

GENIUS LOCI

LASZLOVSZKY 60

edited by
Dóra Mérai
and

Ágnes Drosztmér, Kyra Lyublyanovics,
Judith Rasson, Zsuzsanna Papp Reed,
András Vadas, Csilla Zatykó



ARCHAEOLINGUA

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A Queen's Crusading Connections: Yolanda of Courtenay, the Fifth Crusade, and the Military Orders

CHRISTOPHER MIELKE*

József Laszlovszky has a long and storied history of publication on matters related to Hungary's international contacts, particularly in regard to monastic orders as well as to the Crusading experience. He has recently written about how the Cistercian Order was patronized by several Hungarian queens, including Yolanda of Courtenay (d. 1233), the second wife of Hungarian king Andrew II (r. 1205–1235).¹ Laszlovszky was apt to notice that Yolanda has often been overlooked for her sensational predecessor, the murdered Gertrude of Andechs-Meran (d. 1213). Mór Wertner describes how Queen Yolanda kept a low profile at court and that there were no significant consequences of her marriage.² However, new details have come to light about Yolanda's presence at court; she was the first queen whose seal survives, the first queen to appear on Hungarian coinage, and she was fond of tournaments and chivalric culture.³ One other unexplored aspect of the queen's life is the question of her activity during the Fifth Crusade, led briefly by her husband. While the pope encouraged women to donate generously to this endeavor, they were discouraged from making the journey themselves and Yolanda of Courtenay likely never visited the Holy Land.⁴ Two years before the launch of the Fifth Crusade, Yolanda came to Hungary from France, accompanied by Bishop Peter of Győr.⁵ The work of Prof. Laszlovszky has made it possible to point to the queen's involvement in the Fifth Crusade, primarily through her involvement with the Military Orders – the Templars and possibly the Teutonic Knights in particular.

While Andrew II was off on the Fifth Crusade, the governing party consisted of John, archbishop of Esztergom, Gyula, the Palatine, Raphyan,

the grand reeve of Transylvania, Bánk, the grand reeve, and Oghuz (Agyasz), judge of the King's Court. If Andrew died on the Crusade, his oldest son Béla would inherit the Hungarian throne while his younger son, Coloman, would become the ruler of Halich and his youngest son, Andrew, would be entrusted to the guardianship of Alice (Ahalys), one of Yolanda's ladies-in-waiting, since the boy was still a minor. If Andrew II died on campaign, Yolanda would receive eight thousand silver marks.⁶ Though Yolanda did not accompany her husband on the Crusade and was not part of the governing party, there is evidence that she was active at court during this time. A land grant from 1219 gives an estate to the Templar Order not only because of how the order had helped Andrew while he was on the Crusade, but also for the aid they had given Yolanda while she was managing affairs in his absence. The document specifically states *et insuper ad petitionem ipsius regine*, indicating that it was the queen who requested that the Templars be given the estate on the Gacka River.⁷

It is also possible that Yolanda of Courtenay's presence was vital for diplomatic relations. Filip Van Tricht credits Yolanda of Courtenay with the warm relations between Hungary and the Latin Empire of Constantinople. Yolanda's brother, Robert of Courtenay (r. 1221–1228), visited Hungary from the autumn of 1220 to the winter of 1221.⁸ After visiting Hungary, Robert of Courtenay spent time at the Bulgarian court, visiting Ivan II Asen and (most likely) his betrothed, Anna-Maria of Hungary, the daughter of Andrew II by his first wife, Gertrude of Andechs-Meran.⁹

There is also the possibility that Yolanda of Courtenay played a role of some kind in placating the Teutonic Order after they were expelled from Hungary. Andrew II had invited the order to defend the southeastern border of his realm from the pagan Cumans. Initially the Teutonic Order

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was given mining rights, the rights to hold fairs, the rights to construct towns and castles (first wooden, later stone), as well as exemptions from certain duties.¹⁰ Problems arose, however, when the Teutonic Knights began to mint their own coins and infringe on other privileges which were supposed to be the sole right of the Hungarian king.¹¹ Frustrated with their situation, the Teutonic Order appealed to the pope to be his direct subordinates, bypassing the authority of Andrew II. The king of Hungary responded to this by leading a military campaign against them before expelling them from Hungary in 1225. A decade of appeals from the pope could not restore their position in Hungary.¹²

In 1226, Pope Honorius III (r. 1216-1227) wrote a letter to Yolanda, asking the queen to intervene on behalf of the Teutonic Order, imploring her to restore peace between them and the King of Hungary.¹³ Shortly afterwards, a nobleman named James of Mandalé (Amigdala) began negotiating with the Teutonic Order, agreeing to an exchange of castles.¹⁴ In 1228, James of Mandalé sold his rights to seventeen villages in the Levant (including the castle of Montfort) to the Teutonic Order. Originally they had been the possessions of his grandfather, Joscelin III of Courtenay, Count of Edessa.¹⁵ What makes this particular connection interesting is that James and Yolanda were third cousins once removed. It is possible that James of Mandalé began these negotiations with the Teutonic Order at the request of his distant cousin, the queen of Hungary. This donation to the order did not take place in a vacuum, either. Beatrice, daughter of Joscelin III (and aunt of James of Mandalé) sold her legal rights to the land to the Teutonic Order in 1220, and Leopold VI of Austria (r. 1198-1230) gave them 6,000 marks which they used for the purchase of this estate in 1228.¹⁶

In some ways, this information confirms what Wertner said about Yolanda over one hundred years ago – that she was acting behind the scenes and not part of the crusading campaign. This small glimpse shows that the queen was nonetheless holding her own in a manner entirely consistent with how queens supported the Crusades and the military orders.¹⁷ Searching for the queen's role in the Fifth Crusade would not have been possible without a lecture given by József

Laszlovszky to the students of Central European University—his interdisciplinary approach and creative research has allowed questions to be asked that offer a better glimpse at overlooked and neglected historical figures.

