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KING BÉLA BEFORE THE MONGOL INVASION
(1214-1241)

by
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KING BÉLA BEFORE THE MONGOL INVASION
(1214-1241)

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Western Michigan University, 1991

This is a study of the political history of Hungary in the first part of the thirteenth century. Special attention is given to the political role played by King Béla from 1214 until the Mongol invasion of 1241. The focus of the first part of the study is the relationship between King Béla and his father King Andrew II. In the second half of the study, the focus shifts to the policies pursued by King Béla once he became the sole ruler of the kingdom.

The study sheds light on the reasons for the Hungarian defeat by the Mongol armies led by Batu Khan in 1241, providing a picture of the political developments before the Mongol invasion.
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Finally, I am most grateful for the unending support I have received from my parents, sisters, and grandparents throughout my studies.

Pongrácz Sennyey
To my dear grandfather

Lajos de Purgly
(1906-1983)

(Qui mihi exemplar sapientia
atque temperantiae fuit.)
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King Béla before the Mongol invasion (1214–1241)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During the first half of the thirteenth century the Kingdom of Hungary—a map of the area under discussion is included in Appendix B—was marked by a series of dynastic disputes between the sons of King Béla III (1172-1196). While the dynastic conflicts were settled with the coronation of King Andrew II (1205-1235), the political tensions remained a constant fixture of Hungarian domestic affairs until after King Béla IV (1235-1270) assumed the throne.

King Béla’s political career began in 1214, when he was first crowned king. The coronation itself was controversial, given the fact that it occurred against his father’s wishes. In 1220 Béla became the ruler of Slavonia, where he assumed an active role in the political arena as head of the party opposed to his father’s policies. In 1226 Béla left Slavonia to become ruler of Transylvania. While King Béla’s political influence was growing, his father was facing increasing problems in retaining his hold on the reins of the administration. In the early 1230s Béla assumed an active role in the administration of the kingdom and he attempted to reverse the process of financial decline towards which his father’s policies were leading the Kingdom. In addition to his interference in internal policies, Béla also played an important role in a number of foreign policy initiatives, either in support of his father or independently from him.

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The principal factor determining King Béla’s policies was the ill-conceived policies of his father. The reign of King Andrew II was riddled with unsuccessful foreign policy initiatives, a trend of decentralization of political power, and the emptying of the treasury. In an attempt to establish control over the Russian principality of Galicia, King Andrew II organized a number of expensive military campaigns. To retain political support, and to seek financial solvency, Andrew II donated most of the royal estates to a segment of the aristocracy, thus depriving the treasury of its main source of income. The loss of Royal power culminated in the introduction of new laws whereby the King agreed to cede considerable power to the nobility and the church. Moreover, King Andrew’s policies enraged the papacy; the Interdict declared in 1232 only worsened the decaying reputation of the Crown.

In 1235 King Andrew II died and Béla became the sole ruler of the kingdom. As King, Béla reversed many of his father’s initiatives, such as Andrew’s innovative economic initiatives, and the onerous wars waged against the Russian principality of Galicia. Béla concentrated his efforts on reforming the administration and solving the financial woes of the Kingdom. By reasserting the power of the crown, Béla threatened the power of the nobility, which had increased considerably during the reign of Andrew II.

Because of Béla’s abandonment of his father’s claim to the Russian principality of Galicia, the foreign policy front remained quiet until 1239, when King Béla allowed entry into the Kingdom to a large contingent of Cumans. The Cumans were migrating westward in response to the relentless pressure exerted by the Mongols. Mongol interest in the territories west of the Urals was made clear.
in 1223, when a Mongol reconnaissance force had invaded Russian territory for the first time. In 1237, the Mongol leaders had decided to wage a large-scale campaign to conquer the Russian steppes and thereafter penetrate European territory.

In 1239 the Principality of Kiev fell into the hands of the Mongols, and for all practical purposes central Russia was under the control of the troops led by Batu Khan. Yet, Mongol expansionism was not halted with the conquest of Russia. In 1241 the Mongol troops entered Hungarian territory, engaging the troops of King Béla at the margins of the river Sajó, on the plains of Muhi. During the battle of Muhi the Hungarian troops were overwhelmed by superior tactics and leadership skills and were completely annihilated. Most members of the Hungarian leadership perished; King Béla himself barely escaped.

The Hungarian defenses had proved to be totally ineffective against the Mongol army, which rapidly established control over territories east of the Danube—the Mongols crossed the river after it froze in the winter of 1241-42. During the Mongol occupation the eastern half of the Kingdom suffered the most; the countryside was pillaged, villages were destroyed, and a considerable number of the population perished. Yet in 1242 Batu Khan ordered a sudden retreat abandoning Hungary altogether.

Following the retreat of the Mongols, King Béla undertook the task of rebuilding the Kingdom. The eastern half had to be resettled, and a number of new stone fortresses were erected. King Béla is known as the Second Founder of the Hungarian Kingdom due to the successful reconstruction of the realm following the year-long Mongol occupation (the first is Saint Stephen, king from 1000-1038).

Although the Mongol invasion and the efforts to rebuild the kingdom do
merit extensive study, the period preceding the Mongol invasion is of great importance for the understanding of why the forces summoned by King Béla were unable to defend the kingdom from the Mongols. Furthermore, the events and policies that preceded the Mongol invasion were pivotal in determining the policies that followed it. Notwithstanding its importance, the part of King Béla’s reign that precedes the Mongol invasion has been all but neglected by scholars. In addition to the primary source collections, the main sources for this study were the only monograph dealing solely with King Béla’s life (Wertner Mór, *IV Béla története* [Temesvár: Csanád-egyházmegyei könyvsajtó, 1893]), and the most complete general history of Hungary to date (Székely György, ed., *Magyarország története* [Budapest: Akadémia, 1987]). Illustrating the importance that has been attributed to the period covered in this thesis, Wertner Mór dedicates only 35 pages of his work to the events preceding 1241.

The period covered in this study extends from the beginning of Béla’s political career to the arrival of the Mongol armies in Hungarian territory in 1241. It is the purpose of this work to attempt to trace Béla’s activities from 1214, when he was crowned king, to 1241, when the Mongols invaded Hungary, focusing on the military and political developments of the times. The aim of this study is twofold: first, to determine the role of Béla in the political arena until the Mongol invasion; and second, to better understand the events that led to the dismal failure of the Hungarian defenses against the Mongol forces.

In the pursuit of this task, the life of King Béla will be followed chronologically. The study will be divided into the main periods of Béla’s political life until 1241. Special attention will be given to the consequences of King Béla’s
policies in view of the Mongol invasion. This study will, however, attempt to analyze neither the invasion itself nor the strategies used by the Mongol or Hungarian armies as they confronted each other on the battlefield.
CHAPTER II

PRECEDEENTS

To understand the political stage on which King Béla IV lived it is necessary to look at a number of developments that preceded his ascension into the political scene. In this chapter the most important political, economic, and social issues that shaped the Hungarian kingdom in the first half of the thirteenth century are addressed.

The most important issues in question are the policies of succession to the Hungarian throne, the economic reform initiated by Béla’s father, Andrew II, entitled Novae Institutiones\(^1\), and the mounting opposition to Andrew II that emerged in the course of his reign. These three issues proved pivotal in shaping Béla’s political career until the advent of the Mongol invasion in 1241.

From the tenth to the eleventh century, succession to the Hungarian throne was determined by the principle of seniority, but during the reign of King Géza II (1141-1162) the principle of primogeniture was adopted\(^2\). Moreover, at the end of the twelfth century it became traditional for kings to have their eldest sons crowned king during their own reigns. This tradition was started by Béla III (1172-1196) when he had his son Imre crowned in the early 1180s\(^3\). At that juncture the crowning of the heir to the throne neither made him necessarily co-ruler nor resulted in territorial concessions. Rather, the crowning was solely a way to assert
the rights of succession. It is important to note that the coronation itself granted no political power to the young king; it was through the subsequent grant of territorial autonomy that ultimately the young king became able to wield political power.

In 1194 Béla III established an autonomous administration in the territories on the margins of the Adriatic, in Croatia and granted them to his son King Imre. This autonomous unit disappeared after Imre assumed the Hungarian throne as King Imre I (1196-1204) following the death of his father in 1196. On his deathbed in 1196, Béla III had his younger son Andrew swear to undertake the crusade the dying king had promised the pope and now would be unable to lead. For that purpose Prince Andrew was entrusted with a substantial sum of money—which was never used for its original purpose.

Prince Andrew had no intention of fighting in the Holy Land and instead used the funds entrusted to him to overturn his brother Imre I. In 1197 Andrew defeated Imre I at the battle of Marčkin, and in the next year Imre was forced to concede the territories of Croatia, Dalmatia, and Hercegovina—these provinces were later referred to as Slavonia—to his rebellious brother. Now in control of autonomous territory, Prince Andrew did not relent in his opposition to the ruler, and those who opposed the king joined Andrew’s camp. In 1199 Imre I took arms against his increasingly assertive brother and defeated him at the battle of Rád. Following a truce, 1203 was marked by renewed conflict between the two brothers, but this time Andrew fell prisoner to King Imre.

In 1204 Imre I, gravely ill, had his infant son László crowned king and died soon after. Because of King László’s infancy Imre I had appointed Prince Andrew governor of the kingdom until his son would come of age. But the infant King
László III (1204-1205) died soon after he assumed the throne, and Andrew became sole ruler and was crowned King Andrew II in 1205.

The process whereby King Andrew II (1205-1235) came to power created a precedence that would later endanger his own rule, as his oldest son Béla, later King Béla IV, also became the head of the opposition party. Although Andrew was never crowned during his predecessor's rule, he had gained control over Slavonia. The presence of an autonomous court within the kingdom offered a political alternative to those opposing the ruler. In 1214 Prince Béla, then only eight years of age, was crowned king against the will of his father, as we will see below. In 1220 Béla assumed control over Slavonia, where the opposition to Andrew II's policies found a friendly alternative court. The presence of an autonomous court within the kingdom allowed for great mobility among potential political supporters as they sought for the side that would best serve their interests.

Opposition to Andrew II emerged from two principal sources: the advantages that the retinue of Queen Gertrud was enjoying in the court, and Andrew II's attempt to reform the economic system of the kingdom. King Andrew had married Gertrud of Meran in approximately 1200 as a result of his alliance with the Germans, whereby he expressed his opposition to his brother's alliance with the pope. The queen had come to Hungary with a large number of followers, who received a multitude of privileges from the king. These privileges consisted of large land donations as well as the granting of ecclesiastical and political offices. The queen's brother Bertold, whom the Hungarians hated, became an important officer in King Andrew's court. In 1209 the Queen's two other brothers, who were then in Hungary, received large land donations. The treatment the queen's family was
receiving made the Germans unpopular in the kingdom, and the dissatisfaction culminated in 1213 with the assassination of Queen Gertrud. The other major source of opposition to Andrew II was his attempt to reform the economic system of the Hungarian Kingdom. Until the thirteenth century the overwhelming majority of the land within the Hungarian kingdom belonged to the king himself, while a relatively small area was in the hands of the church and the nobility. The itinerant court would move around the kingdom, which was considered the property of the ruler. Every royal property was administered by a royal appointee, and each province by an appointed Ispán. In 1205 Andrew II initiated the reform of this economic system, and the envisioned new model was called Novae Institutiones. According to the new economic model, the king would donate his land possessions to the nobility for no stipulated preconditions, i.e., land recipients did not owe military obligations to the ruler, and the donation would be "perpetual"—that is, hereditary and irrevocable. Under the model of the Novae Institutiones the kingdom's finances would be maintained by means of taxes collected from the new landowners, and therefore the king would not be required to travel around the kingdom to gain access to the goods produced in his realm. The Novae Institutiones was based on the assumption that the kingdom's finances were based on a money economy, with enough money in circulation to make possible the collection of sufficient taxes to keep the government running. Moreover, it assumed that the economy as a whole had enough goods in circulation to make the itinerant court unnecessary. These assumptions proved to have been not only precocious, for the economy's liquidity was not sufficient to make the Novae Institutiones viable, but also flawed, for they neglected to consider potential
consequences such as shifts in the political power base and the weakening of the military establishment that would result from the unconditional donation of royal properties. Furthermore, in the process of donating land Andrew II alienated those members of the nobility and of the church who did not receive land.

The donations made by King Andrew were based primarily on the merits of past services, whether military or political. Thus the members of the aristocracy who benefited the most from the *Novae Institutiones* were the closest associates of the king and those who had taken part in the numerous military campaigns King Andrew had led against the Russian principality of Galicia. A number of those who did not receive land opposed the *Novae Institutiones* and formed the core of the opposition party. The church, moreover, hitherto the largest landowner after the king himself, saw its previous leverage vis-à-vis the aristocracy and the king dwindle, since they did not benefit from the *Novae Institutiones*. A number of the most powerful church officials joined the opposition camp gathered behind young King Béla.

Beginning in 1205 Andrew II invested enormous energies in establishing control over the principality of Galicia. To do so, King Andrew had his second son Kálmán assume the Galician throne. Yet Prince Kálmán’s presence in Galicia aroused the opposition of the local boyars. After a number of palace revolutions, Prince Kálmán was expelled from Galicia in 1225. In 1226 Prince Kálmán became head of the principality of Slavonia, where he substituted for his older brother.

But King Andrew did not surrender his aspirations to control Galicia, and after 1226 Andrew II tried to have his youngest son, Prince Andrew, put in control of the Russian principality. As with Kálmán, the boyars were divided about the
presence of a Hungarian ruler. A number of revolutions and counter-revolutions ensued, rendering the political scenario complicated and unstable. Since one segment of the boyars favored Prince Andrew’s rule while another opposed it, Prince Andrew’s control over the throne depended on which faction was the strongest at the time. To keep his son in control of the Galician throne Andrew II was forced to organize a number of costly military campaigns. While some of these military campaigns might have resulted in tactical victories, they never settled the political instability reigning in the Russian principalities.

The combination of insufficient tax revenues, loss of revenues due to the donation of land, and the added financial drain caused by the successive Galician campaigns soon emptied the treasury. The king was forced to borrow large sums from Jews and Ismaelites, whose influence in the court thus grew substantially. These developments further fomented the opposition to Andrew II’s policies and became a persistent source of attrition with the Roman Curia.

In 1210 some members of the aristocracy sent a letter to the sons of Prince Géza, who was the brother of King Béla III, residing in Constantinople with the intention of having them overthrow King Andrew II. This letter was intercepted by Domaldus, count of Sebenico, and the conspiracy was thus neutralized. Four years later, in 1214, Prince Béla was crowned against the will of his father, who complained bitterly to the pope that some "perversi" were using his son as a banner of opposition to his policies and that the kingdom was endangered by divisive powers. In the following years the opposition to Andrew II grew sufficiently strong to force the king to concede the principality of Slovenia to Béla in 1220. The opposition party, rallying behind the young king, now wielded its power in a
The socio-political and economic developments were the catalyst for the role that Béla, first as prince and later as king, played in the political arena. As crowned king and ruler of Slovenia Béla was able to offer a legal alternative court within the kingdom of Hungary. Concomitantly, the economic reforms his father attempted to introduce alienated an important stratum of the society, which sought the opportunity to rally behind Béla as a means of achieving their political interests. Later, as king, Béla made costly political sacrifices to reverse the consequences of the *Novae Institutiones*, which ultimately had an important impact in the kingdom's ability to respond to the threat of the invading Mongol forces.
CHAPTER III

POLITICAL BEGINNINGS: 1214-1220

The political career of Béla began in the period between 1214 and 1220. In 1214 he was launched into the forefront of political developments by virtue of his coronation. In contrast to the coronation of previous princes of the Árpád dynasty who were crowned king during their father's rule, Béla's coronation occurred against his father's will. Furthermore, during this period Andrew II recognized that his economic reforms, the *Novae Institutiones*, had failed. Yet, Andrew's attention turned from the impending economic crisis to the dynastic conflicts that followed the death of Emperor Henry of Hainaut (1174-1216, emperor from 1205) who ruled over the empire established by the Crusaders in 1204: the Latin Empire. At this juncture, the pilgrimage Andrew II had promised the pope years earlier became a convenient excuse to be in the region and put forth his dynastic claims. The main opponent to the *Novae Institutiones* was made governor of the kingdom while the king travelled to the Holy Land in his pilgrimage, and temporarily the rate of land donation was slowed down. On his return from the Holy Land Andrew II found the kingdom in chaos immersed in rivalries and the treasury emptied by corrupt officials who had taken the administration from the hands of the entrusted governor.

