary; and has finally been propagated practically all over the country. It is not mentioned in the legends and sermons, while the chronicle manuscripts were copied in very small numbers and did not circulate widely in the country until the 14th century. Still there are different theories about the development of this legendary story. Some argue in favor of a late insertion into the corpus of the chronicle referring to the fact that the story – together with other miracles – is missing from the liturgical sources. If they had occurred in the chronicle, they would have been inserted into the legends and sermons since the end of the 12th century<sup>42</sup>. Others argue that they were neglected primarily because they would have thrown the suspicion on the king of killing somebody. In addition, there is a 15th-century source reinforcing this view, reconstructing a fictive canonization process, which would have examined his attitude to bloodshed<sup>43</sup>.

If we accept that for the authors of the liturgical texts the "hagiographical authenticity" was much more important than the "historical authenticity" – as recently Kornél Szovák has

<sup>40</sup> R. W. Jones, *Bloodied Banners, Martial Display on the Medieval Battlefield*. Woodbridge-Rochester, NY, 2010, pp. 25–26; O. De Laborderie, J. Robert Maddicott, and D. Carpenter, *The Last Hours of Simon de Montfort: A New Account*, "The English Historical Review", 115/2000, p. 399.

<sup>41</sup> T. Kerny, *Historia Sancti Ladislai. A kerlési ütközet ábrázolásairól* [Historia Sancti Ladislai. The iconography of the battle of Kerlés], in: *Történelem - kép: szemelvények múlt és művészet kapcsolatából Magyarországon*, Árpád Mikó, Katalin Sinkó (ed.), Budapest 2000, pp. 188–195. For the details see the paper of Éva Szakálos in this volume.

<sup>42</sup> G. Klaniczay *A Szent László-kultusz*, op. cit.; in this paper I modified slightly my former analysis, see L. Veszprémy, *The Birth of a Structured Literacy in Medieval Hungary*, in: *The Development of Literate Mentalities in East Central Europe*, A. Adamska, M. Mostert (ed.), Turnhout 2004, pp. 161–181.

<sup>43</sup> B. Kertész, *Megjegyzések Szent László kanonizációjához* [Remarks about the canonization of St Ladislás], „Magyar Könyvszemle”, 122/2006, pp. 297–314.

formulated<sup>44</sup>, it is quite easy to find a satisfactory answer. We can recall a fine parallel from the 10th–11th century, the Legend of St Ulrich. He was the bishop of Augsburg (923–973), who defended the city for almost a week against the attacking heathen Hungarians before the battle of Augsburg in August 955. Personally, he did not kill anybody but was actively engaged in the fights, organized the defense, encouraged the fighters in the frontlines, and became a key figure in the German victory. His legend was written by Gerhard, provost of Augsburg between 982 and 993, when his local cult summarized by this legend as the first officially canonized saint was approved by the pope. The author, Gerhard was an eyewitness, and offered an excited and excellent summary of the battle of Augsburg<sup>45</sup>. But surprisingly very soon, between 1020 and 1040 the abbot of Reichenau, Berno revised the Life of the holy bishop, and transformed him into a pious, meditating person, dedicated only to his orations: no fights, no blood, no atrocities, the defense of Augsburg is mentioned only by chance<sup>46</sup>. In later versions of the legends, even the Hungarians and the battle itself disappear from the text, once the Hungarians are replaced by Attila and the Huns. Finally, in the 15th century the Humanists historians discover the original, “historically authentic” version, Sigismund Meisterlin, the author of the Augsburg history in 1456 (*Cronographia Augustensium*) as the first one<sup>47</sup>.

It is really a surprise that the bloody scene of the battle between Ladislás and the Cuman rider became a standard topic of the wall paintings. There are minor differences between the painted cycles and the written stories, indicating the parallel and independent development of the stories<sup>48</sup>. Its iconographical and ethnographical roots have been discussed vehemently among Hungarian scholars in the last decades<sup>49</sup>. Some argued that it is a late revival of an ancient pagan tradition symbolizing the fight between the “good, helping” and the “bad, harmful” powers. In fact, some artistic carvings from the steppe with wrestling and fighting figures are really very similar to our wall paintings. In contrast, some suggested to have a look at the chivalrous illustrations of the *Minnesänger* manuscripts focusing on the rescuing of abducted women. The fight against the pagan world, closely connected with the crusading spirit, opens up another field of explanation, where the knight from this perspective personifies the Christian, saintly world. Recently, art historian Zsombor Jékely edited a paper devoted to this matter, and indicated a possible influence of the Italian Angevin courtly art. As it

<sup>44</sup> K. Szovák, *László-legendák. A csodás történetek háttéré* [St Ladislás legends. The background of miraculous stories], “Rubicon”, 27/2017: 9, pp. 37–41.

