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**The Relationship of Charles I of Hungary with the Papacy  
(1301–1342)**

Summary



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## **Introduction: subject and structure of the thesis**

Conducting research on the Hungarian-papal relations in the Angevin era involves facing a peculiar contradiction: although a considerable part of the relevant sources have been known by Hungarian historiography since a long time, they have not been systematically analysed yet. Earlier historians highlighted and exhaustively described some aspects (mainly connected to dynastic policy and diplomacy), but still a great number of questions remained without answer. The feeling of discontent with the elaboration of the topic has been strengthened by the advancement of the project *Anjou-kori oklevéltár* (the publication of the content of the surviving manuscripts from the Angevin era in form of registers), as well as by the development of digital databases and international research projects. The main aim of the present dissertation is to utilize the newest opportunities created by recent historic projects and to give a detailed analysis of the relationship of Charles I (1301–1342) of Hungary and the Papal Court.

The thesis focuses on the reign of Charles I. The end date (1342) signifies not only the death of the Hungarian king, but also of pope Benedict XII. Considering the administrative changes of the Papal Court, it might have been more reasonable to go back until the beginning of the papacy of Boniface VIII, however, the diplomatic situation of Hungary was completely altered by the succession of the new (Angevin) dynasty. Besides, the analysis of the data has shed light on the importance of the reign of John XXII, so this time (1316–1334) – which anyway takes almost half of the examined period – has been given a special emphasis in some chapters (e. g. VIII. 1. *Beneficial policy*).

I decided to divide the historiographical overview into two chapters, and discuss the Hungarian and international works separately. The reason for this was the fact that there is almost no overlap between the two. We can read in French, German, English or Italian about the 14<sup>th</sup>-century papal diplomacy, the functioning of the Avignon curia or about its administration – mainly in the context of its relationship with other European countries – but these historical works offer only sporadic information about the contemporary Hungarian Kingdom. What is more, Hungarian historiography still lacks monographic works on the relationship of Charles I and the Holy See. There has been no independent work on the Avignon papacy in Hungarian language either, nor could we find any translations of the work of foreign authors on the topic. In Hungarian historic literature even book chapters specifically on 14<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian-papal relations are scarce, thus the relevant

information has to be collected from ecclesiastical historical works and from scientific publications examining a particular aspect (e.g. foreign policy) of the Anjou era. As Enikő Csukovits in her book *Az Anjouk Magyarországa* (The Angevin Hungary, published in 2012) reviewed the works written on the reign of the Anjou dynasty in Hungary, I present only the picture which the modern Hungarian historiography has drawn of the papacy of Avignon and the diplomatic relationship between the popes and the Hungarian Kingdom during the reign of Charles I.

The subchapter *The review of the international historiography* is dominated by historical works written in French and German. The disparity is caused by the long tradition of source publication of the two nations which gave the basis and still determines the research of the Avignon papacy. If we consult the bibliography of the latest historic works, we will find that most of the references are available on these two languages. The most significant summarizing monographs were written in French; after the brief description of these I concentrate on the works which present the most current research results. The second subchapter (II.2. *The review of the Hungarian historiography*) has a similar structure: it starts with the presentation how the summarizing works about the Avignon papacy, and closes with the analysis of thematically classified shorter publications.

After reviewing the dissertation's secondary sources, two subchapters are dedicated to the primary sources of the topic. Although the 14<sup>th</sup>-century narrative sources were not necessarily in the centre of the research, they could not be omitted entirely, as their reports on the dynastic and diplomatic events offered valuable data. In the subchapter *Documentary sources* I give a short overview of the fonds preserved in the Vatican Secret Archives, as they constituted the most important part of the sources in the research. Besides, I also included in this subchapter some paragraphs about the sources which are available in the Hungarian National Archives in original or in digital copy and about the publications which made them available in print.

I believe that it is also important to discuss the methodological problems of the research in a separate subchapter. I tried to answer questions like who exactly were considered as papal or royal representatives, and which criteria decided who was included in the examination.

The main body of the dissertation follows a thematic and not chronological organisation. The three next chapters (*IV. The forms and system of the royal representation, V. The forms and system of the papal representation, VI. Clerics in the service of both powers*) constitute one of the axes of the dissertation. Here I examined how the interests of the

Hungarian king had been represented in the papal curia, in what forms the papal power could manifest in 14<sup>th</sup>-century Hungary and who had mediated between two powers. Despite of the limited amount of data, I dedicated a separate chapter to the clerics who in some way gave service both to the Hungarian king and the pope. The reason for this special attention is partly the controversy which could arise when trying to fit these clerics into a certain category (as they were neither royal nor papal representatives exclusively) and partly the possibilities offered by the obscurity of the topic. Although these clerics “with double loyalty” meant a peculiar segment of the medieval society, the examinations on the papal curia hardly considered them, and local ecclesiastical history usually did not mention them at all.