In the years leading up to 1214 there was a trend of growing dissatisfaction
with the policies of Andrew II. In 1212 there had been an attempt to invite members of the Árpád dynasty from Constantinople to take the crown. In the following year the queen was assassinated, and the perpetrators were left unpunished. Pressure continued to mount, and this time the opposition party gathered behind the eight-year-old Prince Béla. In 1214 the coronation of Béla was forced upon the king; the ceremony was carried through against the will of the ruler, who gave ground to appease the challenge mounted against him. Although King Andrew complained bitterly about Béla’s coronation to the pope he could not reverse the fact that his son was now a crowned king behind whom the opposition party had gathered.

All evidence suggests that the opposition party was formed by those members of the aristocracy who were not beneficiaries of the Nova Institutiones, though they did not necessarily oppose the donation of royal properties per se. This group was sufficiently large and powerful to manipulate members of the royal family and finally mount a challenge to the throne with the crowning of Prince Béla. It is important to note that at this juncture young King Béla had received no land that he could rule. His political autonomy was probably negligible, but his presence served the opposition’s interests by increasing the pressure against the ruling king. A segment of the nobility, united in its opposition to the king, had wielded more power than did the king himself.

Although the coronation of Béla was the single most important source of political pressure that Andrew II experienced during this period, the aristocracy was not the only group opposing the king. As noted in the previous chapter, the church also opposed the Novae Institutiones. The reason behind the church’s position is
probably her rapid loss of economic and political advantages as the king’s power decreased and the aristocracy’s increased. Since the aristocracy was the largest beneficiary of the \textit{Novae Institutiones}, the balance between secular and church properties was changing and so was the influence the church had hitherto enjoyed in economic and political matters at the court. The most important opponent of the \textit{Novae Institutiones} amongst the church officials was John Archbishop of Esztergom.

In 1217 Andrew II recognized that the \textit{Novae Institutiones} was flawed and that it was not having the desired effects, instead having succeeded only in bringing financial hardship and political strife onto the kingdom. In 1217 Andrew II warned a noble to whom he was donating land that "certain agreements should be kept in case the distribution of land would return to the previous situation." Furthermore, in this same year Andrew returned the village of Tordos to the archbishopric of Esztergom, which had previously lost this village because of the archbishop’s opposition to the \textit{Novae Institutiones}. Since Andrew II’s attention shifted to the Latin Empire in 1217, the actual reversal of his policies had to wait until 1220, when Pope Honorius III evoked Andrew II to reverse the \textit{Novae Institutiones}. Andrew himself became a contender to the throne in Constantinople. The union of Hungary and Constantinople had been a goal of King Béla III, who was temporarily supported by the Byzantine Emperor Manuel Comnenos to succeed him to the purple throne. Although Béla III’s plans were not realized, the ideal of occupying the Byzantine throne was not forgotten by Andrew II, who had dynastic claims by virtue of his wife. In 1214 Andrew II had married Jolanta of Courtenay, daughter of Peter of Courtenay and grand-daughter of Baldwin de Hennegani,
brother of Emperor Henry. Since Emperor Henry died without heirs in 1216, Andrew became a contender to the throne of the Latin Empire through Jolanta’s family connections. But in addition to dynastic claims Andrew II needed the support of the pope—a vital ingredient to reach the throne of the Latin Empire—and for that aim he began preparations to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, joining the fight to liberate Jerusalem.

The pope, however, gave his support to Peter of Courtenay (emperor in 1217), and thus Andrew lost his bid to the throne of Constantinople. Notwithstanding the loss of his bid, King Andrew took up arms and carried out the promised pilgrimage to the Holy Land. During Andrew’s absence the administration of the Kingdom was entrusted to Archbishop John of Esztergom. Prince Béla was entrusted to the tutelage of his uncle Bertold of Meran, patriarch of Achillea, who kept him in the fortress of Stein. Béla returned to Hungary sometime between 1218 and 1219.

Andrew II’s voyage to the Holy Land (1217-1218) resulted in neither noteworthy military achievement nor any advancement in Andrew II’s bid to the throne of the Latin Empire. But during his return to Hungary Andrew II established a number of dynastic connections in the region. For his youngest son, Prince Andrew, the king negotiated a marriage with the princess of Armenia. For his oldest son, King Béla, he negotiated a marriage with Maria Laskaris, the daughter of Theodore I Laskaris, Emperor of Nicaea, whom King Andrew took with him to Hungary. Béla married Maria in 1220. Furthermore, King Andrew’s oldest daughter was to marry Czar Ivan Assen of Bulgaria.

Upon his arrival, King Andrew found the kingdom immersed in chaos. The
appointed governor, Archbishop John of Esztergom, who had hitherto been the most outspoken opponent of the *Novae Institutiones*, had not been able to keep the dissenting forces under control. A palace revolution took place, and he was expelled from the kingdom. The available sources do not provide a clear picture of who took control of the administration, but it is clear that by the time Andrew II arrived in 1218 the treasury had been emptied and the rule of law had collapsed. This is well illustrated by Andrew II’s letter written to the pope in 1219, in which he bitterly assesses the political and financial situation in which his kingdom was found when he returned.

With the king’s return order seems to have been re-established. The archbishop returned to Hungary and was compensated by the king, for the unfortunate experiences he had undergone, with the donation of land to his bishopric. Because of the volatile situation in which Andrew II found his kingdom, and the ensuing financial difficulties, Andrew II moderated the rate of land donations until 1219, even though the policy was not altogether halted. This change in course suggests that after the king’s return from the Holy Land, and with order re-established, the opposition party had strengthened.

The events leading to 1218 suggest that the gap between those favoring the continuation of the *Novae Institutiones* and those opposing it was widening. While the king was travelling in the Middle East disagreements between those favoring the *Novae Institutiones* and those opposing it escalated into open conflict, and the archbishop was unseated and expelled from the kingdom. Although in 1217 the king had recognized that his economic reforms were not bringing the results he had hoped for, he did not seem able to halt, much less to reverse, the continuous rate
of land donations⁵⁹.

Hitherto Béla's political role had been merely that of an infant king who became the banner of the opposition party. Until 1220 he had no land to govern, which severely limited his political leverage as well as those advantages enjoyed by the opposition party behind him. Furthermore, between 1217 and 1220 the royal administration returned to the hands of those who had initiated the *Novae Institutiones* in 1205⁶⁰. Concomitantly with the shift in the membership of the royal administration the rate of donations picked up again after the lull of 1217 until 1219⁶¹.

Since they failed to force the king to dismantle the *Novae Institutiones*, the opposition sought some other path for achieving their aims. In 1220 the opposition party gathered behind Béla and pressed King Andrew to make Slavonia an autonomous political unit and cede it to the control of Béla and his party⁶². It was from Slavonia that Andrew II had challenged his brother's rule in 1203, to ultimately gain control over the kingdom. The granting of Slavonia to Béla and his party was certainly not the preferred course of action on the part of King Andrew.

As we have seen, the period between 1214 and 1220 marked the beginning of the division of the royal family into different political camps. The coronation of Prince Béla was the act that solidified this new political reality. That the coronation occurred contrary to the will of King Andrew is evidence for the presence of a powerful and increasingly assertive opposition party, which was manipulating members of the royal family to its own advantage. In 1217 King Andrew recognized the problems with his economic reforms, but instead of reversing the damage caused by the land donations Andrew II engaged in dynastic disputes in the
Latin Empire and travelled to the Holy Land. In the absence of the king, Hungary was thrown into a chaos that weakened the king’s authority and bankrupted his treasury. In 1220 King Andrew’s problems worsened as young King Béla gained control over Slavonia.
 Before Béla became its ruler, Slavonia had been a Bánat, whose governor—the bán, or banus,—became a member of King Béla’s court once he had assumed the rule of the territory. Located within the south-western borders of the Hungarian Kingdom, at the northern margins of the Adriatic, Slavonia’s location made it an important strategic location with relatively easy access to the Italian peninsula, the Holy Roman Empire, or Byzantium by sea. In 1220 Béla assumed control over Slavonia which he ruled until 1226. The formation of Béla’s independent court in Slavonia altered the dynamics of the political power-play in the Kingdom of Hungary. The two kings would compete for the support of influential members of the aristocracy, as well as for the support of the papacy. Anyone refusing to obey one of the kings could now seek allegiance with the other. This new political reality added a new challenge to Andrew II’s rule, and it became the main source of division within the kingdom. The period is characterized by the first open conflict between King Andrew and his son King Béla, who sought refuge from his father’s ire in Austria in 1223. In the course of these six years King Andrew’s reign suffered a number of political setbacks and the position Béla held in Slavonia grew progressively stronger. Béla’s rule over Slavonia lasted until 1226, when he became the ruler of Transylvania, while Béla’s brother, Prince
Kálmán, took over Slavonia.

As head of Slavonia Béla assembled his own independent court, where, among other dignitaries, he had a nádor (palatine), a camerarius (chamberlain), a judge-of-the-court, a lord chief of the treasury, a master of the horse, a warden of the king, and a master cup-bearer. In addition, Béla had the right to issue his own coins. The most efficient means by which Béla could wield political power during this time was by donating land, which remained an intrinsic part of his political activities until 1226. In so doing, he increased the number of his followers in the growing competition against his father’s camp.

Though very few sources on Béla are available until 1222, that year is marked by two significant events: the imposition of the Golden Bull—a series of laws limiting the power of the king—by a segment of the lower nobility, and the separation of Béla from his wife, forced upon the young couple by King Andrew.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, King Andrew was torn between keeping the policies of the Novae Institutiones in place or reversing them as John archbishop of Esztergom had been pressing him to do. After the king’s return from the Fifth Crusade the rate of land donations decreased for a while. Nonetheless, pressure to put an end to the Novae Institutiones continued to mount from the opposition party and the archbishop. From 1219 to 1220 no members of the party favoring the Novae Institutiones were present in Andrew’s court, but by 1220 the officials at the court were changed and the policies of the Novae Institutiones were reborn. Again land donations favoring a segment of the higher aristocracy were being granted, but this shift occurred at the expense of the lower nobility, the serviens.
In 1222 Andrew II's court was shaken by a palace revolution organized by an apparent alliance between those who had formerly supported Andrew II's brother, King Imre, and the serviens. Once in power, the revolutionaries forced King Andrew to issue the Golden Bull. Among these laws the most important to our study are as follow: the serviens would not be required to participate in any offensive military campaigns (paragraph vii); the king would cease granting perpetual donations—neither whole counties nor any smaller units of land (xvi); nobles would be free to pass to King Béla's political camp, and would not be punished for it (xviii); the tithe could be paid in goods rather than in silver denars (xx); salt—one of the most important mineral extracts of the Kingdom during the Middle Ages—could be stored only in Szalacson, Szeged, and other cities located on the periphery of the kingdom, not at the "center of the kingdom," i.e., Székesfehérvár—the capital city (xxv).

Paragraph xvi is evidence that King Andrew did not stop issuing perpetual donations after his return from the crusade—and he would not after signing the Golden Bull of 1222. Paragraph xviii implies that the relations between the two kings, father and son, were troubled, at best. Paragraphs xx and xxv dealt a severe blow to the church, since salt transportation had become its most important source of revenue (it possessed a near monopoly over the transport of salt in the kingdom). Furthermore, paragraph xx denied one of the cornerstones of the Novae Institutiones, i.e., the increase in the circulation of money. Finally, paragraph vii crippled the army, which might not have had any major consequences during Andrew II's reign but, as we shall see in the next chapters, it would have devastating consequences in the kingdom's ability to defend itself from the Mongol
In the same year of 1222 Andrew II succeeded in eliminating the conspirators still present in his court after the rearrangement of the court officials. According to the new arrangement, those who had supported Andrew when he began the *Novae Institutiones* once again returned to power. With the supporters of the *Novae Institutiones* in power the donations of land resumed, although the pace was slowed. Even though many of the stipulations of the Golden Bull of 1222 were ignored by the king the Bull did have an influence on his reign thereafter: if King Andrew had not hitherto realized the magnitude of the opposition to his rule, then the events of 1222 must have awakened him.

In addition to Andrew's success in rearranging his court officials, the relationship between Andrew and Béla improved. In 1222 Béla donated land to the bishop of Zagreb in recognition of his efforts to appease the relationship between the two kings. The peace negotiated by the bishop proved to have been only a temporary lull in the continuous frictions between the two, for shortly afterward a new crisis emerged. This conflict emerged from Andrew II's interference in his son's marriage.

In 1220 Béla, having reached fourteen years of age, married Maria, princess of Nicaea, who had been residing in the Hungarian court since King Andrew's return from the crusade. Following the marriage, King Andrew had Maria crowned queen of Hungary. In what seems to have been a surprising move, after two years of living together Béla wrote to the pope and asked for his marriage to be annulled so that he "could establish another marriage which would offer him more advantages" and dismissed his wife. This request resulted in outrage amongst the
Hungarian clergy, who were vehemently opposed to Béla's wishes. At first, its members attempted to amend the situation themselves, but given their lack of success they informed the pope about the events.

The pope appointed a committee of bishops to analyze the situation and report to him on the causes of the conflict and thus determine the answer to Béla's request. The members of the committee were the bishops of Eger, Vác, and Nagyvárad. After their report was sent to Rome, the pope refused to heed to Béla's request and ordered Béla to reunite with his wife, which order he promptly obeyed.

By rejoining his wife in 1223 Béla enraged his father. Whether or not Andrew II had in any way threatened his son the sources cannot tell, but we do know that Béla sought refuge in Austria with his wife and part of his court. Béla's prompt action in rejoining his wife is taken as evidence of the fact that the divorce had been King Andrew's idea. Queen Maria, Béla's wife, had a sister, Irene by name, who was married to John Dukas Vatatzes, a noble in the court of Nicaea. After the death in 1222 of Emperor Theodore I of Nicaea, father of Maria and Irene, John Dukas Vatatzes took the throne. With Emperor John III Dukas Vatatzes (1222-1254) on the Nicaean throne, King Andrew's hopes for his son's succession to the throne of the remnants of the Byzantine Empire faded, and Maria no longer offered an advantageous dynastic connection.

Although Béla had taken refuge in Austria, and his marriage was thus assured, the clergy evoked the mediation of the pope to solve the crisis between father and son. In 1224 Pope Honorius III wrote three letters to appease the parties involved in the dispute. In the letter written to King Andrew, the pope calls...
upon the king to protect the peace in the realm and reminds him that father and son should be respectful and considerate to each other since Béla had rejoined his wife in obedience to papal orders, not to displease the king. A second letter was sent to Bela’s party, invoking them to restrain themselves from increasing the conflict in the kingdom, and encouraging Béla to be obedient to his father. Finally, a third letter was sent to Béla himself, invoking him to be obedient toward his father and to avoid actions which might threaten the peace in the kingdom. In the same year King Andrew changed his belligerent attitude and let Béla return to Slavonia with his wife and court. In 1225 King Andrew signed a peace agreement with the Duke of Austria in Graz, after the intercession of the bishop of Nyitra.

During Béla’s absence from Slavonia feudal strife broke out in the principality. The leader of the rebellion was Domaldus, the noble who had intercepted the conspiracy against King Andrew early in his reign and who had benefitted from the Novae Institutiones by having received land. Domaldus now turned against the ruler and attacked his rival nobles, disrupting the peace and order in the principality. When he returned to Slavonia in 1224, King Béla moved decisively to crush the rebellion. First he took Domaldus’ lands away, and thereafter he set siege to the fortress of Clissa, where Domaldus had taken refuge. With the capture of Domaldus the rebellion ended.