<sup>45</sup> Gerhard of Augsburg, I.12., pp. 193–203.

<sup>46</sup> D. Blume, D., *Berno von Reichenau (1008–1048): Abt, Gelehrter, Biograph. Ein Lebensbild mit Werkverzeichnis sowie Edition und Übersetzung von Berns Vita S. Uodalrici*, in: *Vorträge und Forschungen*, Sonderband 52, Ostfildern 2008, pp. 195–264.

<sup>47</sup> A. Hammer, *Interferences between Hagiography and Historiography: Bishop Ulrich of Augsburg and Emperor Henry I*, in: *Special Issue Section: Sovereigns and Saints. Narrative Modes of Constructing Rulership and Sainthood in Latin and German (Rhyme) Chronicles of the High and the Late Middle Ages*, “Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik” 70/2013, Issue 1, pp. 179–194.

<sup>48</sup> See B. Zs. Szakács, *Between Chronicle and Legend: Image Cycles of St Ladislás in Fourteenth-Century Hungarian Manuscripts*, in: *The Medieval Chronicle IV*, E. Kooper (ed.), Amsterdam – New York, pp. 149–175.

<sup>49</sup> In favor of the pagan traditions L. Vargyas, *Honfoglalás-előtti hagyományok Szent László legendájában* [Nomadic tradition in the legend of St Ladislás], in: *Mezey, Athleta patriae*, p. 11–18., for the supposed western influences A. Vizkelety, *Nomádokori hagyományok, vagy udvari-lovagi toposzok? Észrevételek Szent László és a leányrabló kun epikai és képzőművészeti ábrázolásaihoz* [Nomadic traditions or courtly-chevaleresque models]. „Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények”, 85/1981, pp. 253–275.

is known, the Angevins considered themselves heirs to the Hungarian throne from 1290, the death of King Ladislas IV (the Cuman). As a consequence, they adopted the literary and pictorial tradition of the Hungarian Holy kings (“Szentkirályok”) of SS Stephen, Ladislas and Emeric, they appeared on the frescoes in Naples supporting their claim to Hungary. Finally, the first Hungarian Angevin king, Charles I entered Hungary – at that time as pretender – by 1301, and after a long civil war stabilized his power by the 1320s. It is highly possible that in the Italian Angevin court, the legend has been interpreted in the light of the French crusader art, and that influenced the Hungarian wall paintings, not by chance for the first time ca. in 1317 in the church of Kakaslomnic (Veľká Lomnica, Slovakia)<sup>50</sup>. It was easy to identify the pagan Cuman with the Muslims, the king’s mythical fights as a proto-crusade. At this point, I have to refer to the so-called Hungarian-Angevin Legendary (its fragments are dispersed in six library collections), a richly illuminated manuscript of a collection of stories from the life of saints with relevance to the House of Anjou. Probably, it was made on the occasion of the journey of Charles I of Hungary and his son Prince Andrew to Naples in Italy in 1330<sup>51</sup>. Among the several hundreds of images, one can find the legend of St Ladislas, with an extremely high number of images, depictions of the crusade and the Kerlés battle episodes as well, practically without texts, only with subtitles. The name of Ladislas belonged to the most popular ones among the nobility, while it was the eleventh most often used male Christian name in the thirteenth century, by the fourteenth century it became the fifth<sup>52</sup>.

On the other hand, it is a strange peculiarity of the Hungarian middle ages that no local crusading tradition developed there, in spite of the fact, that the first three crusader armies (altogether four with the troops of 1001) marched through the country, some Hungarian contingents joined the third crusade for a while, and a genuine Hungarian crusading enterprise was launched in 1217 and led by the king, Andrew II himself<sup>53</sup>.