The aim of the chapter *Dynastic conflicts* was by no means to list every international event which took place in the examined period. I intended to concentrate on those happenings and conflicts which were equally important for both powers (both for Charles I and the papal court) and left a distinctive mark in the documentation. For example, the Visegrád conference of the Czech, Polish and Hungarian monarchs in 1335 was a turning point in Hungarian political or economic history, but it did not trigger any notable response in the papal curia. On the other, the reconsideration of three topics of diplomatic history was clearly justified by the available sources: Charles I’s succession to the Hungarian throne in 1301, the intervention of pope John XXII in the fights for the German crown (1314–1330), and the reflection of the dynastic policy of Charles I in the papal sources.

Lastly, the chapter *Ecclesiastical policy* comprises the questions of church history. The beneficial policy of the 14<sup>th</sup>-century popes (especially of Clement V, John XXII and Benedict XII) proved to be one of the topics in the dissertations which could offer the greatest number of unpublished data. The subchapter *Questions connected to faith* meant to be a summarizing section which handles the papal policy concerning issues of spiritual life, most importantly the crusades.

## **Methodological approach**

When considering the Hungarian-papal relations in the middle ages, most researchers emphasize the work of the papal legates and tax collectors in Hungary, or some aspects of the beneficial policy of the popes. However, the relationship of the two powers was always a lot more complex than that. The primary aim of my dissertation is to give a comprehensive

interpretation of the system of the connections between the 14<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian Kingdom and the papacy. I intended to answer questions, like in what issues and how the two powers kept contact, and who were the people who could form and influence these relations. I concentrated mainly on the representation of the Hungarian king (as the leader and the embodiment of the Hungarian state) and the Holy See (like in chapters IV. and V.), but in some cases (e. g. in chapter VIII.1.) I extended the research on the relations of the Hungarian state in broader sense (e. g. Hungarian high clergy) with the papal curia. As it has been mentioned before, the dissertation is divided into thematic units. These do not, or not necessarily follow the chronology of the events. As the earlier historiography subordinated the presentation of the Hungarian-papal relations to the analysis of the diplomatic and political history, and examined the royal and papal representation exclusively from this perspective, my goal was to determine the main elements of the relation between Charles I and the popes and to describe them using a logically constructed system. I tried to achieve this objective with the help of case studies, prosopographic – and if the amount of the data enabled – statistical analysis. At the end of the dissertation, a database was included in order to facilitate the orientation among the names of the mentioned people. As far as the references to the manuscripts are concerned, I always tried to give the signature of the original document, and the details of two publications: one *in extenso* and one in the form of registers. From the full-text publications, I tended to prefer the works of Theiner, as I found him one of the most reliable editors, and from the volumes containing short summaries of the documents, I mostly cited the *Anjou-kori oklevéltár* numbers, as this series collects the information on all other publications of every source.

The analysis of the sources revealed numerous methodological problems. One of the most significant challenges which I had to face was the fact that earlier Hungarian historical works differentiated between a very limited number of forms of representation; it adopted only a few terms of canon law and did not utilize them consequently. The most frequently used designation for papal representatives has been legate, and the delegates who collected papal taxes have been called collectors, disregarding the title given in the original papal bull. This attitude did not only confuse the papal delegates with different authorities (*legatus*, *nuntius*, etc.), but it concentrated solely on the representatives sent directly from the curia and ignored those Hungarian clerics who were commissioned by the pope to act locally. This dissertation examines both the direct (*legatus*, *collector*, *nuntius*) and the indirect (*iudex delegatus*, *conservator*, stb.) forms of papal representation. The research on the royal representation has been similarly schematic. Although the names of some envoys who were

delegated to the papal curia have been known before, numerous important questions (whose interest they represented in reality, whether another, less direct forms of the royal representation existed in this time, etc.) remained without answer. As a consequence, I had to clarify in the beginning of the research which forms of the representation described by the latest historical works could be traced in the sources reporting about the time of Charles I and about which categories could be enough data collected to draw conclusions.

