

FROM THE HARBOUR OF VENICE TO THE KINGDOM OF HUNGARY: ART AND TRADE IN THE 11TH-13TH CENTURIES

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Venice and Hungary had an intensive but frequently changing relation in the Middle Ages. The second king of the country originated from the Orseolo family. The rivalry between Venice and Hungary led to conflicts from the 12th century onward in the Dalmatian region. On the other hand, the commercial connections were flourishing and Venice was the most important trading partner of medieval Hungary. After 1204 Venice played a key role in mediating goods from the Far East as well as from the Arabic and Byzantine world to Central Europe. This is also a turning point in the artistic relations. Before the 13th century, Venetian influences are mostly visible in stone carvings. This stylistic impact originating from Venice seems to diminish during the 13th century, while stylistic connections has been revealed in the field of goldsmithwork – a genre easy to transport.

Keywords: trade, artistic connections, stone carvings, filigree, Hungary, Venice, 11-13th centuries

The medieval Hungarian Kingdom was not a real maritime power. The Hungarian kings, who were also kings of Croatia and Dalmatia from the 12th century, managed to control for shorter or longer periods certain parts of Dalmatia, however, the most important harbour and maritime trade centre in the neighbourhood was Venice.¹

Venice and Hungary had an intensive but frequently changing relation in the Middle Ages. Hungarian troops challenged to attack Venice in 899 but their effort failed. On the contrary, in the time of the first Hungarian King, Stephen the Saint the contacts were positive. The young doge of Venice, Otto Orseolo married the sister of the Hungarian king in 1009. Otto was expelled from Venice first in 1022 and permanently in 1026, and his family found refuge in Hungary. His son, Peter gained more and more influence in the Hungarian court, especially after 1031 when the Hungarian crown-prince, Saint Emeric died. Peter became the head of the royal army and in 1038 succeeded King Stephen. However, by that time the Orseolo family lost all its power in Venice.²

A few years earlier Gerard, a Venetian monk from the Abbey of San Giorgio Maggiore intended to travel to the Holy Land through Hungary. There he was stopped and King Stephen entrusted him the education of his son. In 1030 he became the first bishop of the newly established bishopric of Csanád. Gerard died in 1046, in the same year when King Peter lost his throne. He was killed by the uprising pagan Hungarians and later was venerated as the first martyr saint of the kingdom.³

While Venetians played important roles in Hungary in the mid-11th century, the diplomatic connections deteriorated in the next decades. King Andrew I of Hungary, as an ally of

the Croats, fought against the Venetians around 1046-1050, and his son, King Solomon did the same in 1064. Later on, the rule over the Dalmatian cities generated conflicts between Venice and Hungary, which lasted until the 15th century. The Hungarian kings looked for confederates in Norman Sicily: Coloman married the daughter of Count Roger of Sicily in 1097 and their son, Stephen II wedded the daughter of Prince Robert of Capua in the early 1120s. However, time-to-time Coloman allied Venice too, e.g. in 1098 and in 1107. King Béla II and King Géza II looked for an alliance with the Normans in 1136 and in 1153 against the Venetians. In the 1160s the situation changed again, and in 1167 Venice and Hungary allied against Byzantium. The conflict between Venice and Hungary intensified again because of the rule over Dalmatia in the time of King Béla III in the late 12th century. This culminated in the siege of Zadar during the Fourth Crusade. Nevertheless, King Andrew II agreed with the Venetians in 1217 for their help on his campaign to the Holy Land, and so did Béla IV in 1244.

By that time a new issue emerged in the inner conflicts of the Árpád dynasty. The third wife of King Andrew II bore a child, Stephen after the death of his husband and found refuge in Venice. Stephen married Tomasina Morosini and his son, Andrew was invited to the Hungarian throne in 1290. Andrew III, the last king of the Árpád dynasty, was supported by his Venetian relatives, especially by his uncle, Albertino Morosini. This branch was opposed by the Neapolitan Anjou dynasty, and their candidate to the Hungarian throne, Charles I (Charles Robert). He strengthened his power after 1307 and became the founder of the Hungarian Angevin Dynasty. The Hungarian Angevins were dominantly in conflict with Venice in the 14th century which seems to be

¹ For the history of medieval Hungary, see P. ENGEL, *Realm of Saint Stephen: A History of Medieval Hungary, 895-1526*, London, 2001.

² An overview of the medieval foreign policy see F. MAKK: *Magyar külpolitika (896-1196)* (Hungarian foreign policy 896-1196), Szeged, 1993.