Although the crisis involving Béla’s marriage was resolved, the following events further deteriorated the relations between father and son and their respective parties. At the end Andrew II’s plan to seek alternative dynastic connections by forcing Béla to reject his wife failed. The resulting crisis was ultimately a victory for Béla, who despite wavering at first changed his mind and resisted his father’s
ambitions. In the process Béla gained the support of the church in Hungary and of the pope, who seemed to have developed a sense of favoritism toward Béla and his party vis-à-vis King Andrew. This favoritism is suggested by the nature of the three letters the pope wrote to appease Andrew II\textsuperscript{101}, by the pope’s letter encouraging Buzád, a member of Béla’s party, to continue his support for Béla\textsuperscript{102}, and, finally, by the fact that the Decretalis Intellecto was addressed to Béla\textsuperscript{103}, further polarizing the political factions in the kingdom\textsuperscript{104}. From 1224 to 1226 Béla’s party continued to grow, and a small yet influential royal court emerged in Slavonia by 1225\textsuperscript{105}. This court posed an increasing threat to King Andrew’s position. Andrew II’s reign continued to face internal problems, now with the Teutonic Knights, which further complicated the relationship between the pope and the king.

In 1211 Andrew II had granted the Teutonic Knights the right to settle in the southeastern area of Transylvania, a region called Barca\textsuperscript{106}. In 1222 King Andrew renewed their territorial grant and the Teutonic Knights were given the rights for the transportation of salt in the Maros and Olt rivers, tax privileges, and the right to build castles in the area under their control\textsuperscript{107}. Transylvania had been the place for numerous Cuman marauding campaigns, and it was in the Barca that the Cuman penetrations were most common\textsuperscript{108}. The presence of the Teutonic Knights put a halt to these costly Cuman penetrations, both by armed resistance and by converting the pagan Cumans to Christianity (they worked in cooperation with the Dominican missionaries). But in the following year, 1223, the Knights sought independence from the bishopric of Transylvania and the archbishopric of Esztergom. In 1224 they offered the pope the territory under their control—thus establishing virtual independence from the Hungarian king. The pope accepted the
Knights' offer and set up a new ecclesiastical administration in the region that was answerable only to Rome. Alarmed by the growing assertiveness of the Teutonic Knights, King Andrew took up arms in 1225 and expelled them from Hungary.

The pope objected vociferously to the expulsion of the German Knights, but for once King Andrew remained steadfast in his decision to have the Teutonic Knights out of the kingdom and did not heed. As a result, relations with the papacy, already weakened by the aforementioned crises, further deteriorated. Following the expulsion of the Teutonic Knights the pope defended the interests of the church with singular aggressiveness. By mid-1225 the pope began to address the issue of land donations, encouraging their return into royal hands. This meant taking away the lands hitherto donated "in perpetuitas"—in other words, the complete reversal of the Novae Institutiones. Regardless of how sound such proposal might have been financially, politically it would have been impossible for Andrew II to carry it through. King Andrew's political support rested on those in favor of the Novae Institutiones, and he could not afford to alienate members of his party, given the growing number of those gathered behind King Béla. But the proposal must have been most appealing to King Béla's party, which had been opposed to the Novae Institutiones from its conception. In fact, Pope Honorius III began to encourage Béla to take the initiative in the restoration of royal properties from 1225 on, even though Béla himself continued his policy of donating land until 1226.

In 1225 Pope Honorius III issued a Decretalis Intellecto, which consisted of three letters, one to Béla, one to Archbishop Ugrin of Kalocsa, and the third to the archbishop's suffragans, admonishing them to revoke the land donations. To make such action possible, the pope declared the oath of perpetual donation invalid since
it resulted in the detriment of the nation that the king had vowed to protect in his oath of coronation. Since the latter takes precedence over the former, the oaths of perpetual donations were illegal\textsuperscript{114}. Although the \textit{Decretalis} marks an escalation of the pressure exerted by the papacy, reversal of the \textit{Novae Institutiones} will not occur until 1228, as we will see later.

In addition to his admonitions for the reversal of the \textit{Novae Institutiones}, the pope also objected to the presence of Saracens and Jews in Andrew II’s court. As King Andrew’s financial difficulties mounted he had had to rely on loans taken from Jews and Saracens, who were taking increasingly important roles in the court. Increasing the pressure against Andrew II, the pope reminded him that the presence of non-Christians in the court had been forbidden since the Council of Toledo, in 1217\textsuperscript{115}. Yet, King Andrew was still not willing to yield.

In 1226 King Andrew changed the rulers of the principalities within the kingdom. King Béla received Transylvania and Prince Kálmán took his place in Slavonia. The primary sources do not provide the reasons behind King Andrew’s move, but there are a number of factors that must be considered as potential reasons for moving King Béla to Transylvania. Although King Andrew resisted pressure from the Roman Curia, the increasingly close contacts between Béla and the pope, combined with the growth of his son’s power and influence in Slavonia, must have worried him\textsuperscript{116}. Slavonia proved to have been a fortuitous strategic base for Béla, where a number of influential dignitaries had gathered around him and from whence he could easily contact the pope, the Austrian duke, or the emperor, without Andrew II knowing of it\textsuperscript{117}. Furthermore, since the Teutonic Knights had left the kingdom, the eastern portions of Transylvania were again vulnerable to
Cuman attacks. Finally, since Prince Kálmán was ousted from Galicia he had been left without land of his own[^18].

As it may be seen, in the period between 1220 and 1226 the relationship between Andrew II and his son Béla progressively worsened, while Andrew II had to face a number of crises within the kingdom. Following a palace revolution in 1222 and the resulting Golden Bull limiting his powers, King Andrew's plan to arrange for a more suitable marriage for his son resulted in open conflict with Béla, which was solved with the mediation of the pope. In addition, the Teutonic Knights tried to obtain independence from the king, and in the aftermath of their expulsion Andrew II's relationship with the pope deteriorated. With increased communications between the pope and Béla regarding the restoration of donated territories—which put the Novae Institutiones at risk—the threat represented by Béla's presence in Slavonia increased. In 1226 Andrew II reorganized the administration of the kingdom, with Béla being relocated to Transylvania.
CHAPTER V

RULER OF TRANSYLVANIA: 1226-1235

Following the expulsion of the Teutonic Knights from Transylvania in 1225, the eastern borders of the Hungarian Kingdom remained open to Cuman attacks. The need to defend the eastern borders became the catalyst for moving Béla from Slavonia in 1226, where his political power-base had grown to the point of presenting a potential threat to King Andrew’s authority. Though temporarily weakened by the move from Slavonia, Béla’s political power increased during the period of his rule over Transylvania (1226-1235). Between 1228 and 1231 Béla’s power reached its apex as he took over the government from his father in an effort to reverse the policies of the Novae Institutiones. In Transylvania, Béla maintained relatively good relations with the church. A brief campaign against Bulgaria in 1228 is seen as his first step toward establishing an independent foreign policy. Yet, Béla’s efforts to reverse the Novae Institutiones were not successful, and after 1231 he became involved in King Andrew’s conflicts with the church and with a series of wars with the Duke of Austria.

In addition to depriving Béla of his political basis in Slavonia, the move to Transylvania distanced Béla from his international connections, especially from Rome. From Transylvania, Béla’s correspondence would diminished considerably, and more important, his correspondence would have had to pass through the
territory under his father's control. In addition to separating Béla from his followers and isolating him geographically, King Andrew probably hoped he could downgrade Béla by supporting Prince Kálmán, who as ruler of Galicia had always been docile to his father's wishes. Therefore Béla, deprived of his political base and away in Transylvania would be a weaker opponent.

Despite King Andrew's hope to weaken his son, Béla managed to take with himself to Transylvania a number of followers. Among these were his chancellor, Mátyás, and Dénes Türje a childhood friend and one of the ablest generals in the Hungarian army. Although he was geographically far from Slavonia and thus separated from a number of local dignitaries who were members of his court, by 1229 Béla had formed a new court. A number of officials of his court in Transylvania were originally from Slavonia. These officials had clearly moved with their king to his new domain. Yet, before Béla had assembled a new party of followers he engaged in an important foreign policy initiative: the conversion of the Cumans.

The Cumans, nomads of Turkoman origin, crossed the Dnyester for the first time during the reign of the Grand-Prince Vsevolod of Perejaslav (1054-1093). In 1068 they penetrated territory under the control of the Russian principalities, and in 1071 they were waging battles against Kiev. By the end of the eleventh century the Cumans had penetrated westward into the areas of Moldavia and Valachia. The first Cuman campaign against Hungarian territory occurred in 1091, was followed by a number of other major attacks. These Cuman incursions, however, were deterred by King László I (1077-1095), who defeated them. With the exception of minor marauding campaigns the Cumans avoided penetrating Hungarian territory.
thereafter. Although the marauders presented a minor military threat, they were a constant inconvenience requiring the mobilization of defensive detachments to the southeastern borders of Transylvania.

Until the 1220s the majority of the Cuman contingent was settled in the vicinities of the southernmost Russian principalities, where they began the process of transition from nomadism to sedentary life. But the expansion of the Mongol empire in the first half of the thirteenth century forced the Cumans to move further west. In 1223 an alliance of Cuman and Russian forces suffered a disastrous defeat to a Mongol reconnaissance force at the battle of Kalka, which ultimately forced the Cumans to abandon the Russian steppes and moved to the northern Balkans.

With their renewed move westward the Cumans threatened Hungarian territory again, and armed incursions became a growing problem. As we saw in the chapter above, in 1211 the Teutonic Knights were settled in the Barca region, where Cuman penetrations were most common. In addition to representing an effective defensive force, the Knights began the efforts to convert the Cumans. For that aim they found an ally in the Dominican order, whose founder, Saint Dominic, had made the conversion of the Cumans an aim of the highest priority before his death. Although the conversion efforts of the Teutonic Knights brought no major results, their presence provided protection to the activities initiated by the Dominican friars, whose peaceful conversion methods proved far more effective than the violence employed by the Teutonic Knights.

The Dominican order found great support in Hungary and its membership increased rapidly. Paulus Hungarus founded the first Dominican monastery in Székesfehérvár in 1221, and the friar Theodoric became its first prior in the same
year. Between 1221 and 1223 Paulus Hungarus organized the first mission to convert the Cumans, which was not successful—the majority of the missionaries were killed. Notwithstanding the early fracas the Dominicans did not relent, and in 1225 a second mission advanced along the Dnyesper River—instead of the Danube, as in the first attempt—and despite difficulties and privations they began proselytizing amidst the Cumans. In that same year the Teutonic Knights were expelled from Hungary, and in the absence of the threatening Knights the Cumans proved to be progressively more receptive to the Dominican missionaries.

In 1227 the Dominicans obtained their first major success when a Cuman chieftain, Borc, sent messengers to inform the Dominicans that he and his people desired to be baptized. By this time King Béla was already ruler of Transylvania, and together with Robert Archbishop of Esztergom he went to Milkov, where chieftain Borc and his people were baptized. Archbishop Robert had received the office of papal legate to carry through his mission, and, given the support he received from Béla, the latter's reputation vis-à-vis the church and the pope increased as well.

Capitalizing upon their success, Archbishop Robert set up a bishopric in Milkov and nominated the prior of the Dominican monastery of Esztergom, Theodoric, its first bishop in 1227. In the efforts to convert the Cumans both the church and King Béla had diverse interests. Besides an increase in the number of faithful, the church sought more revenues through the levy of the tithe. Béla, because of his support for the conversion efforts, gained the favor of the pope, as well as control over new territory, important military allies, and increased revenues through the levying of taxes. In fact, by 1229 the Cumans were complaining to
the pope that the taxes levied against them were too high. In response, the pope reminded Béla of the privileges they had been granted at the time of their conversion. It seems, however, that the pope was not satisfied with solely reminding Béla and the Hungarian clergy of their commitments to the Cumans, for in the same year Pope Gregory IX took the bishopric of Milkov away from the archbishopric of Esztergom and made it a direct dependent of Rome.

Prince Kálmán took over Slavonia in 1226, and Béla took over Transylvania; the division of the Kingdom of Hungary was unprecedented. Yet the activities of the Hungarian royal family during the second half of the 1220s must have pleased the papacy. King Béla was actively supporting the conversion of the Cumans, Prince Kálmán was waging a crusade against the Bugomils along the coasts of the Adriatic, and King Andrew was supporting his youngest son, Prince Andrew, to take over the throne of Galicia and thus expand the influence of the papacy over territory controlled by Christians of the Eastern Rite.

In addition to increasing Béla's reputation in the eyes of the pope, the conversion of the Cumans had strategic consequences. King Béla's influence in the area east of the Carpathians increased to the point that he claimed kingship over Cumania. Béla's expanding territorial interests threatened the Bulgarian czar Ivan Assen (1218-1241) in at least two ways: once his Cuman allies converted to Christianity they accepted the jurisdiction of the bishopric of Milkov, who was under the auspices of the archbishopric of Esztergom; and the bishopric of Milkov claimed the territories north of the Danube, which were hitherto claimed by Bulgaria. In fact, in addition to Béla's influence expanding eastward to the area of the bishopric of Milkov, it also expanded southward with the creation of the
bishopric of Szörény, located in the area between the Olt and Maros rivers\textsuperscript{145}. Expansion into Sörény began with the activities of the Teutonic Knights and was taken over by Béla after 1226\textsuperscript{146}. An increase in activities by monks of the Eastern Rite suggests the dissatisfaction with the expansion that King Béla was encouraging\textsuperscript{147}.

Probably because of the obstacles Czar Ivan Assen had been mounting to the conversion of the Cumans, Béla mounted an offensive against Bulgarian territory in 1228. Béla’s troops advanced along the margins of the Olt River, to the fortress of Vidin. An unsuccessful siege of the fortress preceded the retreat of the Hungarian forces, which, having ravaged the vicinities of Vidin, left Bulgarian territory. Although consequences of the campaign are obscure, it seems that in its aftermath Czar Ivan turned his attentions to the south, abandoning the northern territories that were under the growing influence of King Béla. The most important fact related to the Bulgarian campaign is that it seems to have been undertaken by Béla independently from his father. Czar Ivan Assen was married to King Andrew’s sister, and until 1228 relations between the two kingdoms had been peaceful\textsuperscript{148}.

After his move to Transylvania King Béla’s position slowly solidified. By 1229 he had formed a new court with a number of officials from Slavonia and others who joined his camp in Transylvania, such as the voivod. In addition, Béla expanded the territory under his control to include the Cumans of Milkov and the bán of Szörény, and had in the meantime attacked Bulgaria. Furthermore, Béla had the support of the pope as well as of his brother Prince Kálmán, who relied on his brother’s advice to make the most important decisions—much to their father’s dismay\textsuperscript{149}. While Béla’s power and influence grew in Transylvania, his father
continued to face problems as a result of the policies of the *Novae Institutiones*. By having moved Béla from Slavonia to Transylvania King Andrew had, in fact, only delayed the inevitable. In 1228 under the continuous pressure from the church, and added financial strains, King Andrew admitted the failure of his policies. With the counsel of his court officials, he asked Béla to organize and carry through the confiscation of the previously donated royal properties. Thus, King Andrew was on his way to completely reversing the *Novae Institutiones*. To carry out the politically damaging act of confiscating the properties donated "in perpetuitas," Andrew II pressed Béla to the forefront and let him execute the task.

Béla took the task of restoring the royal properties with enthusiasm. The objective he set for himself was to put the kingdom back to what it had been during the reign of his grandfather King Béla III. Béla’s objective was the restoration of lands donated to the secular aristocracy, while the church properties, with only a few exceptions, were left untouched. Yet, even amongst these, Béla aimed solely at the "superfluous" donations, not all of them. To achieve his objectives Béla initiated a study of each nobleman who had been granted land, and when he considered the donations excessive he took away a portion of the territory.