Besides, it was of primary importance to clarify in the beginning who I accepted as a person visiting the papal curia personally. Obviously, if a papal bull granted some privileges to a certain person, it did not necessarily mean that (s)he her/himself presented the supplication in Rome/Avignon. It is enough to mention the example of the high clergy: the archbishops and the bishops mostly did not travel to the papal curia to request the confirmation of their election, but they appointed *procurators* who represented their interests. It could similarly happen (and it did indeed happen) that when a person (laic or ecclesiastical) risked the long journey to the pope, he did not only arrange his own issues, but he handed over the supplications, complaints, etc. of the people in his closest surroundings in the curia. My aim was to identify the envoys with the least possible uncertainty, so I made decisions on a set of criteria. The least unambiguous cases were those one in which the source (papal letter, royal donation, etc.) stated explicitly that the addressee was present in the curia as *nuntius* or *ambaxiator*, and referred to the pope or handed over a message. Some people were included in the research based on indirect proofs: when more papal letters dealt with the issues of the same person and the issuing date of these letters matched the confirmed date of a Hungarian delegation in the papal court. On the other hand, I excluded the cases when only the fact of the delivery of a letter/supplication was known, but there was no solid evidence about the way of the delivery. In the chapter VI, the examination is limited to clerics; however, this constriction was determined by the data collected from the sources, as the people who rendered service to both the king and the pope were exclusively members of the clergy.

## **The results of the research**

The systematisation and the analysis of the sources connected to the relationship of Charles I of Hungary and the papacy shed new light on many aspects of already known topics of examination and drew the attention to questions which have been neglected earlier. The

results made it clear that the system of the connection and representation of the two powers was more complex and versatile than described in earlier historiography.

First of all, it could be concluded that the Hungarian king was represented by formal (and occasional) delegations in the papal curia. There is no proof in the sources that any member of the Hungarian clergy would have lived in the papal curia and represented the Hungarian interests periodically. However, it seems that a small, but ambitious segment of the clergy tried to get ahead in the hierarchy by rendering service to both the royal and the papal courts. Besides, the sources confirmed that the middle stratum of the clergy kept gaining importance in the diplomatic and political relations during the 14<sup>th</sup> century as well. The case studies and the prosopographic analysis also showed that the representatives of the royal power were the members of a small, closed group.

The papal power, on the other hand, manifested itself in different forms in Hungary during the reign of Charles I. The first and most direct level of representation was constituted by the legates and the tax collectors (often entitled *nuntii*), who were delegated from the papal curia to act on behalf of the pope locally and personally. In the time of Charles I, papal delegates were commissioned to Hungary twice as legates and five times to collect the papal tenth. The first legate, Niccolò Boccasini played an important role in the reorganisation of the church government in the time of the succession war in Hungary, while Gentilis de Monteflorum had a significant influence on the diplomatic connections of Charles I and on the ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The examination of the work of the papal tax collectors demonstrated the administrative changes which had started in the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It showed that popes tended more and more to prefer to give the title *nuntius* which entailed in theory broader authority, while the commissions started to be restricted on ensuring the success of the money collection. For coping with other, occasional and one-time issues the *nuntii* were given powers by posterior papal bulls. In spite of the fact that the title *nuntius* frequently meant some kind of diplomatic mission as well, in case of Hungary (unlike Poland in the same time) there is no evidence for such activity of the papal tax collectors.

The second level of the papal representation was the less direct, but more frequent commission of delegated judges and *conservators* in ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and the *administrators* in church government. These papal representatives were chosen from the local clergy to handle a single case and had (both in time and scale) a more limited authority. The sources on the work of the delegated judges are in this time dominated by some complicated and long trials which originated in tenth or ecclesiastical authority conflicts. Often the delegated judges handed over their original commission (*subdelegatio*), but it rarely happened

that the process – after several appeals – went eventually to the papal curia where papal *auditors* had to take action. The most common reason for the delegation of *conservators* was some kind of violence committed against clerics/ecclesiastical institutions by other members of the clergy or by secular powers. Both the delegated judges and the *conservators* were chosen from a broad range of clerics, and also the plaintiffs came from every segment of the clerical hierarchy. In the *conservators*' commissions, the proximity of the dioceses and the rank of the plaintiff seem to have influenced the selection of the *conservator*. Sources of legal processes initiated by *conservators* are scarce which suggest that these cases could be handled mostly outside court.

It is important to emphasise that both the agents of the direct (legates, *nuntii*, collectors or royal envoys) and of the less direct (delegated judges, *conservators*, clerics serving both powers) forms of representation could have a collateral effect which went beyond the diplomatic issues and would be difficult to quantify. We have to consider the cultural, legal and institutional experiences as well which the delegates faced while working for the papal/royal court and later – probably unconsciously – transmitted.