Another inspiring aspect may have been the Mongol destruction of the country in the years 1241–1242, enriching the figure of the Cuman rider with the memory of the bloodthirsty Mongol riders. Anyway, the ethnicity of the pagan warrior is of minor importance, as the historical raiders in 1068 were probably not Cumans (Kipchak-Cumans) at all – at that time they were far away from the Carpathian basin – but some other nomadic people, perhaps the Oğuz. In ca. 1220 the Anonymous notary (chs. 8–10, pp. 21–9) also referred to some nomadic people (who allegedly joined the Magyars in the ninth century) anachronistically as Cumans. The Cumans had a lively history in Hungary during the 13th century, in the first decades the Teutonic Order fought against them in the borderland of Southern Transylvania, later, in the 1220s they were – at least superficially – Christianized at the Lower Danube,

<sup>50</sup> For similar examples see H. Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, *Mittelbare Partizipation am Kreuzzug. Nord- und mitteleuropäische Bildzeugnisse nach dem Fall Jerusalems 1187*, „Das Mittelalter“, 21/2016, pp. 61–82, where the ‘Eli-sabeth Psalter’, the figure of the victorious St Margaret, and the murals depicting the legend of the Holy Cross in Braunschweig cathedral are mentioned, referring to the battle of Hattin.

<sup>51</sup> S. M. Newton, *Tomaso da Modena, Simone Martini, Hungarians and St Martin in Fourteenth-Century Italy*. “Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes”, 43/1980, pp. 234–238., for a facsimile edition see *Hungarian Angevin Legendary*. For a detailed analysis see, B. Zs. Szakács, *The Visual World* op. cit.

<sup>52</sup> M. Slíz, *Cults of Saints and Naming in Medieval Hungary*, in *Byzance et l’Occident: rencontre de l’Est et de l’Ouest*, E. Egedi-Kovács (ed.), Budapest, pp. 236–237.

<sup>53</sup> For the crusade of Andrew II see J. R. Sweeny, *Hungary in the Crusades, 1169–1218*, “The International History Review” 3/1981, pp. 467–481; L. Veszprémy, *The Crusade of Andrew II, King of Hungary, 1217–1218*. “Jacobus”, 13–14/2002, pp. 87–110.

becoming Hungarian vassals, before and after the Mongol invasion they entered and left the country several times. Even after their settlement in the country, there were violent, sometimes bloody clashes between the native Hungarians and the immigrant Cumans who were granted territorial privileges, although their light cavalry became the most important military ally of the royal court. On the other hand, there are some anachronistic and archaic expressions in this chapter, like the name of the Cumans, used here as “Cuni”. Formerly the naming of the maiden’s father as the bishop of Várad was also explained as a relic of a period when the canon law did not sanction the marriage of the bishops. Concerning this argumentation, I cannot exclude the possibility being simply a literary expression of the oral story-teller. The identity of the maiden was important to the readers; one of them named her, others, like in the Hungarian-Angevin Legendary identified her with St Mary<sup>54</sup>.

After the disastrous battle against the Mongols at the field of Muhi. King Béla IV (reigned 1235–1270) was chased through the whole country, finally finding shelter on the Island of Trau (Trogir, Croatia) at the Adriatic Sea. On their road to Trau, in the castle of Clissa (Klis, Croatia) in January 1242 princess Margaret was born, offered by her royal parents to God as a vow to enlist His aid against the Tartars. As a future Dominican nun, she was respected for her saintly life, though officially canonized only in 1943. The thirteenth-century legend of Margaret preserves interesting information on Hungarian historical culture and memory around 1250. According to the St Margaret legend the nun-princess frequently studied the legends and stories of saints, driven by her interest in Hungarian history: <sup>55</sup>

“She often turned the lives of her predecessors over in her mind and discussed them with others, the sanctity of Blessed Stephen, the first king and apostle of Hungary, who converted his people from the cult of idols; the holiest chastity of Blessed Emeric, who as the story of his life says (*in gestis*), preserved his purity throughout his life; St Ladislav the king, who reigned gloriously and fought against the intruders from abroad, especially against the pagans attacking from eastern parts, as the writings of the Hungarians (*ut scriptum Ungarorum*) claim.”

These lines make probable that by the middle of the 13th century – Margaret died in 1270 – the text of the national chronicle contained the story of King Ladislav. The family tree of the Latin chronicles of Hungary is complicated by the fact that most of the pre-14th-century versions are lost. The dating and contents of the unfortunately lost ‘first’ Hungarian *Gesta* (*‘Urgesta’*) have not been definitively clarified, and are still hotly debated<sup>56</sup>. It seems

<sup>54</sup> The identification of the maiden with St Mary is questioned by B. Zs. Szakács *Between Chronicle and Legend*, op. cit.