³ The legends of Saint Gerard were published by E. MADZSAR in E. Szentpétery (ed.), *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum tempore ducum regumque stirpis Arpadianae gestarum*, vol. II, Budapest, 1938, p. 461-506.

decisive in general for the Venetian-Hungarian relations of the period.

The Fourth Crusade was a turning point in the Hungarian-Venetian relations and not only because of the siege of Zadar. After the fall of Constantinople, Venice became the dominant economic and commercial power in the Eastern Mediterranean.⁴ This is the starting point of the intensive trade relations between the Hungarian Kingdom and the Adriatic harbour. The medieval commercial connections of Hungary and Venice were investigated thoroughly by Zsuzsa Teke in 1979.⁵ She pointed out that before 1200 there are no clear signs of a vivid connection between the two partners. After 1204 a huge amount of merchandise arrived to Venice from the former Byzantine territories as well as from Egypt and for that Venetians looked for new markets. Moreover, Venetians needed precious metal to pay for the Eastern goods, which was easily available in Hungary. Venetians were also present in Champagne and Flanders from where they carried textile to the East. Thus Venice was in a key position in the East-West trade.

We have several documents attesting the activities of Venetian merchants in Hungary and Hungarians in Venice. Trade was officially regulated in 1217 when King Andrew II settled an agreement on custom affairs. Venetians paid 1/80 of their goods but gold, precious stone, spice and silk were free of charges.⁶ Practically these were the major goods Venetians brought to and from Hungary. Regarding silver, the major export product of Hungary, merchants paid an import custom in Venice in 1270, "as before" – says the source.⁷ A Venetian manual of merchandise dated to the second half of the 13th century also mentions silver originating from Hungary.⁸

Trade was not very safe in medieval Hungary. We learn about attacked Venetian traders in the 1220s as well as in the 1270s. In 1279 the Venetian doge asked compensation for a merchant who was robbed by Henrik Kőszegi, an oligarch of Western Hungary. In 1274 the Council of Venice asked information about Venetian merchants staying in Hungary because they were away for a long time.⁹ Venetians travelled through Western Hungary, passing today Slovenia (Ljubljana, Celje, Ptuj) and arriving to the Hungarian Kingdom at Radkersburg. They passed Körmend, Szombathely and Sopron and left the country towards Vienna. This seems to

be the usual road to Vienna until 1398. Venetians also travelled to the middle of the country as far as Esztergom since their custom duty is fixed to 1/100 in 1255. According to a late medieval source, they passed Vasvár, Veszprém and Székesfehérvár before reaching Esztergom or Buda. Certainly, there was another road from Dalmatia through Zagreb.¹⁰

Hungarian merchants were also present in Venice. The 1217 agreement fixed the same duties both for Hungarians and Venetians. Goods of Hungarian traders were taken in 1224 in Venice because of the debts of the Hungarian king. Further losses of Venetian merchants were compensated in 1226 by forcing Hungarian traders to pay 1.5 % more custom duties. In 1275 Hungarian merchants are mentioned together with Germans, Lombards and Tuscans.¹¹

What kind of products was transferred by the merchants between Venice and Hungary? We have a highly interesting source kept in the State Archives of Venice from the 13th century. It has been published first in 1934 by Giovanni Soranzo and discussed extensively by Hungarian scholars (Dénes Huszti 1938/1941, László Zolnay 1964 and Jenő Szűcs in his posthumous book of 1993).¹² It is an account made by a certain Syr Wullam (or Willam) for *Dominus Rex*, a Hungarian king. It discusses the goods and sums delivered by Syr Wullam for the king, the queen and 36 further persons. On the basis of the persons mentioned, László Zolnay dated the account to 1264 and identified the king with Stephen, the younger king of Hungary (the future King Stephen V, 1270-72) who ruled the eastern part of the country at that time.