Notes

- ¹ József Laszlovszky, "Local Tradition or European Patterns? The Grave of Queen Gertrude in the Pilis Cistercian Abbey," in *Medieval East Central Europe in a Comparative Perspective: from Frontier Zones to Lands in Focus*, ed. Gerhard Jaritz and Katalin Szende (New York: Routledge, 2016), 87.
- ² Mór Wertner, *Az Árpádok családi története* [A family history of the Árpáds] (Nagybecskerek: Pleitz, 1892), 423-424.
- ³ Hungarian National Archives [MNL], Diplomatic Archives [DL] 24383, 61126. Wojciech Kętrzyński, ed., "Vita sanctae Salomeae reginae Haliciensis auctore Stanislao Franciscano," in *Monumenta Poloniae historica IV*. (Cracow: 1884), 778-779; Lajos Huszár, *Münzkatalog Ungarn von 1000 bis heute* (Budapest: Corvina, 1979), 58, 61; Karol Hollý, "Princess Salomea and Hungarian-Polish Relations in the Period 1214-1241," *Historický Časopis* 55 (2007): 27; Jusèp Boya, László Révész, and Margarida Sala, *Princesses from Afar: Hungary and Catalonia in the Middle Ages* (Budapest: Hungarian National Museum, 2009), 12-13; Christopher Mielke, "The Material Culture of Queen Gertrude and Her Contemporaries," in *Egy történelmi gyilkosság margójára: Merániai Gertrúd emlékezete, 1213-2013*, ed. Judit Majorossy (Szentendre: Ferenczy Múzeum, 2014), 206-208.
- ⁴ Women and members of the lower classes only made up 3% of 800 known people who went on the Fifth Crusade. James M. Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade (1213-1221)* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 21, 93, 167.
- ⁵ Z. J. Kosztołnyik, *Hungary in the Thirteenth Century* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1996), 50; Attila Bárány, "II. András és a Latin Császárság" [Andrew II and the Latin Empire], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 126 (2013): 467.
- ⁶ Augustin Theiner, *Vetera monumenta historica Hungarum sacram illustrantia*, I (Rome: Typis Vaticanis, 1859), 5, 13-14 (letters V, VI, XXII); Wertner, *Az Árpádok családi története*, 423; Kosztołnyik, *Hungary in the Thirteenth Century*, 62.
- ⁷ Tade Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, III (Zagreb: Tisak Dioničke tiskare, 1905), 150, 188-190; Miha Kosi, "The Age of the Crusades in the South-East of the Empire (Between the Alps and the Adriatic)," in *The Crusades and the Military Orders: Expanding the Frontiers of Medieval Latin Christianity* ed., Zsolt Hunyadi, József Laszlovszky, and Steven Runciman (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 137.
- ⁸ It is possible that Stefan II Nemanja of Serbia married a relative of Robert of Courtenay during this visit, although the chronology of this is uncertain. Filip Van Tricht, *The Latin Renovatio of Byzantium: The Empire of Constantinople (1204-1228)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 405-407; Attila Bárány, "Courtenay Róbert latin császár Magyarországon" [The Latin Emperor Robert of Courtenay in Hungary], in *Francia-magyar kapcsolatok a középkorban*,

- ed. Attila Györkös and Gergely Kiss (Debrecen: Debrecen University Press, 2013), 153, 157-158.
- ⁹ Van Tricht, *The Latin Renovatio of Byzantium*, 395; Bárány, "Courtenay Róbert latin császár Magyarországon," 158.
- ¹⁰ Nora Berend, "Hungary at the Gate of Christendom," in *Medieval Frontiers*, ed. David Abulafia and Nora Berend (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), 202; Kosztolnyik, *Hungary in the Thirteenth Century*, 93.
- ¹¹ József Laszlovszky and Zoltán Soós, "Historical Monuments of the Teutonic Order in Transylvania," in *The Crusades and the Military Orders*, 326.
- ¹² Harald Zimmermann, *Der Deutsche Orden im Burzenland: eine diplomatische Untersuchung* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2000), 6; Berend, "Hungary at the Gate of Christendom," 205.
- ¹³ Theiner, *Vetera monumenta historica Hungariam*, CXXXVIII, 66; Zimmermann, *Der Deutsche Orden im Burzenland*, 197.
- ¹⁴ He would give the order a castle called Mobilir, and in return, they would give him one called Trefile. Denys Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus*, II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 40.
- ¹⁵ Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 40.
- ¹⁶ Shlomo Lotan, "Between the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and Burzenland in Medieval Hungary—The Teutonic Military Order status and rule in the poles of Christianity," *Mirabilia: Electronic Journal of Antiquity and Middle Ages* 10 (2010): 193-194.
- ¹⁷ Christopher Mielke, "Medieval Queens and the Diaspora of Escort, Conquest, the Crusades and Military Orders," in *Military Diasporas: Defending, Shaping, and Connecting Power in the Euromediterranean from the Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, ed. Georg Christ and Patrick Sängler (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming 2019).