<sup>55</sup> ‘Revolvebat crebrius secum et conferebat cum aliis interdum progenitorum suorum vitam et vite sanctitatem beati scilicet Stephani primi regis et apostoli Ungarorum, cuius fidem et catholicæ fidei predicationem, qua suam convertit gentem ab ydolorum cultura, ecclesia narrat vulgarica; beati Henrici filii eiusdem sancti Stephani regis santissimam virginitatem, ...ut in eius gestis habetur, . . . ; sancti quoque Ladislav regis, qui gloriosa regni gubernatione et defensione adversus invasores, maxime insultus paganorum partium orientalium, ut scriptum continet Ungarorum. ...’ (*Vita beate Margarie*, ch. 12, also edited by Gombos 1937–1938, 3: 2012–13., *SRH* 2. rev. ed. 1999., pp. 685–709).

<sup>56</sup> N. Kersken, *Geschichtsschreibung im Europa der “nationes.” Nationalgeschichtliche Gesamtdarstellungen im Mittelalter*: Cologne, Weimar, Vienna 1995; K. Szovák, *L’historiographie hongroise à l’époque arpadienne*, in: *Les hongrois et l’Europe: conquête et intégration*, S. Csernus – K. Korompay (ed.), Paris-Szeged 1999, pp. 375–384; D. Bagi, *Problematik der ältesten Schichten der ungarischen Chronikkomposition des 14. Jh. Im Lichte der ungarischen Geschichtsforschung der letzten Jahrzehnte – einige ausgewählte Problemstellen*, „*Questiones Medii Aevi*

sure that the stories of Ladislás in their present form were not inserted into his oldest, lost chronicle version. There are traces of contemporary historical notes originating from the reign of Ladislás, but they are so confusing in the existing chapters, that a radical rewriting must have taken place after the 1100s. Modern scholars have tried to reconstruct the medieval textual form of the national chronicle based on mainly two manuscript families dating from the middle of the fourteenth century. This reconstructed Chronicle is usually referred to as the ‘National Chronicle’ or the so-called ‘Chronicle Composition of the Fourteenth Century’, *Chronici Hungarici compositio*, edited for the first time in 1938<sup>57</sup>. Though the oldest dated of these manuscripts is the ‘Illustrated (or Pictorial) Chronicle’ (IC) from 1358 (Budapest, Széchényi National Library, Clm. 404., formerly in Vienna), it preserved the earliest written memories of Hungarian history from its Christian beginnings, including the Ladislás stories. On the base of the Margaret legend, it may be concluded that the nuns at the Island of Rabbits (today Margitsziget in Budapest) had access to such a chronicle manuscript, that was probably read aloud to them.

Although there is a close textual relationship between the *Gesta* of the ‘Anonymous’ notary (c. 1220), which has survived in an almost contemporary copy (Budapest, Széchényi National Library, Clm. 403.), and the *Gesta* of Simon of Kéza (c. 1282) and the National Chronicle, they provide little help in the reconstruction process of the lost first versions of the Chronicle. Anyway, just in the chapter of the IC about the battle of Kerlés there is a sentence that is repeated in a very similar form by the Anonymous Notary. If János Bak is right in what he is going to suggest in the coming edition of the IC, the IC served as a model for the Anonymous notary, he borrowed the sentence from the IC, consequently the Kerlés story was already a part of the chronicle by the 1220s. The sentence is as follows:<sup>58</sup>