Despite the fact that Béla was acting according to Andrew II’s authority and occasional support, his power was severely limited. Although Béla confiscated land from a number of his father’s supporters he did not do so from those who had received land from Béla III or those who had served his father well, i.e., in the military campaigns against Galicia. For these Béla reconfirmed the previous donations. In addition, King Andrew did not confiscate a single square inch of
territory on his own, much to the contrary, King Andrew did not stop donating lands while his son was restoring them to royal control\textsuperscript{158}. Moreover, while the aristocracy thought of Béla as being too radical, there were those of the lower nobility who tried to take advantage of the changes, and thought of Béla as being too moderate\textsuperscript{159}.

Complicating the delicate political situation surrounding him, in 1230 Béla took up arms and led a campaign against Galicia to put his brother Prince Andrew back on the throne he had lost in 1229. This campaign was waged "de mandato et voluntate patris,"\textsuperscript{160} and in it Béla utilized his Cuman allies led by chieftain Borc—while in Galicia the Russians established an alliance with another Cuman chieftain, Kuten. This campaign resulted in a complete fiasco for the Hungarian forces. Béla failed to take the city of Hallich and in addition lost most of his forces to the enemy, who stormed out of the city, taking the Hungarian troops by surprise. An additional number of his forces perished during the ensuing retreat due to the inclement weather\textsuperscript{161}.

In 1231 King Andrew organized a second campaign against Galicia to accomplish the task in which Béla had failed. In this campaign King Andrew took along both King Béla and Prince Andrew. This time the Hungarian forces were successful, and a number of Galician cities did not even resist the advance of the army\textsuperscript{162}. By the end of the campaign Prince Andrew again ruled from Hallich, and King Andrew returned home victorious. The victory on the military front gave King Andrew an important political boost. Soon after his return the court was reorganized, with a substantial change amongst its officials. In its aftermath the king issued large-scale donations of royal properties again. In fact, after 1231 King
Andrew nullified most of his son’s achievements by giving back all the land Béla had confiscated since 1228. Opposition to Béla’s policy of confiscating land and restoring them to royal control must have increased between 1228 and 1231. As a result of the growing opposition, the balance between those in favor and those opposed to the restoration of royal properties shifted. Béla’s defeat on the Galician front in 1229 must have been costly for Béla’s reputation, and it probably accelerated his loss of support. King Andrew’s victory in Galicia, however, proved to have been the final blow to Béla’s unpopular policy. Having lost the needed support Béla had to discontinue the campaign of restoration of royal properties, and King Andrew retook the reins of the government.

While his father changed courses once again, Béla returned to Transylvania. Although his chancellor claimed that Béla had corrected the problems of the kingdom and vowed that he would continue the campaign of restoration of royal properties in Transylvanian territory, Béla had in fact been "sidelined" as a result of a significant political defeat. Based on his chancellor’s claim, it has been claimed that Béla returned to Transylvania because he considered his aims achieved. Yet, given King Andrew’s lack of cooperation, if not direct opposition, to Béla’s efforts to restore royal properties under the control of the crown Béla must have known full well that his attempt to undo the Novae Institutiones had failed. His political objectives had been consistently countered by his father and had led nowhere. Thus, it seems to me that, once Béla lost the support necessary to continue the confiscation of royal properties, he had nothing to do in his father’s domains and returned to Transylvania. On the same premise, it is unlikely that
Béla’s chancellor did not realize the reality of the situation, in which case the chancellor’s claim of Béla’s having restored the dignity to the kingdom amounts only to political rhetoric. Béla returned to Transylvania not as one who had completed his task, but as a loser.

With this turn of events, the first campaign of restoration of royal properties came to an end. Andrew II succeeded in reversing his son’s intrusive political activities that were so damaging to the Novae Institutiones. For Béla success had been only partial. Although he received formal support from Andrew II, his father did everything he could to hinder Béla’s success in reversing the Novae Institutiones. After the tragic adventure in Galicia the restoration of royal properties was doomed; and, as if the defeat suffered in 1230 had not damaged Béla’s reputation sufficiently, his father’s astounding victory on the same front an year later rendered Béla’s political activities impossible to continue. Those who favored the Novae Institutiones won a convincing victory in foreign policy, and pushed Béla and his supporters aside. Efforts toward the restoration of royal properties were abandoned, and the kingdom’s attention turned to other, more pressing issues.

Although King Andrew had emerged victorious both domestically and in foreign affairs after 1231, his problems did not end. This time his main opponent was the church. Having seen her political leverage diminish since Andrew II took the throne, and her economic base erode since the Golden Bull of 1222, now the church saw her hopes with Béla’s reform initiatives dwindle as well. Had Béla succeeded in his campaign of restoration of royal properties, he would have restored the previous balance between the amount of land in the hands of the aristocracy and in the hands of the church. This explains why the church supported Béla’s
efforts to undo the *Novae Institutiones*\(^{67}\). Conversely, Béla’s need for political support to carry through the confiscation of royal properties explains why he did not confiscate lands donated to the church\(^{68}\). After Béla’s lack of success the church sought other means to achieve her objectives.

To defend the interests of the church, the bishops had pressed King Andrew to revise the Golden Bull of 1222. For that purpose church officials also found support among the aristocracy, and in 1231 the king was forced to re-issue the Golden Bull. This time, all the laws limiting the church’s control over the commercialization of salt and stipulating the payment of the tithe were absent\(^{69}\). With the reintroduction of the land donations Andrew II’s chronic financial problems had surfaced again. As he had done so many times before, Andrew II relied on money borrowed from Saracens and Jews to finance his policy, which the church vehemently opposed.

In addition to the financial and political losses mentioned above, the pope was still trying to reverse King Andrew’s decision to expel the Teutonic Knights\(^{70}\). In fact, since Andrew II remained inflexible about the issue, the pope also pressed King Béla\(^{71}\) in the matter; but despite the pressure and the threats neither Andrew nor Béla allowed their return. Church officials became progressively intolerant towards the king, and in 1232 Archbishop Robert of Esztergom declared the Interdict and excommunicated the King’s most important adviser, Dénes, son of Ampod\(^{72}\). King Andrew complained bitterly to the pope\(^{73}\), and intense negotiations followed between the king and the archbishop; three months later the archbishop revoked both the excommunication and the interdict\(^{74}\). In the same year Jacob of Pecorari, the papal legate sent to investigate the crisis between the throne and the
church, arrived in Hungarian territory. He remained in Hungary from June 1232 to
the spring of 1234\textsuperscript{175}. Pressure against the king mounted. In 1233 the king, on his
way to Galicia in his newest military adventure, was pressed to sign the agreement
of Bereg\textsuperscript{176}. According to the agreement, King Andrew would rid the court of all
Jews and Saracens; the church would be granted free transportation of salt
throughout the kingdom; some members of the church would be paid compensation
for previous damages; and the church was declared exempt from taxation\textsuperscript{177}. The
agreement of Bereg was signed by King Andrew, King Béla\textsuperscript{178}, Prince Kálmán, and
the highest Hungarian ecclesiastic dignitaries.

Given his difficult financial situation, King Andrew could not comply with
the severe conditions stipulated by the Agreement of Bereg. The compensation
promised to certain members of the church were not paid off, and neither Jews nor
Saracens were expelled from the court. In 1234 Legate Jacob of Pecorari declared
the Interdict again and this time excommunicated the king\textsuperscript{179}. In response to the
excommunication both King Andrew and the archbishop of Esztergom petitioned
the pope to reconsider the drastic measure; the Curia responded by revoking the
Interdict in 1235\textsuperscript{180}.

While King Andrew was facing a crisis with the church, the struggle in the
Galician front came to an end with the death of Prince Andrew in 1234. After a
number of military campaigns\textsuperscript{181} and enormous expenditure, the efforts to establish
control over the Russian principality had brought no benefits to Hungary.

Despite the perennially difficult financial conditions, King Andrew was
unable to moderate his expenses. Following the death of Queen Jolanta in 1233\textsuperscript{182},
King Andrew married Beatrix of Este (the following year). The new queen was
granted a number of costly benefits that the treasury could ill afford\textsuperscript{183}. In addition, Andrew II had his daughter married to the King Jacob the Conqueror, of Aragonia (1213-1276), to whom the king had promised the payment of a large dowry. These additional expenses explain why Andrew II could not comply with the Agreement of Bereg.

Although the finalization of the Galician claim had put an end to military adventures in that region, the ascension of Duke Frederick II to the throne of Austria following the death of his predecessor (Duke Leopold) altered the peaceful nature of the western borders of Hungary\textsuperscript{184}. Duke Frederick II, the Warrior (1230-1246), attacked Hungarian territory in 1233. King Andrew, with the help of forces led by King Béla and Dénes Türje, repelled the duke and his forces in the same year\textsuperscript{185}. In 1235 Duke Frederick attacked again, and this time the Hungarian forces mounted a counter-attack under the joint leadership of King Andrew, King Béla, and Prince Kálmán. The Hungarian forces penetrated Austrian territory as far as Vienna, where Duke Frederick surrendered and a new peace treaty was signed after the payment of large tribute\textsuperscript{186}.

In 1235 King Andrew died\textsuperscript{187}. The crown passed to Béla, who was crowned King Béla IV in Esztergom on October 14, 1235\textsuperscript{188}. After many years as the head of the opposition party Béla was now the head of the government and finally was able to dictate his own policies.

Ever since Béla’s coronation in 1214 his relationship with Andrew II had been tempestuous. He had been crowned against his father’s will; mounting pressure had forced Andrew II to cede Slavonia; and in 1226 Andrew II had moved Béla to Transylvania in an attempt to weaken him as a political rival. Despite the loss
of a number of supporters who stayed in Slavonia, a new court had gathered around the young king by 1229. This court had assured the support necessary for Béla to make independent moves in matters of foreign policy, as well as to take over the reigns of the government between 1228 and 1231. Despite Béla’s opposition to the Novae Institutiones and the resulting rivalry with Andrew II, he had supported his father in the urgent need to defend the western borders of the kingdom against the duke of Austria. Moreover, Béla had participated in a number of military expeditions against Hallich. These events suggest a more complex relationship between father and son than simply that of an opposition leader who had no scruples in his drive for power. It seems there were certain aspects of Andrew’s policies that Béla opposed with vehemence, i.e., the Novae Institutiones, while there were other aspects of Andrew II’s policies that Béla was willing to support, i.e., the defense of the kingdom’s borders, as well as protection of the relative power of the crown.

Upon succeeding his father to the throne Béla again attempted to restore the lands granted in “perpetuitas” to the control of the crown. In the process of restoring royal possessions Béla also tried to reverse the social and political changes that had occurred because of the Novae Institutiones.

Now Andrew II would not be present to hinder King Béla’s plans, but a far more dangerous enemy would threaten the king’s realm from the east.
CHAPTER VI

BÉLA IV, KING OF HUNGARY: 1235-1241

Although the danger of the approaching enemy was recognized only one year before its arrival in Hungarian territory, as we will see, the developments taking place between 1235 and 1241 determined the political environment in which King Béla was acting and the resources he had available to meet the challenge imposed by the expansionist Mongol army. The most important source of information available about these years is provided by a chronicle written by Master Roger, entitled Carmen Miserabile. By 1223 Master Roger had visited Hungary a number of times as member of diplomatic missions. In 1232 he accompanied Jacob of Pecorare in his mission to Hungary as Papal Legate, and he apparently remained in Hungarian territory thereafter. During the Mongol invasion Master Roger hid in the mountains for a month until he fell prisoner to the Mongols; he lived amidst his captors for approximately one year, until he escaped. The work Carmen Miserabile was written between 1243 and 1244, during one of Master Roger's stays in Rome.

Following the death of King Andrew II, Béla was crowned the sole ruler of Hungary. Without his father on the political scene, Béla's political role changed from that of an opposition leader to that of the sole policy-maker, and as such he was now unhindered in executing his political aspirations. Given the situation in which the kingdom was left by Andrew II, i.e., an empty treasury, a powerful
aristocracy, and the weakening of the crown, Béla needed to introduce urgent reforms if he wanted to reverse the social and political trends unleashed by his father's policies.

The coronation of King Béla IV took place in Székesfehérvár on October 14, 1235\textsuperscript{191}. During the coronation ceremony his brother, Prince Kálmán, sat by his side, while the Russian Prince Daniel\textsuperscript{192}, his one-time enemy and victor, led Béla's horse in what seemed to have been a sign of vassalage\textsuperscript{193}. Immediately after he assumed the throne, Béla took vengeance upon those allegedly involved in the assassination of his mother, as well as those who had mistreated him over the course of the years\textsuperscript{194}. Many of those he sought to punish had been his father's highest court officials. Among these, Dénes son of Ampod, Andrew II's Nádor in the last years of his reign, was blinded and imprisoned\textsuperscript{195}, and Gyula of the house of Kán, one of the most important advisors of Andrew II, was imprisoned, to die in 1237\textsuperscript{196}. A number of other nobles were subjected to torture and interrogations concerning rumors of conspiracies against the crown\textsuperscript{197}. Many of King Andrew's court officials left the kingdom, and in punishment their lands were confiscated.

The former retinue of King Andrew II, now persecuted and without leadership, sent a letter to Emperor Frederick II (emperor 1220-1250) proposing that under certain conditions they would overthrow Béla IV and hand over the Kingdom of Hungary. The messenger was captured and the conspiracy bore no fruits\textsuperscript{198}. This was the first time that conspirators attempted to usurp the throne for someone who was not a member of the house of Árpád. It is interesting to note that in the thirteenth century there were efforts to increase the cult of saints who had been members of the Árpád dynasty\textsuperscript{199}. In fact, these efforts ultimately claimed that all
members of the dynasty were saints, even though not all of them had been beatified, as if to legitimize the dynasty's sole right to the Hungarian throne.

Once his father's highest officials had been punished and the early conspiracy squelched, Béla was now free to introduce the policies he had been unable to carry out during his father's life. Having raised his most faithful followers to the court, Béla had to alter the relationship between the aristocracy—which during his father's reign had gained substantial power at the expense of the crown—and the king himself. To achieve this aim, Béla declared that no one besides the highest church officials and the princes could sit down in the presence of the king, and the chairs in the counsel chamber were burned. Furthermore, until then all nobles had had the right of voicing their petitions directly to the king, but now Béla introduced a chancellery and required all petitions to be handed to appointed officials, in writing. The less complicated cases were solved by the officials of the chancellery itself, while the king dealt solely with the most complicated legal disputes. The introduction of such bureaucratic apparatus, modelled upon the Roman curia, required a fixed location (Old Buda), and it slowed down the rate at which many of the problems were solved; this of course fostered dissatisfaction amongst the aristocracy.

During the early part of his reign Béla also had to solve the troublesome dynastic question raised by Queen Beatrice's (the last wife of the late King Andrew II) announcement that she was pregnant. The announcement was made after the death of King Andrew II. Neither Béla nor Kálmán recognized the legitimacy of the offspring, and the Queen was put into custody. Fearing for her life, in 1236 she escaped Hungary with a German diplomatic mission and gave birth to her son.
Unhindered by his father’s presence and that of his officials, Béla re-initiated the campaign of restoration of royal properties abandoned in 1231. This time, however, the campaign would be far more complex and the results longer lasting. Again, the aim of the policy was to restore the king’s control over land. As in 1228-1231, Béla sought to restate the conditions predominating during the reign of Béla III, but now the confiscation of properties also extended to ecclesiastical lands. Yet, as in the earlier effort to undo the consequences of the Novae Institutiones, Béla did not attempt to retake all properties. Donations made by King Béla III were not touched, nor were donations considered justified, i.e., for good services to the crown. To execute the land reform and distinguish between those properties that had to be confiscated from those granted for good cause, Béla nominated judges who were responsible for overseeing the legal processes, and the kingdom was divided into distinct areas of jurisdiction. For properties in the hands of the secular aristocracy, the county’s ispán was the overseer; he was aided by four or six other officials. For church properties, the provincial bishop—or other equivalent church official—was made responsible for the reform. Thus, Robert Archbishop of Esztergom was responsible for the reforms in his diocese; Bertalan, Bishop of Veszprém in the counties of Somogy and Zala; Kázmér, Provost of Veszprém, became a more mobile officer sent to various places by King Béla; Ozyás, Archdeacon of Vácz was responsible for the county of Bars; and Gergely, Bishop of Györ for the county of Vas.