The list enumerated 114 items which were delivered by Syr Wullam to the younger king and his entourage. 54 % was textile, 18 % goldsmithwork, 5.5 % spice, 4 % fur, and 15 % cash.¹³ The goods of this list valued 1159.5 marks, i.e. 270 kg silver.¹⁴ Half of it was already paid by King Stephen; the second half was still to be paid. The majority of the goods, as we have seen, were textile. Among these, we find purple and silk. Some time they are called *imperiales*, which can be identified with Byzantine luxurious textile. They also called *transmarinum*, a clear reference to the Levant origin of these goods. Some of them are called *akabit*, which originated from Bagdad. Another type is *purpura Tartarensis*, possibly textile of Chinese origin coming in the Silk Road.¹⁵ According to the calculation of Jenő Szűcs, eastern textile figures 30.2 %.¹⁶ Another portion is the textile coming from Western

⁴ B. NAGY, *Magyarország külkereskedelme a középkorban* (Foreign trade of Hungary in the Middle Ages), in A. Kubinyi, J. Laszlovszky and P. Szabó (eds), *Gazdaság és gazdálkodás a középkori Magyarországon*, Budapest, 2008, p. 265.; see also ID., *The Study of Medieval Foreign Trade of Hungary: A Historical-geographical Overview* in Ph. R. Rössner (ed.): *Cities – Coins – Commerce. Essays presented to Ian Blanchard on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday*, Stuttgart, 2012, p. 65-75.

⁵ Zs. TEKE, *Velencei-magyar kereskedelmi kapcsolatok a XIII-XV. században* (Venetian-Hungarian trade connections in 13th to 15th centuries), Budapest, 1979.

⁶ TEKE, *op. cit.* (n. 5), p. 18.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 19, note 52.

⁸ A. STUSSI (a cura di), *Zibaldone da Canal, Manoscritto mercantile del secolo XIV*, Venezia, 1967, p. 7.

⁹ TEKE, *op. cit.* (n. 5), p. 19.

¹⁰ K. H. GYÜRKY, *Üvegek a középkori Magyarországon* (Glass in Medieval Hungary), Budapest, 1991, p. 16.

¹¹ TEKE, *op. cit.* (n. 5), p. 20.

¹² G. SORANZO, *Aquisti e debiti di Bela IV. Re d'Ungheria*, in *Aevum* 8, 1934, p. 343-356; D. HUSZTI, *IV. Béla olaszországi vásárlásai* (Italian acquisitions of Béla IV), in *Közgazdasági Szemle* 62, 1938, p. 737-770; ID. *Olasz-magyar kereskedelmi kapcsolatok a középkorban* (Italian-Hungarian trade connections in the Middle Ages), Budapest, 1941, p. 35-49; L. ZOLNAY, *István ifjabb király számadása 1264-ből* (The account of Stephen younger king from 1264), in *Budapest Régiségei*, 21, 1964, 79-114; J. SZŰCS, *Az utolsó Árpádok* (The Last Arpadians), Budapest, 1993, p. 230-233.

¹³ ZOLNAY, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 83.

¹⁴ SZŰCS, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 231.

¹⁵ ZOLNAY, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 107-108, SZŰCS *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 230.

¹⁶ SZŰCS, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 230.

centres. Silk of Lucca and purple of Milan is mentioned as well as cloth of Gent. Moreover, valuable silver belts and rings are mentioned. The spices were also typically coming from the East. Altogether 45.3 % of the goods came from the East and 43 % from the West.¹⁷ The Hungarians paid with silver and salt.

This list is usually regarded as representative for the import activity from Venice in the 13th century. This means that the imported goods were luxurious objects, mainly art works. What was the purpose of the younger king ordering all these goods? We are in the middle of a conflict between him and his father, King Béla IV. Both party tried to recruit the most influential aristocrats of the country with the help of presents and donations. Stephen, the younger king simply bought the support of some of the leading Hungarian families with these objects. According to the account, beside the queen and the Cumans, it was the Hahót, the Gutkeled, the Rátót, the Monoszló and the Csák family which received the most valuable presents. It seems that by 1264 these luxurious artefacts were highly esteemed by Hungarian aristocratic circles.¹⁸

However, this single source, being as detailed as it is, cannot provide a full view of the commercial connections. One type of object, typically Venetian, is certainly missing although it was present in Hungary according to archaeological sources. This is glass production. According to the overview of Katalin Gyürky, the earliest glass flasks are probably of Byzantine origin; similar objects were found in regions related to Venice which might suggest that these flasks were imported by Venetian merchants.¹⁹ At the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries Venetian glass became internationally popular. Painted glasses were found in Buda and in the castle of Mende-Leányvár (east of Budapest). In Leányvár fragments of a glass saucer were also found; on the basis of archaeological evidences, they are dated to the end of the 13th century (fig. 1).²⁰ The painted glass has a parallel in Buda, which might have been arrived during the time of Andrew III who, as we have seen, came from Venice. Other Venetian glasses were also found in Buda, such as a flask of *angastare* type, a glass with ribs and another one with optic decoration (fig. 2).²¹

Thus, the 13th century can be regarded a turning point in the commercial connections of Venice and Hungary. It seems that artistic connections had a comparable rhythm.