Anonymous notary ch. 8. third phase	IC, ch. 102. second phase	Bible, Deut. 32:42 first phase
“Almus dux et sui milites persequentes Ruthenos et Cumanos usque ad civitatem Kyeu et tonsa <b>capita Cumanorum</b> Almi ducis milites mactabant <i>tanquam</i> crudas <i>cucurbitas</i> ...	“Quos Hungari celerius persequentes acutissimos <b>gladios</b> suos et sitibundos in sanguinibus Cunorum <b>inebriaverunt. Capita</b> quippe <b>Cumanorum</b> noviter rasa, <i>tanquam cucurbitas</i> ad maturitatem nondum bene perductas, gladiatorum ictibus disciderunt.”	... <b>inebriabo</b> sagittas meas sanguine et <b>gladius</b> meus devorabit carnes de cruore occisorum et de captivitate nudati inimicorum <b>capitis</b> .
“Duke Álmos and his warriors pursued the Ruthenes and Cumans up to the city of Kiev and the warriors of Duke Álmos broke the shaven <b>heads of the Cumans</b> as if fresh gourds	„The Hungarians followed in swift pursuit and made their sharp <b>swords drunk</b> by the blood of the <b>Cumans</b> . With the strokes of their swords they severed the freshly shaven <b>heads of the Cumans like unripe gourds</b> ...	„I will make mine arrows <b>drunk with blood</b> , And my sword shall devour flesh; With the blood of the slain and the captives, From the <b>head</b> of the leaders of the enemy...”

Novae“ 12/2007, pp. 128–147; G. Thoroczkay, *Die Legendenliteratur und Geschichtsschreibung Ungarns bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts*, “Bullettino dell’istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo”, 118/2016, pp. 217–248.

<sup>57</sup> SRH 1: pp. 217–506.

<sup>58</sup> For the translations see the volumes of CEMT, CEU Press.

Formerly, we compared the similar phrases of chapter 121 of the IC and chapter 39 of the Anonymous Notary, and concluded that the IC served as model for the anonymous author. It confirms that the notary himself enjoyed the chapters on St Ladislav and readily borrowed expressions and phrase from it<sup>59</sup>.

It seems convincing that parallel to the formation of the chronicle variants, there existed a vulgar cycle of Ladislav, a so-called „*matière de Hongrie*”, started after the 1100s, disseminated widely after the canonization of Ladislav, and finally documented by the wall paintings all over Hungary. The heart of the story were the fights of King Solomon and the princes Géza and Ladislav between 1063 and 1074, not necessarily against each other, often jointly against the attacking heathen Cumans or against the castle of Belgrade, at that time under Byzantine rule. At the same time, every moment of these chapters is interwoven with a latent rivalry between the king and the princes, with the intrigues or – on the contrary – with the bravery of their vassals and counselors, like the legendary Opos the Brave or ispán Vid on the side of King Solomon. The text we read today is strongly influenced by the courtly literary tradition, the cycle of Charlemagne, the “*Historia Roderici*”, the “*Historia scholastica*”, and in some chronicle chapters enriched by a canon law and theological argumentation.

### Solomon and Ladislav: an intricate relationship

Solomon and Ladislav were not simply enemies, representing the “bad” and the “good” side.<sup>60</sup> They were rather illustrating the power of God, the way He manifests his will and makes the real Christian political virtues evident for the human beings. The theory of Gregorianism has not lost its actuality by the end of the 12th century, partly because the most important papal documents were inserted into legal handbooks and letter collections. The papal canonists broke away forever from the traditional sanctity of kings and kingdoms, but stressed the throne candidates’ suitability, “*idoneitas*” versus legitimacy and inheritance. The content of suitability was clearly formulated in the letters of Gregory VII: to follow the basic Christian virtues, based on respect towards the popes. That is why in chapter 133 of the IC, Ladislav was trying to convert Solomon by his piety to follow the divine law. On the other hand, the papal letters help to explain why Ladislav’s most important virtue was his humility (*humilitas*). His behavior is a striking parallel to the German counter-king, Rudolf of Rheinfeld (a father-in-law of Ladislav), who was also supposed to hide his political ambitions. For the same reasons Géza and Ladislav are explicitly forced to accept the Hungarian crown by the nobles of the country. First of all, Ladislav is a classic example of the “*rex renitens*”, the “reluctant king”, who did not let himself be crowned to respect the justice of the lawful king<sup>61</sup>. In the IC, two angels are assisting in the ceremony. Another example is when, after having conquered Croatia, he immediately gave away his conquest to his sister, the widow of the former Croatian king.

<sup>59</sup> L. Veszprémy *Korhűség és forrásérték a magyar Krónika egyes fejezeteiben* [Historicity and authenticity in some chapters of the Hungarian chronicle], in: *Arcana Tabularii. Tanulmányok Solymosi László tiszteletére*, A. Bárány, K. Szovák, G. Dreska (edd.), Vols. 1-2, Budapest-Debrecen, 2014, pp. 809–824.