As the campaign of restoration of royal properties progressed, opposition to the policy grew. The pope was among the first to express his disapproval of the
confiscation of church properties, in 1236\textsuperscript{214}. In addition, the rift between the aristocracy, which was unsure whether or not their lands would be confiscated, and the king, who was carrying out his policy with utmost severity, grew progressively wider. Although members of the church were supportive of the king’s policy in the beginning, this support also began to erode with time. By 1238 King Béla halted the policy of land restoration, and he offered to compensate the church for the losses she had suffered\textsuperscript{215}. This political turn around is taken as a sign that the support Béla had enjoyed from the Hungarian church—which had been so important throughout Béla’s career ever since 1214—had reached a critical point. Clearly Béla could not afford to alienate both the aristocracy and the church at the same time, and although not all the lands of the kingdom had been returned to the crown, the policy of restoration had to be abandoned.

The second campaign of restoration of royal properties had been successful insofar as it increased the amount of land returned into the hands of the crown. As a result of land confiscations the counties regained control over most of their previous land, and thus their original economic and military role was at least partially restored. As a consequence, the de facto power of the ispáns increased, this time at the expense of the landed aristocracy. The end of the campaign, however, was dictated by Béla’s need for political support, which was eroding as the campaign progressed. Concomitantly with the last campaign of restoration of royal properties Béla substantially diminished the number of land donations. But, most important, most of the new land donations were based upon the condition of military service\textsuperscript{216}: those receiving land had to supply a given number of soldiers when summoned by the king. Thus Andrew II’s policy of granting land
unconditionally as a payment for past services was reversed\textsuperscript{217}.

As a result of the numerous shifts of proprietary rights over land that had occurred since the reign of Andrew II, the laws regulating rules and obligations to the crown or the landowner became unclear. In the course of these succeeding changes people had at times been under the tight control of a new landowner, only to return to the rather loose control of the crown a few years later. Confusion over exactly what were the laws dictating rights and obligations resulted\textsuperscript{218}. After the end of the campaign of restoration Béla redirected his efforts to clarify the obligations that each strata of the society owned to the king\textsuperscript{219}.

In foreign policy Béla IV distanced himself from the far-fetched objectives pursued by his father. Andrew II had involved himself in foreign policy initiatives that took him far beyond Hungary's geo-political region, i.e., his interest in establishing control over Galicia and dynastic connections with Galicia and Aragon. Béla limited his policies to areas of immediate interest to the kingdom and abandoned the pursuit for the Galician throne\textsuperscript{220}, where rivalries among princes and boyars rendered political developments unpredictable\textsuperscript{221}. Hungary's western borders remained quiet after 1235, when rivalries between the duke of Austria and the emperor escalated into armed conflict\textsuperscript{222}. In addition, the emperor's policies in northern Italy put him in a collision course with the pope over the control of the Lombard cities, keeping both the emperor and the pope's attention and resources tied up. Béla directed his attentions to the Northern Balkans, where he had been active as ruler of Transylvania and where he could act with the support of the church. In 1237 Pope Gregory IX invoked Béla to take up arms in a crusade to defend the Latin Empire\textsuperscript{223}. Ever since Czar Ivan II Assen of Bulgaria had
established an alliance with the Nicaean emperor Dukas Vatatzes, the Latin Empire faced enemies on both its northern and southern fronts at the same time. The Latin Empire would have gained some respite if Hungarian forces attacked Czar Ivan II from the rear.

Béla’s response to the pope was ambiguous. He stated that he would not attack Bulgaria or Nicaea, given the fact that both Czar Ivan II and Emperor Dukas Vatatzes were his friends and relatives (Czar Ivan II was married to Béla’s sister, Maria; Emperor Dukas Vatatzes was married to Irene, the sister of King Béla’s wife). Yet Béla IV made clear his willingness to take up arms if the pope would meet certain conditions. King Béla wanted the pope to grant him the office of Papal Legate; he wanted to have the authority to assign a Hungarian bishopric to administer Szörény; he requested the right to command any crusading army crossing Hungarian territory; and he wanted the excommunication declared by the legate during his father’s reign to be declared null and void. Béla IV justified the need for the office of papal legate as being indispensable, as otherwise the Bulgarians would think they were to fall subject to the jurisdiction of Rome rather than that of Hungary, which the Bulgarians "abhor to the point that many of those who could be conquered without effort would resist him." The pope granted all of Béla’s requests with the exception of the office of papal legate. Once negotiations had unfolded the alliance between Czar Ivan and Emperor Dukas broke down. With the end of the alliance, the threat to the Latin Empire diminished and the planned crusade lost its importance. Although Béla had shown interest in involving himself in the Balkans, he had remained reluctant to take military action. Until the Mongol invasion Béla IV did not involve himself in any military activity, and his foreign
policy relied solely on diplomatic means.

It is important to note that as King Béla’s foreign policy differed from his father’s, so did his relationship with the papacy. During Andrew II’s reign attrition with the pope remained commonplace, while the pope wielded substantial influence in Hungarian internal affairs. Béla IV did not, however, allow papal interference in domestic policy, while he managed to keep a harmonious relationship with the Holy See. One of the reasons for this new relationship was the fact that the pope’s attention had turned to the conflicts with the Holy Roman Emperor over the control of the Lombard cities. An illustration of the change in the nature of the relationship with the pope is the fact that Béla never answered the pope’s letters from 1236 that (still) insisted that the Teutonic Knights should be welcomed back to Hungary. Béla IV, furthermore, supported the emperor in his conflict with the pope, and in a letter warned the pontiff that “great problems arise if the pope interferes in issues concerning the princes.” Moreover, in 1238 Béla received the right to borrow money from Jews and Saracens alike. (Four years earlier Andrew II had been excommunicated for having borrowed money from them). Yet, that Béla had asked for the right to borrow money is also evidence that the kingdom was still struggling with economic difficulties in 1238; this indicates that the reversal of the Novae Institutiones and the restoration of royal properties did not automatically solve the financial woes of the kingdom. If in fact the kingdom’s financial situation were still bleak, it becomes easier to understand Béla’s reluctance to take up arms against Bulgaria in an attempt to expand the Kingdom’s territory into the northern Balkans.

Although the foreign policy front remained quiet until 1238, events taking place in the east were to change the situation. In the beginning of 1236 following
a kuriltai in Karakorum the Mongol leaders decided to expand their control over the Russian principalities, from whence they would later attack Europe. Their advance began in the end of 1236, and in their path they encountered the Cumans under the leadership of chieftain Kuten, who suffered yet another defeat to the Mongol forces.

After his latest defeat, Kuten, faced the choice of either being destroyed by the Mongols or moving further westward. Moving further westward, however, meant entering either Polish or Hungarian territory. Accepting the protection of either of the two kingdoms would have implied settling and the consequent loss of his people's nomadic way of life. Chieftain Kuten and a number of his followers chose to move further west. In 1238, once he had moved closer to Hungarian territory, Kuten sent messengers to King Béla asking for permission to enter his kingdom. In return for their relocation and respect for their freedom, i.e., they would not automatically become serfs, he and his people would convert to Christianity and settle.

Following lengthy negotiations, on Easter of 1239 King Béla welcomed Kuten and his people, and in festive mood allowed the Cumans to enter the Kingdom. Béla himself received Kuten with royal pomp and participated in the Cumans' baptismal ceremonies. According to Master Roger, the arrival of the Cumans was an honor to King Béla, considering that a chieftain "almost" equal to the king himself was willing to become his subject. The conversion of a great number of pagans to Christianity represented another victory for Béla, who had been active in the conversion of the Cumans since he had taken over Transylvania. Furthermore, the Cumans' military capability was most certainly taken into account.
in his decision to allow their settlement.

Kuten and his people were at first taken to the central part of the kingdom, but the Cumans did not abandon their nomadic way of life. Hungarians soon filled the royal chancellery with complaints against destruction by the unruly Cumans and their hordes of cattle in cultivated areas\textsuperscript{238}. With the increase of tension between Hungarians and Cumans violence became commonplace\textsuperscript{239}. In addition to complaints against the damage caused by the Cumans' cattle hordes, the Hungarians complained that the king was, seemingly, giving preference to the Cumans whenever they were at the court. While Hungarians had to present their cases to the chancellery, Cumans seemed to have direct access to the king; and in addition Béla was accused of granting them preferential treatment in legal disputes. King Béla's decision to allow entry to the Cumans proved to have brought troublesome consequences to the already unpopular king. In response to the vehement protests, in 1239 Béla met with the nobles of the realm at the monastery of Ko, where it was decided that ispáns of each province would resolve the legal disputes arising from conflicts between Cumans and Hungarians\textsuperscript{240}. In addition, Cuman contingents were to be separated into smaller groups and each would be settled in a specific province of the kingdom, which they would not be allowed to leave. It was hoped that by restricting their ability to move they would cause less damage to farmlands and settle at a faster pace\textsuperscript{241}.

Master Roger argues that the primary reason for Béla's decision to let the Cumans into Hungarian territory was to increase the number of converts, and he argues that only those opposed to Béla claimed he had invited the Cumans to oppress the Hungarians\textsuperscript{242}. But, given the unpopularity of Béla vis-à-vis the nobility,
it is not inconceivable that by allowing the settlement of the Cumans Béla was also
seeking to gain an important ally within the kingdom, to tip the balance of those
in favor and those opposed to the king. This would in part explain the king’s
tolerance towards the Cumans. Finally, we must consider the fact that allowing
foreigners to settle in Hungarian territory was not unprecedented in thirteenth-
century Hungary. Preceding the Cumans, Pechenegs and Iassians from the east and
Germans and French from the west had been welcomed to occupy unpopulated
areas of the kingdom.

Concomitantly with the Cumans’ move westward, the Mongol armies
continued their campaign against the Russian principalities, conquering the Russian
steppes in a sequel to the battle of Kalka in 1223. By the end of 1236 the Mongols
had advanced up to the frontiers of Vladimir and Suzdal, which fell by mid-1237.
In December 1237 Riazan and then Moscow were destroyed. In February 1238
Vladimir fell, and during the summer and winter of 1238-1239 the Mongol army
did not engage in any major military action. After resting their troops for a time,
the Mongols took the initiative in 1239, advancing over the remaining Russian
principalities. The conquest of the Russian steppes was completed in 1240, when
the Mongols conquered the city of Kiev. Once in control of the Russian territories,
the Mongols, led by Batu Khan and General Subedei prepared the campaign against
Hungary. The Mongol campaign would consist of simultaneous attacks on the
southeastern, eastern, and northeastern borders, involving the Kingdom of Hungary
in a pincer movement. To avoid being attacked from the rear, which a Mongol
division invaded Poland. On March 1241 Krakow was burned to the ground, and
on April 9 Liegnitz suffered the same fate when the troops of Henry II, Prince of
Silesia (1238-1241), suffered a disastrous defeat⁴⁶. The Mongol forces began the campaign against Hungary in early 1241, penetrating Hungarian territory on March 12.

Béla seemed oblivious to the mounting threat the Mongols represented, and apparently he realized the magnitude of the threat only after the news of the fall of Kiev had reached him. Yet, Béla must have known of the Mongols’ activities east of the Russian steppes since at least 1237. For that purpose Béla could have counted upon a number of sources, including Dominican missionaries, the Cumans, and the Russian princes themselves who were common guests at Béla’s court.

The earliest evidence European knowledge about the Mongol expansion in Asia date from the late 1170s, when there were rumors in Europe about a certain "Johannes presbiter et rex," later referred to as David. This imaginary monarch was believed to be a mighty Christian king who would come to defeat the Seljuk Turks and liberate Jerusalem⁴⁷. These rumors had no historical foundations⁴⁸. In 1224 the pope received a letter from Georgia and Armenia informing him that these two kingdoms had been defeated by "mali homines Tartari"—which must have been a reference to the reconnaissance campaign waged by General Subedei in 1222-1223, who before crossing the Caucasian mountains defeated Georgia and Armenia, and on the northern foot of the Caucasus defeated the Cumans, to finally engage an alliance of Russian and Cuman forces at the battle of Kalka.

More concrete information was made available to Europe and to Béla IV after 1235, when a Dominican friar by the name of Julian, together with a few others, travelled eastward to confirm the rumors of the existence of Magyar tribes still living in the steppes east of the Volga river. The origin of these rumors is
uncertain, but conceivably it was brought to Hungary by the Cumans, with whom Hungarians were having closer contact since 1227. In 1236, Julian returned from what became known as "Magna Hungaria. Friar Julian travelled to Rome to personally inform the pope of the news he had gathered. His report was later recorded by Friar Ricardus, who mentions that the Mongols were planning a military campaign against Europe, and that their ultimate objective was the conquest of Germany.

In the next year Julian took the road again, planning to begin the conversion of the Magyars he had found east of the Volga. By the time he arrived at Suzdal, however, Julian was informed that "Magna Hungaria" had been annihilated by the Mongols. Julian and his companions returned to Hungary, carrying a letter sent by Batu Khan to Béla IV. In this letter the Khan requested Béla to expel the Cumans from Hungarian territory and to surrender to the Mongol forces. In addition, the letter makes mention of the fact that the Hungarians had mistreated a number of Batu Khan's messengers; this suggests that there had been an exchange of diplomatic messages between the Mongols and King Béla preceding the aforementioned letter. It is unquestionable that at this point Béla had to be aware of the Mongols and their intentions. The question that remains is how seriously he took the message brought by the Dominican friars.

In addition to the information brought by Friar Julian, Béla IV must have known about the Mongols from the Russian princes, who had visited the Hungarian court in search for support or refuge a number of times after 1223. In the late 1230s Rostislav, Prince of Kiev, abandoned his city due to the Mongol threats and went to Hungary with the intention of marrying one of King Béla's daughters.
Closer dynastic ties could have become the basis of an alliance of Hungarian and Russian forces against the Mongols. Yet, Rostislav left Hungary empty-handed (he did marry Béla’s daughter Anna, but only in 1243\(^{256}\)). In 1240, Daniel, who had taken over Kiev from Rostislav, also visited the Hungarian court, with similar intentions. It was during his stay in Hungary that Daniel received news that Kiev had fallen to the Mongol forces. Daniel returned to home empty-handed as well\(^{255}\).

King Béla’s lack of interest in establishing dynastic connections with the Russian princes before 1242 has been interpreted as evidence that he did not take the Mongol threat seriously\(^{256}\).

The first evidence of Béla’s reacting to the advancing Mongols, thus indicating that he had understood that they indeed represented a military threat to Hungary, is available after he received news about the fall of Kiev, in 1240\(^{257}\). At that juncture Béla hastily began to organize the defense of the kingdom. Dénes Türje, one of the king’s favorite supporters and his best general, was sent to protect the northwestern passes of the Carpathian mountains\(^{258}\), while the king himself travelled around the eastern borders to oversee the work of blocking the major roads\(^{259}\). In early 1241 Béla issued a warning to all the provinces to remain ready for war and remain prepared to mobilize to the city of Buda\(^{260}\).