Fig. 1. Venetian glass finds from Mende-Leányvár (after Gyürky 1991)

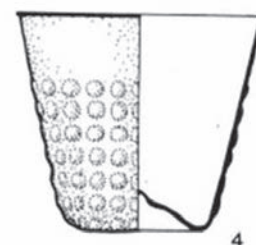
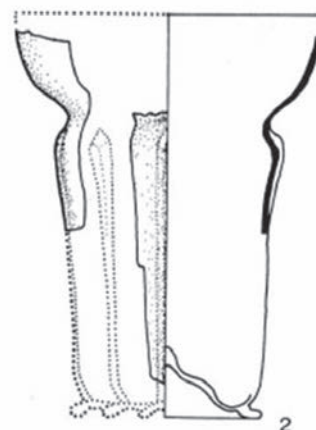
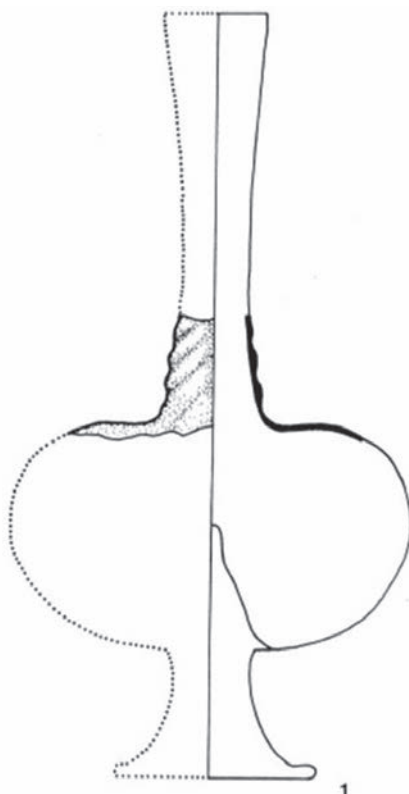


Fig. 2. Venetian glass finds from Buda (after Gyürky 1991)

The first period can be dated to the 11th and 12th centuries. Almost two decades ago, in 1996 Miklós Takács presented during the third session of this conference series a paper on 11th-century Hungarian stone carvings. He analysed a certain group of capitals decorated with a special type of acanthus leaves, the so-called *acanthus spinosa*.²² Variants

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 231.

¹⁸ ZOLNAY, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 101-102.

¹⁹ GYÜRKY, *op. cit.* (n. 10), p. 12.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 57 and 61.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 47-48.

²² M. TAKÁCS, *Ornamentale Beziehungen zwischen der Steinmetzkunst von Ungarn und Dalmatien im XI. Jahrhundert*, in *Hortus Artium Mediaevalium* 3, 1997, 165-178, ID., *Die sogenannte Palmettenornamentik der christlichen Bauten des 11. Jahrhunderts im mittelalterlichen Ungarn*, in F. Daim, J. Drauschke (Hrsg.), *Byzanz. Das Römerreich im Mittelalter: Peripherie und Nachbarschaft*, Mainz, 2010, p. 411-415. B. Zs. SZAKÁCS, *Hungary, Byzantium, Italy: Architectural Connections in the 11th Century*, in R. M. Bacile and J. McNeill (eds.) *Romanesque and the Mediterranean*, London, 2015, p. 193-203.



Fig. 3. Capital decorated with acanthus spinosa from Esztergom



Fig. 4. Capital decorated with acanthus spinosa in Sv. Lovreč Pazenatički



Fig. 5. Capital decorated with acanthus spinosa in Venice, S. Giovanni Decollato



Fig. 6. Capital decorated with acanthus spinosa in Venice, S. Nicolò di Lido

of this type are known from Esztergom (fig. 3), Veszprém, Zselicszentjakab, Mohács and other places. Takács compared them to Istrian and Dalmatian carvings such as in Sv. Lovreč Pazenatički (fig. 4) and the cathedral of Rab. Probably they originate from an influential artistic centre such as Aquileia (as Ernő Marosi has pointed out²³) or Venice. Here the related capitals are known in smaller churches such as the San Giovanni Decollato (San Zan Degola, fig. 5), S. Eufemia

on the island of Giudecca and S. Nicolò di Lido (fig. 6).²⁴ Similar capitals were found also in Padua, once decorating the church of St. Martin and now exhibited in the lapidary of the *Museo d'Arte Medievale e Moderna*.²⁵ The Hungarian examples cannot be dated easily; however, the large capital of Zselicszentjakab cannot be much later than the foundation of its monastery in 1061.²⁶

²³ E. MAROSI: *Die Anfänge der Gotik in Ungarn. Esztergom in der Kunst des 12.-13. Jahrhunderts*, Budapest, 1984, p. 16.