<sup>60</sup> G. Klaniczay, *The Ambivalent Model of Solomon for Royal Sainthood and Royal Wisdom*, in: *The Biblical Models of Power and Law- Les modèles bibliques du pouvoir et du droit Papers of the International Conference*, I. Biliarsky, R. Păun (ed.), Bucharest, 2005, pp. 75-92.

<sup>61</sup> B. Weiler, *The ‘rex renitens’ and the Medieval Ideal of Kingship, ca. 900-ca. 1250*, „*Viator*” 31/2000, pp. 1–42.

Ladislás indeed needed to be buttressed with miracles, since the editor of the text between the king's death (1095) and his canonization (1192) narrated the struggle between Solomon and Ladislás with a latent 'legitimistic' view of royal succession, again and again siding with Solomon, partly due to several phases of chronicle composition. There are several signs of it in the text, including references to Solomon's fate after Ladislás' victory over him (1082). German sources claim that Solomon lost his life in a military adventure in 1087, which is supported by the fact that his wife Judith married the Polish king, Władysław I Herman the next year. By contrast, the pro-Solomon chronicler kept him alive, turning him into a pious monk as in the Alexis legend, making up, as it were, for Ladislás' unlawful steps<sup>62</sup>. Solomon's wife, the chronicler claims, remained faithful to him until her death, not getting married again. The historiographer's interpretation was successful, as there are extant liturgical lections of the penitent and saintly Solomon, and after the flourishing of his local cult in Pula from the late 15th century, especially in the baroque age, his tomb is still a tourist attraction at Pula, in the Istrian peninsula<sup>63</sup>. The story is very similar to *Vita Haroldi*, written after 1206, in which the pious Harold Godwinson was said to have made a pilgrimage after his actual death in 1066, thus reminding the Normans with his physical presence of their illegal conquest; a spontaneous cult also emerged around his fictitious grave in Chester<sup>64</sup>. Anyway, some features of Solomon's story are similar to that of the Moravian prince, Svatopluk (died 894), described by Cosmas<sup>65</sup>, and if the tale really survived in Hungary, it could offer a historiographical model for the tradition of the Hungarian Solomon a century later.

### Afterlife

On the other hand, we know that heroic deeds performed in the military service of the king and the crown, and their rewards, had been popularized by hundreds of charters in their so-called "narrations" part from the thirteenth century on<sup>66</sup>. That also implied that the *king* was to be capable of defending the country with arms, and was also obliged to do so by the coronation oath from the thirteenth century, the same way that St Ladislás had done a few centuries before. The military virtues and suitability of the king on the one hand and the individual prosperity and well-being of his noble subjects on the other were mutually related to each other and promoted the emergence of the figure of a knightly king in both Chronicle and Legend.

King Ladislás, a valiant and generous warrior, always depicted in arms and armor, remained the ideal of Hungarian rulers throughout the Middle Ages. It is no accident that in the Hungarian chronicle, printed during King Matthias's reign (1458–1490), the so-called Chronicle of John of Thurocz (1488), an entire illuminated page is devoted to the valiant

<sup>62</sup> *SRH* 1: pp. 410–411, *IC* ch. 136.

<sup>63</sup> T. Kerny, *Salamon magyar király ábrázolásairól (14–19. század)*, in: *Romantikus kastély: tanulmányok Komáromi Dénes tiszteletére* [On the iconography of King Solomon, 14th–19th c., in: *Studies in honour of Dénes Komáromi*, F. Vadas (ed.), Budapest 2004, pp. 33–51.

<sup>64</sup> P. G. Schmidt, *Veritas naufragatur. Das Leben und die Taten König Harold's von England nach 1066*, in: *Forschungen in Mittelalter*, Vol. 1. Hannover 1988, pp. 189–204. (MGH Schriften 33/1).

<sup>65</sup> Cosmas Pragensis (1980), pp. 32–34.

<sup>66</sup> E. Mályusz, *La chancelleire royale et la rédaction de chroniques dans la Hongrie médiévale*, „Le Moyen Age”, 71/1968, pp. 59–70.



deeds of St Ladislav, suggesting a similarity between the two rulers<sup>67</sup>. During Matthias's reign, especially in the 1460s, the king himself was fighting against the infidels, in that case against the Ottomans, and permanently claimed the title of 'the defender of Christian faith' all over Europe.