As it was alluded in earlier chapters, the social consequences of the *Novae Institutiones* had a pivotal impact upon the Hungarian army and its capacity to mobilize. Preceding the *Novae Institutiones* the main body of the Hungarian army was based on the troops provided by the provinces led by their respective ispáns. As a result of the *Novae Institutiones*, however, most of the land under the control of the ispáns had been donated into private hands—which did not owe military
service to the king—and as a result considerably reduced the provinces’ fighting capabilities. Once the landowners did not till royal lands but, rather, lived independently from the provincial administration (because of the donations) the army lost a substantial portion of its fighting capability. Béla’s efforts to dismantle the Novae Institutiones and its consequences resulted in the existence of two distinct military systems: one based on military obligations owed to the ispáns, and the other consisting of military obligations owed directly to the king by those who had received land. But the latter had not become sufficiently widespread a practice to make a noticeable impact on the hasty mobilization of forces needed in 1241, while the former was still struggling with financial difficulties. Many of the nobles required to mobilize in 1241 had been severely impoverished by the restoration of royal properties, while others must have invested in weaponry with reluctance, given the uncertainty of their control over land. Such reluctance is understandable considering the high costs of acquiring heavy armor coupled with a period of economic difficulties. In short, the military system that existed in the time of Andrew II was not functional any longer, while the military system that would have resulted from King Béla’s reform policies was not yet functional. The numbers that aggregated in Buda were not all the men King Béla should have counted upon had either of the two systems been working properly.

In addition to the systemic problems of the army, Béla IV was an unpopular king. He had offended the aristocracy when he assumed the throne by having severely punished his father’s advisors. He had changed the relationship between the crown and the nobles with the creation of the chancellery, as well as by having forbidden them to sit down in royal meetings and burning their chairs. Furthermore,
King Béla’s unpopularity stemmed from the welcome and the treatment the Cumans had received. The most important cause for resentment between the king and his nobles was the restoration of royal properties which Béla had waged with such severity \textsuperscript{263}. The most powerful and influential nobles had lost substantial amount of land, and with it their wealth and influence. When it came time for the urgent mobilization of forces the nobles moved with neither enthusiasm nor appropriate haste. In fact, Master Roger specifically refers to the fact that the news about the Mongol advance was taken as a hoax by some, while others thought to blame the hated Cumans for the incoming Mongol attack \textsuperscript{264}. Furthermore, there were those who saw the Mongol attack as an opportunity to have their king humbled, wishing to see him "lose once." \textsuperscript{265} Regardless of what the popular sentiments were, the fact is that everyone, including Béla himself, had underestimated the might of the Mongols.

Even after a messenger sent by Dénes Türije arrived at Buda informing the king that the Mongols had arrived and that Türije’s forces would not be able to resist the attack for long, King Béla remained hesitant on what course of action to take \textsuperscript{266}. On March 15 Dénes Türije himself returned from his border post with the news that he had been defeated by the advancing Mongol forces \textsuperscript{267}. Action on the part of King Béla became urgent, who now ordered his forces to gather in Buda. On March 15, 1241, knowing that the Mongols had penetrated Hungarian territory, Béla summoned all his forces to Buda, whence the defence of the kingdom would be organized. Together with his highest officials and supporters, including the Cuman chieftain Kuten, King Béla tried to conceive a plan of defense against the Mongol armies \textsuperscript{268}. 

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Among the forces that attended the royal summons concentrated at Pest were the Cuman light cavalrymen, led by their chieftain Kuten. Given the Cumans’ unpopularity among the Hungarians and the existence of rumors suggesting that the Cumans were Mongol allies who had entered the kingdom to spy on the Hungarians, tensions arose among the troops. Worsening the tense situation, King Béla hesitated on the course of action to be taken. Apparently he wanted to wage a defensive campaign by keeping the majority of his forces in Pest waiting for the main Mongol army to come closer. Yet the Archbishop of Kalocsa favored a counter-attack. Béla’s hesitant attitude worsened the already explosive situation.

By March 17 advanced Mongol reconnaissance forces arrived in Buda. Although King Béla had issued orders that they should not be attacked, both Archbishop Ugrin of Kalocsa and the Austrian Duke Frederick—who had come with a few men in response to King Béla’s pleas for help—disobeyed the king’s orders. In their feeble counter attack against the Mongols the archbishop was tricked into a marshy area and was almost killed, while the Duke of Austria succeeded in killing a few Mongol horsemen. Despite his success, he returned to Austria with his men. The duke’s apparent easy victory increased the anxiety of the troops already dissatisfied with the king’s lack of action against an enemy reckoned to be no match against the Hungarians. The duke’s condescending attitude sparked a rebellion in King Béla’s troops. By the time the mutiny was over chieftain Kuten and his family had been killed, and the Cuman contingent abandoned Béla’s army and left the Kingdom of Hungary. In their path toward the northern Balkans, the Cumans left a trail of destruction. Facing the pressure from his close advisors and the growing tension in his camp, King Béla issued marching orders towards the
northeast, where the main body of enemy troops were believed to be concentrated. But at this juncture the Hungarian army had already lost the forces of Dénes Türje (defeated by the Mongols in the mountain passes), of Bulcsu, Bishop of Csanád, and Miklos, son of Barc (destroyed by the fleeing Cumans\(^{275}\)), Benedek, Bishop of Várad (defeated near Eger\(^{277}\)), Posa, Voivod of Transylvania (defeated by the Mongols at an undetermined location, before the battle of Muhi), and of László, ispán of Somogy (who did not arrive on time at Buda for the mobilization of forces)\(^{278}\).

The two armies met at the plains of Muhi, on the margins of the river Sajó. The battle lasted through the night of April 21, 1241, and although Batu Khan considered retreating at one point, General Subedei’s men succeeded in crossing the river in a ford upstream. The Hungarian camp was surrendered and Béla’s forces were soundly defeated. The disastrous battle of Muhi was followed by a year-long occupation\(^{279}\). While the Kingdom suffered heavy losses, the King himself barely escaped the tireless Mongol pursuers in his flight towards the Dalmatian coast\(^{280}\).

Batu Khan and his forces left Hungarian territory in 1242 just as swiftly and surprisingly as they had invaded the kingdom. Béla IV then faced the monumental task of rebuilding the kingdom, and for his accomplishment he became known as the Second Founder of Hungary.

When he took the throne in 1235 Béla IV dedicated his efforts to reverse his father’s policies and to restore the power and prestige of the crown. In the process he lost the support of a significant segment of the aristocracy, which resented the king’s aims and methods. Yet support of the aristocracy is what Béla needed the most, once he recognized the danger the Mongols represented to the
Kingdom. In fact, Béla, as well as Europe in general, failed to recognize the significance of the Mongol expansionist policies. Without the support due to him from the nobility, and amidst a major change in the principles of military obligation, the Kingdom of Hungary was attacked—at the worst possible time. The kingdom's defenses were wholly inadequate, and the fighting ability of the Hungarian armies were no match for the seasoned Mongol warriors. Furthermore, King Béla was no able general, and his hesitation in Buda cost him both time and the important alliance with the Cumans.

The devastation caused by the year-long Mongol presence in Hungary rendered all of King Béla's reforms obsolete. After 1242 the entire kingdom was under the control of the crown, but there was no one left to till the soil. As a result King Béla was forced to donate land on a large scale to hasten the process of repopulating the Kingdom. The Cumans were also invited to return to Hungary, and large numbers of them were settled in the central plains of Hungary where the devastation caused by the Mongols had been the most severe. Béla thereafter became obsessed with the possibility of a second Mongol attack. Vowing not to be taken by surprise a second time, he invested substantial resources to in enhancing the defenses of the Kingdom.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

As demonstrated in the previous chapters, King Béla’s political activities were an important element in the dynamics that rendered the Hungarian defenses ineffective against the Mongol armies. Although credit must be given to the strategy employed by Batu Khan and General Subedei, one can conclude that if there were a propitious moment to invade Hungary, then 1242 was one of the best. As the Mongols had done in their campaigns against the Russian principalities, in Hungary also they took advantage of unstable domestic conditions to overwhelm the defenders.

The causes for Hungary’s inability to defend itself can be traced through the course of events. The economic reforms inaugurated by King Andrew II left the military establishment severely weakened, while crippling the kingdom’s finances. Béla IV’s efforts to correct the problems inherited from his father had not been effective enough to resist the Mongol onslaught. The aim of the reforms might have been correct, but by 1241 the results had not yet come to fruition. The army was in transition toward a feudal system of military service, but in 1241 it was not yet functional, while the previous system was no longer functional.

The first half of the thirteenth century is marked by the conflict between the aristocracy and the crown. Throughout Andrew II’s reign the aristocracy had the upper hand, but once Béla IV took power he reversed the power balance. Ironically,
in 1241 the asset Béla needed most was a powerful aristocracy with the resources to mobilize a large army. Once King Béla assumed the throne, however, one of his most important objectives was to increase the power of the crown, which had lost much of its leverage during his father's reign. Ultimately, Béla's policies alienated the highest stratum of society, which in 1241 did not give the king its full support. The events of 1241 show that the king was neither able to wield the necessary authority to summon his troops swiftly to Pest nor to demonstrate the necessary leadership required by the occasion.

The condescending attitude of the Hungarian forces toward the Mongols stems, in part, from the dissatisfaction they had toward the king, whose political and financial reforms conflicted with the interests of the most powerful strata of society—the aristocracy and the clergy. Yet, one has also to consider King Béla's dismissive attitude toward the numerous signs indicating that there was an impending military invasion against his realm. Notwithstanding the evidence, Béla IV failed to take urgent action to bolster the defenses of the kingdom.

During this study of the early reign of King Béla IV, a number of additional important themes deserving further exploration have emerged. Among them is King Béla's role in the signing of the Golden Bulls of 1222 and 1231. In these two years his precise whereabouts are not clear, and the influence he might have wielded in the course of events is equally obscure, though potentially important. In addition, King Béla's relationship with the papal legate, Jacob of Pecorare, deserves further attention. Despite the enmity between Andrew II and Béla the legate does not seem to have sought the latter's support—rather he had Béla sign the Agreement of Bereg as well. The reason for the lack of formal contact between King Béla and...
the legate may reveal much about Béla’s attitudes toward the policies being pursued by the Curia against Andrew II.

In addition, the role of Saracens in medieval Hungary needs further research. Few Hungarian or papal sources provide information about this group, who obviously had a most important role to play in the financial administration of the Kingdom. Their precise origin (Persians, Arabs, Moors?), their numbers, and their legal status in Hungary are not yet researched. Answers to these questions would be of utmost importance in understanding the extent of medieval Hungary’s connections with the Middle (and Far) East.

Related to the financial administration of the kingdom lies the question of whence did Andrew II derived his ideas for the Novae Institutiones. Furthermore, what did the Novae Institutiones attempt to achieve? Was Andrew II simply manipulated by a fraction of his retinue to donate land, or was there, in fact, a consistent plan to reform the financial institutions of the kingdom, as has been assumed by historians? If in fact the Novae Institutiones were a premeditated attempt to change the existing financial institutions, the origins of the plan and its place in European economic history are intriguing and await further study.
ENDNOTES

1. "Cum ad regie celsitudinis munificentia nullis terminis cohecetur, sed optima in principe donandi mensura immensitas iudicetur, precipua tamen est erga benemeritos circumspectio adhibenda, ne quis apud illum sui laboris premio defraudetur, qui sue liberalitatis beneficia etiam ad extraneos usque potentindit." Emericus Szentpétery, ed., Regesta regum stirpis arpadianae critico-diplomatica (Budapest: 1923), vol. 1, 237.

2. For more details see Emma Bartoniek, "Az Árpádok trónkövetelési joga," Századok (1926): 785-841.


14. This is the principle of the Patriarchal Kingship. For more details see: Gyula Kristó, Feudális széttagolódás magyarországon, (Budapest: 1984).
15. These donations were made as a reward, i.e., for past military actions, and not in return for future obligations. For more details see György Székely ed., *Magyarország története* (Budapest: 1987), 1299.


19. In 1231 the church reversed its loss of political leverage, by gaining the right to oppose the king in his decisions, as well as by gaining privileges in the legal system whereby the lay court would have no jurisdiction over church matters. Furthermore, the bishops obtained the right to punish members of the nobility who occupied church properties. See Nándor Knauz, ed., *II Endre szabadságévelei* (Pest: 1869), 39, 42, 44. See also Székely György, ed., *Magyarország története* (Budapest: 1987), 1355.


28. A number of historians have attributed the title of *rex junior* to King Béla between the years of 1214 and 1235, but as Gyula Kristó (Gyula Kristó, *Feudalis széttagolódás magyarországon* [Budapest: 1979], 68.) points out, there is no reference to King Béla as "junior rex" in any of the existing primary sources. Hungarian scholars have chosen to refer to King Béla previous to his coronation of 1235 as "ifíabb" king, which in English can be translated as either "younger" or "junior". To avoid confusion with the Latin title "junior rex" I shall avoid the use of qualifying adjectives, though it should remain clear that between 1214 and 1235...
there were two kings in Hungary who reigned over distinct areas of the realm and were not co-rulers.


31. Andrew II's voyage to the Holy Land has been called a "crusade", although it was more a private military expedition encouraged by the pope. In his letters to the pope Andrew II refers to the voyage as his "peregrinationis", hence the idiom used in this work. Augustino Theiner, Vetera monumenta historica hungariam sacram illustrantia (Onasbriick: 1968), vol. 1, no. 5, 4. See also: Zoltán Kosztolnyik, "Triumphs of Ecclesiastical Politics in the 1231 Decretum of Andrew II of Hungary", edited by John Sommerfeld, Memorial Volume in Honor of Professor L.J. Lekai on His 75th Birthday (Forhtcoming).


38. Gyula Kristó, Az aranybullák évszázada (Budapest: 1976), 47. The author argues that a segment of the aristocracy had close access to members of the royal family by the means of being their educators; an example is Dénes Türje, who was to
become one of the most important officials in Béla's court. See also Elemér Mályus, "A karizmátkus királyság," Társadalomtudomány 3 (1934): 167.


42. Gyula Kristó, Az aranybullák évszázada (Budapest: 1976), 56.


44. "...usque dum quorundam nostrum principium consilio terre nostre statum ab antiquis illibatis conservatum, alterantis, castra, comitatus, terras et ceteros tocius opulensis Hungariae provenus in perpetuas hereditates nostris baronis et militibus distribuimus..." Ferdinandus Knauz, ed., Monumenta ecclesia strigoniensis (Esztergom: 1874), vol. 1, 216-217. In György Székely, ed., Magyarország története (Budapest: 1987), 1310. Kristó Gyula points to the fact that the reference to the Novae Institutiones being made in the past tense is evidence that the king had reconsidered his policy of land donations.


46. Emericus Szentpétery, ed., Regesta regum stirpis arpadianae criticus-diplomatica (Budapest: 1923), vol. 1, 312. See also Mór Wertner, Negyedik Béla király története (Temesvár: 1893), 12.

47. Peter of Courtenay was emperor for less than a year. After his death his wife Jolante became the regent until 1219. George Osztrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State (New Jersey: 1969), 433.


49. Emericus Szentpétery, ed., Regesta regum stirpis arpadianae criticus-diplomatica (Budapest: 1923), vol. 1, 354. The granting of the governorship to the archbishop is evidence that King Andrew had changed his mind in regard to the Novae Institutiones.

51. The precise date of his return is not known, but he must have returned before his marriage with Maria Laskaris in 1220. Georgii Fejér, ed., *Codex diplomaticus hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis* (Buda: 1829), vol. 3, 388. See also Mór Wertner, *Négyedik Béla király története* (Temesvár: 1893), 14.

52. This marriage never occurred, and Prince Andrew married a member of the Russian nobility in the late 1220s.


54. Augustino Theiner, ed., *Vetera monumenta historica hungariae sacrae illustrantia* (Onasbrück: 1968), vol. 1, 20-21 in Andrew II's letter to the pope. See also Gyula Pauler, *A magyar nemzet története* (Budapest: 1899), 70. Szabolcs Vajay, "Dominae reginae milites. Arpád-házi Jolánta magyarjai Valencia visszavéttele idején" in *Társadalom és művészet történetei tanulmányok. Mányusz Elemér emlékkönyv* (Budapest: 1984). Vajay argues that Andrew II's dynastic connections with the Latin Empire, Nicaea, Armenia, and Bulgaria was a sound policy based on the principle of the "archiregnum Hungariae". This assumes that some sort of union of the parts would have been feasible. Such a proposal, however, does not seem to take into consideration the political realities of the Balkan Peninsula, which renders such hypothesis unrealistic.