²⁴ W. DORIGO, *Venezia Romanica*, Venezia, 2003, p. 82-83, 90-91, 250-253; G. TREVISAN, *Il rinnovamento architettonico degli edifici religiosi a Torcello, Aquileia e Venezia nella prima metà del secolo XI*, in G. M. Cantarella, A. Calzona (a cura di), *La Reliquia del Sangue di Cristo: Mantova, l'Italia e l'Europa al tempo di Leone IX.*, Mantova, 2012, p. 479-504.

²⁵ G. P. BROGIOLO and M. IBSEN (a cura di) *Corpus Architecturae Religiosae Europae (saec. IV-X)*, vol. II, Italia I. Province di Belluno, Treviso, Padova, Vicenza, Zagreb, 2009, p. 129.

²⁶ S. TÓTH, *Zselicszentjakab*, in I. Takács (ed.), *Paradisum plantavit. Bencés monostorok a középkori Magyarországon. Benedictine Monasteries in Medieval Hungary*, Pannonhalma, 2001, p. 342-346 and 683-686.

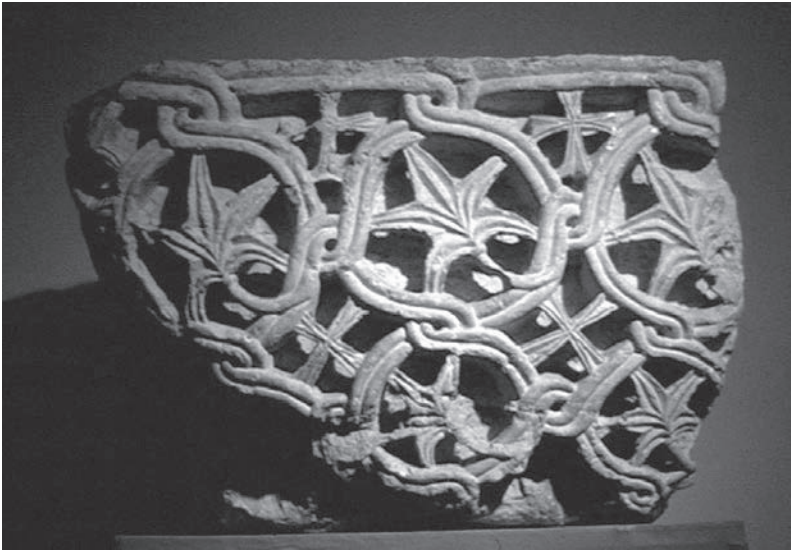


Fig. 7. Capital with palmette decoration from Szekszárd, Szekszárd, Wosinszky Mór Múzeum



Fig. 9. The sarcophagus of Saint Stephen, Székesfehérvár

Exactly in the same year, in 1061 King Béla I founded a Benedictine monastery at Szekszárd where he was buried two years later. The stone carvings of this monastery were analysed by Melinda Tóth in 1980 (fig. 7).²⁷ She compared them to carvings in Venice, such as the *transenna* of the sepulchre of Felicitas Michiel, now in the entrance hall of San Marco (fig. 8). This style certainly followed much earlier Byzantine traditions such as that of the San Vitale in Ravenna, which was regarded as an adequate prototype in 11th-century Venice.

There is another important 11th-century stone carving in Hungary which has been related to Venetian workshops. This is the famous sarcophagus of Székesfehérvár which is usually associated with King Stephen the Saint (fig 9). It was originally a Roman sarcophagus recarved for the canonization of the saint king in 1083. The composition of the left side is determined by the Roman arrangement so the right side seems to transmit the original artistic intention



Fig. 8. *Transenna* of the sepulchre of Felicitas Michiel, Venice, San Marco



Fig. 10. Relief on the south façade of San Marco, Venice

more authentically. This composition is dominated by a cherub and four rosettes, all of them encircled by interlace motifs. This type of interlace was compared to a marble slab of the Venetian San Marco by Tibor Gerevich in 1938 (fig. 10). He argued that the sarcophagus was carved by a Venetian master who was trained in Byzantium.²⁸ His ideas were taken over but slightly modified by Géza Entz in 1964 when he connected the sarcophagus and the workshop of

²⁷ M. TÓTH, *Szekszárdi fejezetek* (Capitals from Szekszárd), in *Építés-Építészettudomány* 12, 1980, p. 425-437.