A theory recently turned up of a possible connection between the Ladislav story and the story of „Lancelot” by Chrétien de Troyes<sup>68</sup>. Despite the fact that the pronounced Hungarian variant of Ladislav, „László” and the French form of Lancelot sound very similar, it seems indisputable that the Hungarian stories were built up from the motives of the Western literature, and not vice versa. Of course, it cannot be excluded that the envoys of King Béla may have told stories in Paris about this legendary king, but the Hungarian traces of the French epic preserved the figure of King Béla and not that of Ladislav<sup>69</sup>.

In fact, by the fifteenth century a French cleric in the service of René of Anjou, Antoine de La Sale (1385/1386–1460/1461) in his story, entitled „the history of the knight Jean de Saintré” described a fictive battle scene between Hungarians and Saracens, mentioning the Hungarian battle cry as „Saint Lancelot! Saint Lancelot!”. Certainly, at the time, their battle cry was widely known and testified by other historical sources as „Saint Ladislav” – pronounced as „szent László”.

## Conclusion

It is not by chance that the IC devotes the relatively greatest percentage, some one fifth of all the chapters, to the story of Ladislav, the so called “Gesta Ladislav”. Around the figure of Ladislav, who became the most popular saint in Hungary by the middle of the fourteenth century<sup>70</sup>, concentrated the elements of the surviving nomad traditions, the chivalric ideas of the Hungarian royal court, elements of the French crusader traditions of the Angevin court, the memory of the struggle against the Mongols in 1241–42. If the Admonitions of St Stephan written for his son, Emeric, were taken as a King's mirror during the Middle Ages and were enlisted into the Hungarian ‘Corpus iuris’ as its first book, then the Legend of Ladislav deserved the same appreciation. Ladislav carried himself during his life as warrior king but knew very well the Gregorian ideas on kingship. In his often-cited words, written to the abbot of Monte Cassino in 1091, he acknowledged, that „I'm guilty, because it is impossible to exercise the earthy power without the most serious offences”<sup>71</sup>. An ever-relevant warning.

<sup>67</sup> Ladislav is depicted on the front page of the Thurocz chronicle.

<sup>68</sup> Stephen L. Pow (Calgary, Canada), László to Lancelot. Hungarian Kings, Arthurian Knights, lecture, 14 September 2017, ELTE University, Budapest.

<sup>69</sup> E. Egedi-Kovács, *Le souvenir de Béla-Alexis dans la littérature française du XIIe siècle*, in: *Byzanz und das Abendland: Begegnungen zwischen Ost und West*, E. Juhász (ed.), Budapest, 2013, pp. 161–177.

<sup>70</sup> E. Marosi, *Der Heilige Ladislaus als ungarischer Nationalheiliger. Bemerkungen zu seiner Ikonographie im 14-15. Jahrhundert*, “Acta Historiae Artium Hungariae”, 33/1987, pp. 211–256; Idem, *Between East and West. Medieval Representations of Saint Ladislav, King of Hungary*, “The Hungarian Quarterly”, 36/1995, pp. 102–110.

<sup>71</sup> “Quamvis peccator existam, quum cura terrene dignitatis absque grauissimis non potest promoveri criminibus”. *Diplomata Hungariae antiquissima. Accedunt epistolae et acta ad historiam Hungariae pertinentia. I. Ab anno 1000 usque ad annum 1131*, Ed. Gy. Györffy. Budapest, 1992, p. 272, nr. 91.

## King St Ladislas, chronicles, legends, and miracles

### Summary

Much can be read in the Hungarian chronicle versions and Latin legends about the figure of King St Ladislas (reigned 1077–1095, canonized 1192), the most popular saint in Hungary by the middle of the fourteenth century. These sources are all enlarged and interpolated representation of the elements of the surviving nomad traditions, the chivalric ideas of the Hungarian royal court, elements of the French crusader traditions of the Angevin court, the memory of the struggle against the Mongols in 1241–42. This paper focuses on some of these motifs, like becoming a fictive leader of the First crusade, and a fictive successor to the imperial throne. The paper confronts the textual differences between the legends and the chronicles and tries to answer the question why the hagiographic and liturgical texts neglect his fights against the heathen.

**Keywords:** Hungarian history, medieval hagiography, holy kings, courtly culture, crusades

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