56. "... et licet per multa viarum dispendia transeundes, cum in Hungaria pervenimus multa ampliora perfide scelera, quam prius audiveramus, tam per ecclesiasticas quam laicales personas compertimus esse perpetrata, que vel qualia nullatemus per nostra scripta sanctitati vellemus innotescere: nam pro patrati magnitude faciortis a vestre circumspectionis intuitu nullatemus fuisse credimus occultata. Noverit etiam vestra sanctitas, quod cum in Hungariam pervenimus, non Hungaram sed tantum angariatam atque dissipatam et cunctis nisi fidelis spolia spoliatam reperimus, ita videlicet quod nec debita, quibus in nostre peregrinationis itinere fuimus obligati, persolvere nec usque ad quindecim annum regnum nostrum pristino statu poterimus reformare" Augustino Theiner, ed., *Vetera monumenta historica hungariae sacrae illustrantia* (Onasbrück: 1968), vol. 1, 20. See also György Székely, ed., *Magyarország története* (Budapest: 1987), 1312. Gyula Kristó argues that during the king's absence the conflict between those in favor and those opposed to the *Novae Institutiones* became progressively more violent. The fact that the archbishop of Esztergom, then appointed governor of Hungary, had to leave the country suggests that those favoring the *Novae Institutiones* gained the upper hand in this conflict.

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58. In György Székely, ed., Magyarország története (Budapest: 1987), 1313, Gyula Kristó, argues that the moderation on the part of Andrew II in donating land is a sign of the mounting economic problems the king faced from his bankrupt treasury.

59. István Rákos, "IV Béla birtokrestaurációs politikája," Acta Universitatis Szegedienensis 47 (1974): 6. The author argues that since the Novae Institutiones was the result of the advice of "a selected few" Andrew II was probably under pressure to act according to the interests of a small group that forced him to donate royal properties. See also Ferdinandus Knauz, ed., Monumenta ecclesiae strigoniensis (Esztergom: 1874), vol. 1, 216.


62. Gyula Kristó, Az aranybullák ószázada (Budapest: 1976), 47. See also Gyula Kristó, Feudális széttagolódás magyarországon (Budapest: 1979), 47; where the author points to the fact that the presence of another king had granted the opportunity to those who refused to obey the one, to seek allegiance with the other. But real power came when Béla received autonomous land where he appointed his own chancellery and ruled over an independent court.

63. Bánat is the general term applied to military and administrative units on the frontier territories of the Kingdom of Hungary.

64. In 1224 the Ispán of Somogy supported King Andrew (Emericus Szentpétery, ed., Regesta regum stirpis arpadiana critico-diplomatica [Budapest: 1923], vol. 1, 406), but in the following year he is to be found in Béla’s camp (Ibid., 575). In 1231 the bishops of Esztergom and of Kalocsa supported Béla (Ibid., 597), although they were both officers of King Andrew (Ibid., 269, 471, 501).


67. The provost of Zagreb was his chancellor; the bán was Salamon; the Lord chief of the treasury was Pausa; the Master of the horse was János; the warden of the king was András; the Master cup bearer was Bogomer. See Emericus Szentpétery, ed., Regesta regum stirpis arpadiana critico-diplomatica (Budapest: 1923), vol. 1, 572-577 for Béla’s court officials in Slavonia. See also: György Székely, ed., Magyarország története (Budapest: 1987), 1337-38.

69. "Digum est et omni rationi consentaneum ut hi qui principibus suum pro tempore exibent obsequium, sui laboris premio non fraudentur, precipue ut alii eorum exemplo ad indefesse fideltatis constantiam animentur, quo sui laboris premia viderint assecutos. Hinc est, quod Radus et frater eius Zorian...quibus eciam terram Klokoche perpetua donavimus libertate...". T. Smičiklas, ed., *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae* (Zagreb: 1906), vol. 3, no. 213, 238.

70. Béla’s first diploma dates to 1220, in which for the first time he claims the title of king ("In nomine sancte trinitatis et individe unitatis. Béla dei gratia Hungarie, Croacie, Dalmacie, Seruie, Lodomerique, illustissimi regis Andree filius, rex in perpetuum"). 1220, T. Smičiklas, ed., *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae* (Zagreb: 1906), vol. 3, 186. See also Emericus Szentpétery, ed., *Regesta regum stirpis arpadianae critico-diplomatica* (Budapest: 1923), vol. 1, 567. Unfortunately, no diploma survives from 1221; however, in 1222 Béla already claimed both the title of king and control over the principality of Slavonia (Béla dei gratia rex, filius regis Ungariae et dux totus Slavonie").

71. Emericus Szentpétery, ed., *Regesta regum stirpis arpadianae critico-diplomatica* (Budapest: 1923), vol. 1, 357, 358, 359. See also: István Rákos, "IV Béla birtokrestaurációs politikája," *Acta Universitatis Szegediensis* 47 (1974): 9. The author argues that in 1220-1221 King Andrew for the first time made changes in his land policy. Orders were issued to restor all land taken away from the king illegally, which, did not, however, include the perpetual donations. This move still falls short of what the archbishop of Esztergom had been pressing Andrew to do, but it was a precedent which was ceased by Béla in 1228. This argument is based on the dating of the *Decretalis Intellecto* to 1220 (Augustino Theiner, ed., *Vetera monumeta historica hungaria sacrae inllustrantia* [Onasbrück: 1968], vol. 1, 60). However, György Bonis convincingly points to the fact that the *Decretalis* was issued in 1225 instead of the previously believed date of 1220. See György Bonis, "Decretalis Intellecto (III Honorius a koronajavak elidegeníthetetlenségéről)," *Történelmi Szemle* 18 (1974): 24-31.

72. Although the higher nobility was a direct beneficiary of the *Novae Institutiones*, the lower nobility was not. For as long as the property where they lived pertained to the king, their administrative connections were very loose; and thus they enjoyed a number of privileges that were lost once the property passed into the hands of a member of the higher nobility, which considered them their vassals.


79. See chapter 5 below.

80. This is evidenced by the officials of his court, who were present at the signing of the decrees of donations. Among these officials the most important is Bán Jula (or Gyula), see Emericus Szentpétery, ed., *Regesta regum stirpis arpadianae critico-diplomatica* (Budapest: 1923), vol. 1, 402, 403. See also: György Székely, ed., *Magyarország története* (Budapest: 1987), 1332.

81. "...terram Pzer...contulibus iure hereditario in perpetuum possidendum". Augustino Theiner, ed., *Vetera monumenta historica hungariae sacram illustrantia* (Onasbrück: 1968), vol. 1, 85. It is noteworthy that this was also a perpetual donation.

82. "...cuius (the bishop of Zagreb) discretionem procurante prae ceteris Regni primatibus discordia inter patrem nostrum et nos olim exorta, et ad inextimabile Regni detrimentum suberescens est ad concordiam revocata, et universa gens variis perturbationum procellis fluctuans in pace". 1222. Augustino Theiner, ed., *Vetera monumenta historica hungariae sacram illustrantia* (Onasbrück: 1968), vol. 1, 85.

83. Augustino Theiner, ed., *Vetera monumenta historica hungariae sacram illustrantia* (Onasbrück: 1968), vol. 1, 20. (end of 1220) King Andrew informs the pope that he had brought Princess Maria from Nicaea to Hungary. Ibid., vol. 1. 33. (May 28, 1222), and ibid., vol. 1, 42. (early 1223), the Hungarian bishops in a report to the pope mention the fact that Béla had lived with his wife for two years already. See also Mór Wertner, *Negyedik Béla király története* (Temesvár: 1893), 14.


86. "...vir legitimam, cui postquam ad etatem legitimam uterque pervenerat, per biennium et amplius cohabitarat, ut diximus, in totius regni scandalum et subversionem religionis christianae dimisit uxorem...". 1222 Augustino Theiner, ed., *Vetera monumenta historica hungariae sacram illustrantia* (Onasbrück: 1968), vol. 1, 42.


92. Mór Wertner, *Négyedik Béla király története* (Temesvár: 1893), 16, offers this explanation to the crisis between Béla and his father in 1222. Gyula Pauler, *A magyar nemzet története* (Budapest: 1899), 76, suggests that the attempt to divorce Maria is connected with the Golden Bull and the respective political changes. László Szalay, *Magyarország története* (Pest: 1861), 15, argues that the divorce resulted from Maria’s political activities against Andrew II regarding the donation of royal properties. Given King Andrew’s earlier interests for the throne of the Byzantine Empire, and the immature age of Queen Maria - which renders her political aspirations questionable - we consider Wertner’s theory for the causes of the attempted divorce the most plausible.


102. "...pro ipso intrepide personam et res suas expositum et periculis, ei adheserit et habentum ipsius ut domini tui custodiam et curam et sollicitudinem exercendo. Quia vero incepientibus, sed perseveretibus corona debetur, nobilitatem tuam monemus, atque per apostolica scripta mandamus, quatemus in fide ac devotione ipsius persistens." Augustino Theiner, ed., *Vetera monumenta historica hungariam sacram illustrantia* (Onasbrück: 1968), vol. 1, 44.


104. "...emulationes existerent, et alii seminarent discordias inter ipsos, cum per hoc regni tranquillitas turbaretur, ex quo gravia inde pericula pervenirent". Augustino Theiner, ed., *Vetera monumenta historica hungariam sacram illustrantia* (Onasbrück: 1968), vol. 1, 49, 101. See also György Székely, ed., *Magyarország története* (Budapest: 1987), 1336 Gyula Kristó argues that Béla's estrangement from his wife, and the crisis that followed, was used by the nobility which manipulated the two kings to further their own interests.


106. "...caritatis intuitu quandam terram, Borza nomine, ultra silvas versus Cumanus licet desertam et inhabitatum, contulimus pacifice inhabitandum, et in perpetuum libere possidendam...et parentum nostrum coram summo Deo deportetur...et ad munimen Regni contra Cumanos Castra linea et Urbes ligneas construere eos permittimus...liberos denarios et pondera eis remissimus". Augustino Theiner, ed., *Vetera monumenta historica hungariam sacram illustrantia* (Onasbrück: 1968), vol. 1, 95.

107. "Concessimus etiam liberalitate regia, quatemus sales suos, ubiqueque locorum regni nostri voluerint, etiam usque Dravam, exceptis confiniis, liber et sine omni tributo venditioni possint exponere et alienare iuxta eorum propriam voluntatem". Augustino Theiner, ed., *Vetera Monumenta historica hungariam sacram illustrantia* (Onasbrück: 1968), vol. 1, 17, 25. and also "...et alius fratribus ibidem
commorantibus recepti fuimus, constituimus predicto Castro centum marcas de
proventibus salium nostrorum in Scelasche". Augustino Theiner, ed., *Vetera
monumenta historica hungariae sacram illustrantium* (Onasbrück: 1968). vol. 1, 18,
26. See also János Illésy, "Törekvések a német lovagrend meghonosítására
története* (Budapest: 1987), 1338.

108. "...quod cum tuorum domus terram Borze pia liberalitate donasses...per quam
Cumanis Regum Hungarie multiplicier perturbantibus frequens introitus et exitus
habebatur..." Augustino Theiner, ed., *Vetera monumenta historica hungariae sacram
illustrantium* (Onasbrück: 1968), vol. 1, no. 170, 96. See also: László Makkai, *A
Milkói (Kún) püspökség és népei* (Debrecen: 1936), 14.


110. Augustino Theiner, ed., *Vetera monumenta historica hungariae sacram
illustrantium* (Onasbrück: 1968), vol. 1, no. 64, 135. Having been expelled from
Hungary the German Knights went to Prussia and Poland, while with their departure
the conversion of the Cumans was left to the Dominican friars. For more details


112. Augustino Theiner, ed., *Vetera monumenta historica hungariae sacram
illustrantium* (Onasbrück: 1968), vol. 1, no. 60, 126, and 127. Augustus Potthast, ed.,
*Regesta pontificum romanorum* (Graz: 1957), vol. 1, no. 7466, 643. See also

113. "...Illustris Rex Ungarie, pater tuus, alienationes quasdam fecerit in preiudicium
Regni sui et contra Regis honorem, nos super hoc paterna affectione consulere
cupientes, eodem Regi dirigimus scripta nostra, ut alienationes predictas, non
obstante iuramento, si quod fecit de non revocandis eisdem, studeat revocare, quod
cum teneatur, et in coronatione sua iuraverit etiam iura Regni sui in honorem
corone illibata servare: illicitum profecto fuit, si præstitit de non revocandis
alienationibus huimusmodi iuramento..." 1225. Augustino Theiner, ed., *Vetera
monumenta historica hungariae sacram illustrantium* (Onasbrück: 1968), vol. 1, no.
60, 126.

114. Georgii Fejér, ed., *Codex diplomaticus hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis*
(Buda: 1829), vol. 3, 294.


argues that Béla's move was solely the result of the threat King Andrew felt from
his son's growing political leverage.


120. Homán Bálint and Gyula Szekfű, *Magyar történet* (Budapest: 1935), 503, argues that by granting Béla control over Transylvania, Andrew avoided having to revert his policies as Béla and the pope had been urging him to do after 1225. László Szalay, *Magyarország története* (Pest: 1861), 18, argues that once King Andrew granted Slavonia to Prince Kálmán he took Béla to his side and initiated the restoration of royal properties with the help of his son. The available evidence discredits this suggestion, given the fact that the first charters of restoration of royal properties were issued only after 1228—see Emericus Szentpétery, ed., *Regesta regum stirpis arpadianae critico-diplomatica* (Budapest: 1923), 444.


123. Among the officials in Transylvania who had moved with King Béla were Matias, provost of Zagreb, his Chancellor, Pös of the house of Csák; Csák of the house of Csák; and Gyula of the house of Rátot. See Emericus Szentpétery, ed., *Regesta regum stirpis arpadianae critico-diplomatica* (Budapest: 1923), vol. 1, 582, 583, 586.


125. Viktor Szombathelyi and Gyula László, eds., *Magyarról lett keleti népek* (Pécs: 1988), 148. During this time the Cumans established dynastic connections with the Russian principalities, and changed their succession principles, from seniority to primogeniture.


130. Augustus Potthast, ed., Regesta pontificum romanorum (Graz: 1957), vol. 1, no. 8152, 703. See also Ferent Ioan A kúnok és püspökségük (Budapest: 1981), 123; László Makkai, A milkói (Kún) püspökség és népei (Debrecen: 1936), 12; and Konrád Szántó, A katolikus egyház története (Esztergom: 1982), 399.

131. Ferent Ioan, A kúnok és püspökségük (Budapest: 1981), 124. László Makkai, A milkói (Kún) püspökség (Debrecen: 1936), 15, suggests that after the defeat at Kalka the Cumans sought to establish friendlier relations with the Hungarian Kingdom, thus explaining the success of the later Dominican missions.

132. The city of Milkov was located in the proximity of the modern town of Odobesti. It was destroyed by the Mongols in 1241-1242.


134. "...et quia magis fructicare poteris, si apostolice sedis legatione fungaris, cum auctoritas semper consueverit multum favoris habere in Cumanorum et Brodnicorum provinciis sibi vicinis, de quorum gentis conversione speratus, legationis officium tibi committere dignaremur, per quod habeas potestatem in eisdem terris vice nostra predicanti, baptizanti, edificanti ecclesias, ordinari clericos, nec non et creandi episcopos, et generaliter omnia, que ad cultum et ampliationem fidei pertinent, exercendi". Augustino Theiner, ed., Vetera monumenta historica hungariae sacrae illustrantia (Onasbriect: 1968), vol. 1, no. 167, 93.