The analysis of the sources related to the diplomatic-dynastic connection between the Holy See and the Hungarian king has also revealed some new results. First of all, pope Boniface VIII's attitude towards Charles I's succession to the Hungarian throne in 1301 was far more moderate than it has been depicted earlier by the historians. Furthermore, the papal court's decision was obviously influenced by the political situation of the countries neighbouring Hungary. The Holy See – especially during the reign of pope John XXII – strived to occupy a central, mediating role in the European diplomacy, as a result of which Charles I tended to communicate with other European dynasties (including the other branches of the Angevin dynasty) through the papal court.

The fights for the German throne after 1314 proved that even though Charles I faced a difficult political situation during the first half of his reign (because of his confrontation with the oligarchs and the other two pretenders), he always kept an eye on Western European dynastic events and diplomacy. What is more, it seems highly probable that the Kingdom of Naples influenced Charles I's foreign policy on several levels. The Hungarian-Habsburg alliance originated in the dynastic policy of the Neapolitan Angevins, and it was highly supported by king Robert I. It means that the agreements of Charles I with the Habsburg princes was not only a decision made according to the inner political interests, but it can also be seen as the Hungarian king's stand in the German throne fights. However, it is important to emphasize the relationship of Naples and Hungary was not a hierarchical one. It is more



correct to use Iván Bertényi's expression and see the attachment of Charles I to Naples as "the golden yarn" in his foreign policy,<sup>1</sup> which obviously included the detailed knowledge and the consideration of the diplomatic system in which the Kingdom of Naples belonged. The diplomatic activity of the papal curia had an indirect effect on the foreign policy of Charles I (primarily through king Robert I and the Habsburg princes), but there is evidence for more direct ways of exercising pressure as well (mainly with papal bulls). Although it is not possible to judge how strongly Charles I was influenced by the pope and by his wish to maintain a favourable relationship with the Holy See in his diplomatic decisions, it is obvious that after 1314 John XXII and the Hungarian king belonged to the same group of allied powers.

The papal universalism and centralisation characteristic for the Avignon era was reflected by the beneficial policy of the Holy See as well. The popes did not only create the legal basis for the papal reservations, but they tried to enforce their rights even in case of the minor benefices. First of all, it could be concluded that the majority of the papal decisions concerning Hungarian benefices (70%) comes from the time of pope John XXII. The reason for this was not only the length of his reign (18 out of the examined 41 years), but also the way how he treated the church benefices in general. Comparing the beneficial policy of Clement V, Benedict XII and John XXII, it became obvious that there was a significant difference in case of minor benefices: John XXII decided about minor Hungarian benefices approximately six times more than his predecessor or his successor. Furthermore, the number of provisions and expectatives was more or less the same in his time, and one-third of the papal letters were addressed to clerics who held more than one benefice. Besides, the examination of the papal demonstrated how John XXII strived to put the *Ex debito* (1316) bull in practice, especially as far as the major benefices were concerned. Although it occurred rarely that the pope nominated a cleric for a major benefice disregarding both the chapter's election and the preference of the king (his own protégé), he tried to close every case in a way that the office of the beneficiary depended on the papal grace; for instance by annulling the election because of some infringement, but eventually bestowing the benefice to the original candidate. The results of the examination on the beneficial policy of John XXII towards Hungary did not only correspond to earlier research concerning other countries, but they verified the old-established theory according to which John XXII intended to extend papal control on the middle and lower strata of the church government. It has to be noted as well

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<sup>1</sup> BERTÉNYI 1987. 88.

that the diplomatic events left a clear mark on the papal beneficial policy: the number of expectatives grew significantly in the time of important negotiations. The outcomes suggest that the monarchs in many cases tried to remunerate diplomatic service with ecclesiastical benefices. However, the data showed that it was difficult to enforce the expectatives, which means that the filling of benefices depended rather on local circumstances than on the papal wish. Although earlier Hungarian historiography put a great effort in determining whether the papal or the royal power was more efficient in case of the allocation of church benefices, the sources have revealed that this kind of rivalry did not really exist yet in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The beneficial policy of the pope and the king seems to be parallel rather than opposing, and there were only a small number of conflicts between the two powers in this question. To find the traces of a clash of interests, we have to take a look at the documents connected to the councils of the Hungarian prelates in 1318 and 1338, because these events reveal the real participants of the confrontation.

Considering the issues related to spiritual life in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the concept of the crusades influenced the most notably and most directly the diplomatic relationship of Charles I with the papal curia. In case of the crusade to the Holy Land, the influence manifested itself through the tax collection where John XXII was compelled to make concession in favour of the Hungarian monarch. However, the strategy of the Holy See (Benedict XII) concerning the heresy in Bosnia intruded in the sphere of interest of Charles I which forced the Hungarian king to take preventive actions.

### **The author's publications**

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