137. Pauler Gyula, A magyar nemzet története (Budapest: 1899), 98, in 1226 King Béla and King Andrew issued a Golden Bull assuring the Cumans their freedom and that they would not be oppressed if converted to Christianity.

138. "...tuis precibus benignius annuentes, te ac successores tuos a cuius libet subiectione preter quam Romani Pontificis liberos esse dicernibus, et immediate ad iurisdictionem sedis apostolice pertinere..." Augustino Theiner, ed., Vetera monumenta historica hungariae sacrae illustrantia (Onasbriect: 1968), vol. 1, no. 90, 161. Augustus Potthast, ed., Regesta pontificum romanorum (Graz: 1957), vol. 1, no. 8454, 726. See also: Ferent Ioan, A kúnok és püspökségük (Budapest: 1981), 141-142, Ioan sees this action as evidence that Béla was exerting too much control over the Cumans, who probably threatened to abandon their newly acquired faith.

139. "Collomanus dei gratia Rutenorum rex ex largitate gloriosi patris nostri Andree Ungarorum regis dux Dalmacie atque Croatië ad partes descendissemus

140. Gyula Kristó, Feudális szétagolódás magyarországon (Budapest 1979), 48, 51; it is important to note that such division of the kingdom never became an institution. The principality of Transylvania was abolished as soon as Béla was crowned in 1235, while the principality of Slavonia was abolished after the death of Prince Kálmán in 1241. The administration of Transylvania returned to the hands of the Voivod, and the administration of Slavonia, to the hands of the Bán.

141. The Bugomils were heretics whose beliefs were drawn from the Albigensians. Their activities centered in the region of the northern Balkans and expanded northwards on the Adriatic coast.


145. Pál Engel, Beilleszkedés Európában a kezdettől 1440-ig. Magyarok Europában (Budapest: 1990), 212.


147. In 1234 Bishop Theodore informed the pope about the activities of monks of the eastern rite: "In Cumanorum Episcopatu... existentunt... quae huic nomini sunt inimica. Nam romanam Ecclesiam contemnentes, non venerabili fratre nostro episcopo Cumanorum, qui loci Diaecesanus existit sed a quibusdam pseudoepiscopis, Graecorum ritum tenentibus...". Georgii Fejér, ed., Codex diplomaticus hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis (Buda: 1829), vol. 3, 399. See also Ferent Ioan, A kúnok és püspökségük (Budapest: 1981), 140.


150. "Noverit igitur praesens generatio et eiusdem in posterum tota successio, quod cum per inofficiosas munificencias, et liberalitatis immensias, a nobis factas, iura comitatum plurium destituta intellexistissemus, et seniora usi consilio ad ea in pristinum statum reformanda, et redintegranda circumspectione debita et sollicitudine diligenti animatemus, universas inutiles et superfulas donationes karissimo primogenito nostro, Bele regi, nostra auctoritate commisimus revocandas, concessa eidem a nobis in hac parte plenitudine potestatis". Georgii Fejér, ed., Codex diplomaticus hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis (Buda: 1829), vol. 2, 204.

151. "...superfusas et inutiles donationes temporibus piae memoriae Andreae Patris nostri, nec non felicis recordationes Emerici, Regnum Hungariae illustrium factas, per quas ius coronae regiae pene penitus erat annullatum...". Georgii Fejér, ed., *Codex diplomaticus hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis* (Buda: 1829), vol. 4, 104.


155. In 1230 Andrew II reinforced the decision taken by Béla to confiscate the lands donated to ispán Miklós. Emericus Szentpétery, ed., *Regesta regum stirpis arpadianae critico-diplomatica* (Budapest: 1923), vol. 1, no. 461, 149.


159. King Béla was forced to settle a court process in which members of the *serviens* attempted to take advantage of the aristocracy that was losing territory. Béla, however, ruled that the claim was unfair and the *serviens* lost their claim. See György Székely, ed., *Magyarország története* (Budapest: 1987), 1350.


167. In 1230 the chaplain of Zagreb refers to King Andrew II as "magno rege existente" while referring to King Béla as "regnum Hungarie gubernante". T. Smičiklas, ed., *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatianae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae* (Zagreb: 1906), no. 295. 235.


170. In April 1231 the pope issued two letters to Andrew II. One of them consisted of a copy of the King's grant of the region of Barca to the Teutonic Knights in 1211, which he finished saying "Unde districte precipio omnibus, quamvis nullus presumat decetero dicti cruciferor super dicti castro et patriis prohibere vel molestare". Augustino Theiner, ed., *Vetera monumenta historic a hungariam sacram illustrantia* (Onasbriick: 1968), vol. 1, no. 168, 95-96. Augustus Potthast, ed., *Regesta pontificum romanorum* (Graz: 1957), vol. 1, no. 8728, 749. The second letter was more imperative: "In que dicti Magister et fratres Castrum multissimus construxissent, Cumani perterriti et dolentes ademptam sibi ingressus et exitus facultatem congregata ingenti multitudine ballatorum...per violentiam expulsit non absque Romana ecclesie iniuria manifesta cum eadem terra nullum preter Romanum Pontificem habens Episcopum vel prelatum, eidem ecclesie duas marcas auri pro censu solveret annuatium...Serenitatem regiam rogamus et hortam.us in Divino, in remissione tibi peccaminum inungentes...cum peccatum minime remittantus...restitutas terram ipsam, de dambris et irrogatis iniuriiis satisfactionem congruum impendendo. Augustino Theiner, ed., *Vetera monumenta historic a hungariam sacram illustrantia*


173. "...subito R(obertus) Strigoniensis Archiepiscopus, occasione auctoritas, ut asserit, vobis suscepta, in me et regni mei colonos, et universaliter per totam Hungaria sententiam intulit interdici, et quosdam meos familiares, filiorumque meorum, nor confessos vel vistos, sententia excommunicationes innodavit...immo fere flebiter supplicamus eidem...vel excessui similibus divina mihi et regno interdixit; eodem salvo iure regio si correctione digni inveniantur ad ipsius consilium et mandatum...sententiam removeat interdici". Georgii Fejér, ed., Codex diplomaticus hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis (Buda: 1829), vol. 3, 299-302. Augustus Potthast, ed., Regesta pontificum romanorum (Graz: 1957), vol. 1, no. 8075, 770.

174. Gyula Pauler, A magyar nemzet története (Budapest: 1899), 115, claims that King Béla took part in these negotiations representing the interests of his father, but no further details are available.

175. Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, Cardinali di curia e “família” cardinalizie dal 1227 al 1254 (Padova: 1972), 120.

176. György Székely, ed., Magyarország története (Budapest: 1987); Gyula Pauler, A magyar nemzet története (Budapest: 1899), and Toru Senga, "Béla királyi Bolgár, Halicsi, és Osztrák hadjáratok," Századok (1988) claim that the Agreement of Bereg was signed in the presence of Jacob of Pecorare, the papal legate. Yet, the text of the Agreement proves that the legate was not present, rather he was represented by other church officials. See Knauz Nándor, ed., II Endre Szabadságlevélei (Budapest: 1869), 61. See also Almási Tibor, "A beregi egyezmény megkötésének diplomaciai mozzanatai," Acta Universitatis Szegediensis 83 (1986): 36.

177. Gyula Pauler, A magyar nemzet története (Budapest: 1899), 119. The Agreement of Bereg turned the balance of power between the church and the aristocracy to the other extremity, for it severely limited the power of the king, and took away the lucrative salt trade from the hands of the aristocracy.


181. According to Mártta Font, "Magyar Orosz politikai kapcsolatok." Ph.D. diss., Janus Pannonius University (1989), there were a total of seventeen campaigns, counting both Prince Kálmán's and Prince Andrew's rule in Galicia.

182. Mór Wertner, Negyedik Béla király története (Temesvár: 1893), 27.

183. Mór Wertner, Negyedik Béla király története (Temesvár: 1893), 28-29. Wertner argues that Queen Maria, Béla's wife, objected to the presence of the new queen in the Kingdom, and that a conflict emerged between the two. We found no evidence to substantiate the claim.

184. Anonymi caenoditae Zwedensis, Chronicon in Catalogus fontium historiae hungaricae, ed. by Albinus Francus Gombos (Budapest: 1937), 259.

185. Gyula Pauler, A magyar nemzet története (Budapest: 1899), 123.


192. Prince Daniel had been overthrown in Halich earlier in the same year, and took refuge in Hungary. See John Fennell, The Crisis of Medieval Russia 1200-1394 (New York: 1983).


200. Whether the trend to consider all member of the dynasty saints is related to the 1235 conspiracy against King Béla is a theme that deserves more research, but it seems a plausible proposition.

201. Dénes son of Dénes, of the house of Tomaj became nádor; Dénes son of Türje became the voivod; Rátot of the house of Gyula became the court judge; Csák of the house of Pós became the officer of the treasury; Posa son of Sóyom became master of the stables; Csák of the house of Csák became ispán of Somogy; and Matias provost of Zágráb remained Béla's chancellor, etc. See Emericus Szentpétery, ed., *Regesta regum stirpis arpadianae critico-diplomatica* (Budapest: 1923), vol. 1, 186-189.


207. Apparently there were rumors that she had been having an affair with Dénes, son of Ampod, Andrew II's high court official, who was blinded by King Béla.

208. "$...et tunc Beatrix regina praegnans timore crudelis privigni qui faciebat eam diligentes custodiri in habitu virili et in societate dictorum legatorum latentibus in Alemanniam ad terram Columbae confugit, deinde ad civitatem Vordae de ducatu Kiaipi ibidem filium peperit quem nomine Stephanum appelavit...". *Chronicum Patavinum* (1174-1399), in *Catalogus fontium historiae hungaricae*, ed. by Albinus Francus Gombos (Budapest: 1937), 594.

209. "$...superfulas et inutiles donationes temporibus piae memoriae Andreae patris nostri, nec non felicis recordationis Emerici, Regum Hungariae illustrium factas, per qua ius coronae regiae pene penitus erat annulatum, de charissimi fratris nostri Colomani Regis et Dukis totius Slavonie voluntate, ac de Praetorium, omnium Barorum nostrorum, nec non totius regni nostri consilio et consensu decrissimus revocandas..." Georgii Fejér, ed., *Codex diplomaticus hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis* (Buda: 1829), vol. 4, 203.

210. "$Ad donationes etiam Ecclesiis et alis piis locis per eosdem factas, de eorundem consilio, ut processus facilius transiret in alias, manus revocationes duximus opponendas; licet id non absque magna cordis nostri amaritudine et quodam modo praeter nostram voluntatem felicissemus...". Georgii Fejér, ed., *Codex diplomaticus hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis* (Buda: 1829), vol. 4, 203.


215. "Postremo vero cum Regnum nostrum divina preveniente, ac subsequite gratia
in statum debitum esset iam quasi reformatum, Ecclesiarum et priorum locorum
utilitatis, quibus conferre semper intendibus, non auffere, salubriter duximus
providendum". Georgii Fejér, ed., Codex diplomaticus hungariae ecclesiasticus ac
civilis (Buda: 1829), vol. 4, 104.

216. Emericus Szentpétery, ed., Regesta regum stirpis arpadianae critico-diplomatica
(Budapest: 1923), vol. 1, no. 656, 200.

217. Land donations on the condition of military service was begun by King Béla
III, but abandoned by Andrew II. For more details see György Székely, ed.,
Magyarország története (Budapest: 1987), 1381.

218. István Rákos, "IV Béla birtokrestauráció politikája," Acta Universitatis


220. The Russian chronicles refer to Hungarian troops fighting in the region after
1235 (see Antal Hodinka, Az Orosz évkönyvek magyar vonatkozásai [Budapest:
1916], 397.), but their connection to Béla’s foreign policy initiatives is not clear.
Possibly Béla sent a few soldiers, but he did not consider the Russian front
important enough to organize large military campaigns as Andrew II did.

221. For more details on the political situation of Russia in this period see, John


223. "...contra dictum Assanum et terram suam praedicent verbum Crucis; illam
cruce signatis, illicin personis aut rebus laborantibus, indulgentiam concedentes, quae
conceditur transeuntibus in subsidium terrae sancta". Georgii Fejér, ed., Codex
diplomaticus hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis (Buda: 1829), vol. 4, 101.

224. "...assumimus ex animo per nos, aut poer nostros, prout expedire videbimus,
Bulgiam et alias terras Assani occupare, et sedi Apostolicae in spiritualibus vero
nostre iurisdictioni, Deo cooperante, subiugare". Georgii Fejér, ed., Codex
diplomaticus hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis (Buda: 1829), vol. 4, 111.

225. "Qum tamen negocium sit arduum...per prefati legati nuncium praesentis
litteras, nostrarum petitionum seriem continentis, ad sedem apostolicam
transmissimus, ut sine morae dispoendio ad nos cum Vestra sanctitatis beneplacito
revertatur. Petimus, ut officium legationis non alii, sed nobis, in terra Assani
committatur.... Itam petimus, ut nulli regnum Ungariae invadendum, aut occupandum
concedatur, noisi cui nos permiserimus; et nos et universa, nostro subiecta regno,
in protectionem sedis Apostolicae assumatis. ...excommunicationum
sententias...suppliciter deposcimus relaxari". 1238 Georgii Fejér, ed., Codex
diplomaticus hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis (Buda: 1829), vol. 4, 111.
226. "...illa potissimum ratione, quia si cum legato sedis apostolicae partes illas ingressi fuerimus; ab universis illarum partium incolis presemetur, quod non nobis, sed Romanae Ecclesiae, eos velimusem in temporalibus subicere; quo ipsi tam plurimum abhorriterunt, ut quam plurimi, quos sine pugnae certamine possemus obtinere, usque ad mortis periculum se defendere niterentur". Georgii Fejér, ed., Codex diplomaticus hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis (Buda: 1829), vol. 4, 111.


233. Given the Mongols custom of not forgiving anyone who had once resisted their forces, it is most probable that Kuten had no options but to seek refuge further west.


237. "Quo audio rex repletus est gaudio magno valde tum pro eo, quod talis princeps sibi quasi par hactemus sue ne volebat subicere ditioni...". Emericus Szentpétery, ed., Scriptores rerum hungaricarum (Budapest: 1938), vol. 2, 553.


243. Horváth András Páloczi, *Besenyők, künök, jászok* (Budapest: 1989), 43; argues that King Béla allowed the Cumans into Hungarian territory to improve the defense of the kingdom against the incoming Mongol armies. As we will see later, there is no evidence that King Béla recognized the danger of the Mongols until 1240-41.

244. For a detailed description of the Mongol army’s action in Russia see George Vernadsky, *The Mongols and Russia* (New York: 1953), 45-52.


256. See Master Roger, *Carmen Miserabile* in *Scriptores rerum hungaricarum* ed. by Emericus Szentpétery (Budapest: 1938); György Székely, ed., *Magyarország története* (Budapest: 1987), 1385; as well as Gyula Paudi, *A magyar nemzet története* (Budapest: 1898), 152. Ilona Pálfi, *A tatár késő XIII. század Europa* (Budapest: 1928), 32; argues that Béla IV was the only European king to recognize the Mongol threat, and thus he allowed the Cumans to enter Hungarian territory. Yet, I found no evidence suggesting that Béla IV had any defensive role planned for the Cumans before the Mongols arrived in 1241.


278. Attila Zsoldos, "A királyi vársvezetés és a tatárijárás" *Hátiörténelmi Közlönny* 104 (1991): 58-59. The author argues that a number of other units were incomplete because a number of soldiers refused to march. Given the Hungarian army's inability to mobilize in time, local resistance proved to have been much stronger than anticipated throughout the Mongol occupation.


281. The actual damage caused by the Mongol year long occupation is a controversial issue, far from having been settled. For a summary of the different views, see András Borosy, "A tatárjárás és a Muhi csata 750. évfordulója történeti történeti történetirok a tatárjárásról" Hadtörténelmi Közlemény 104 (1991): 3-21.
Appendix A
Genealogy
Appendix B

Hungary, Thirteenth Century
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