²⁸ T. GEREVICH, *Magyarország románkori emlékei* (Romanesque monuments of Hungary), Budapest, 1938, p. 159. Already Elemér Varju suspected that the Byzantine style of the sarcophagus was transmitted by Italy. E. VARJU: *Szent István koporsója* (The sarcophagus of Saint Stephen), in *Magyar Művészet* 6, 1930, p. 373.



Fig. 11. The front side of the sarcophagus of Saint Stephen at Székesfehérvár



Fig. 13. Relief from the church of Our Lady at Székesfehérvár, Szent István Király Múzeum



Fig. 14. Relief on the façade of San Giacomo d'Orio, Venice

Zalavár (to whom he attributed the work) to Aquileia.²⁹ Thomas von Bogyay emphasized the Byzantine character of the sarcophagus. He pointed out that the marble slab quoted



Fig. 12. Koimesis, Byzantine ivory carving, Paris, Cluny Museum

by Gerevich is in reality a Byzantine carving brought to Venice only after 1204.³⁰ Bogyay also took over the interpretation of the front side of the sarcophagus formulated by Zoltán Kádár in 1955. Here we can see an angel who is lifting the soul of the deceased to Heaven (fig. 11). This motif is well-known from a group of Byzantine ivory carvings from the early 11th century which represent the death of Virgin Mary in a special way: her soul is taken by Christ and given to an angel in the upper right corner (fig. 12).³¹ More recently, Ernő Marosi realized that the plasticity and contraposto of the flying angel is comparable to a group of Venetian carvings from the 13th century (he quoted the sarcophagus of Doge Reniero Zeno in the SS. Giovanni e Paolo and the Rogati-Negri tomb in Padua, S. Antonio). These carvings are certainly related to Early Christian and Byzantine sculpture. Marosi suspected that such a relation would be valid also in the 11th century and thus the Székesfehérvár sarcophagus is probably a witness of a lost phase of Venetian sculpture.³²

The upper and lower frame of the Rogati-Negri tomb is decorated with dental motif which is highly characteristic for Venetian carvings. Melinda Tóth realised that it is present in 12th-century stone carvings from Székesfehérvár, e.g. a large capital from the period of the rebuilding of the basilica. She also connected fragments of a frieze from the royal basilica of Székesfehérvár to Venice (fig. 13). Indeed, there are many comparable fragments known from Venice (e.g. San Giacomo d'Orio, fig. 14) which can prove that Venetian sculpture was quite influential in Hungary during the 11th and 12th centuries. A *patera* showing animal

²⁹ G. ENTZ, E. SZAKÁL, *La reconstitution du sarcophage du roi Etienne*, in *Acta Historiae Artium* 10, 1964, p. 225.

³⁰ Th v. BOGYAY, *Über den Stuhlweißenburger Sarkophag des hl. Stephan*, in *Ungarn-Jahrbuch* 4, 1972, p. 16.

³¹ BOGYAY, *op. cit.* (n. 30) p. 21; Z. KÁDÁR, *A székesfehérvári István koporsó ikonográfiája*, in *Művészettörténeti Értesítő* 4, 1955, p. 201-204.

³² E. MAROSI, „*Quievit corpus beatum eodem in loco annis XLV*”. *Bemerkungen zum Sarkophag Königs Stefan des Heiligen von Ungarn*, in A. Cadei (a cura di), *Arte d'Occidente: temi e metodi*, Roma, 1999, vol. I, p. 337-348.



Fig. 15. Patera from Székesfehérvár, Szent István Király Múzeum



Fig. 16. The cross of Saint Kinga, detail, Cracow, Cathedral treasury (after Kovács 1974)

fight found in Székesfehérvár is another clear example of the vivid Venetian connections (fig. 15).³³

Turning to the 13th century, the problem of Venetian origin of works of art has been discussed primarily in connection with goldsmithwork. One of the most debated objects of medieval Hungarian art is the Holy Crown. The lower part of the crown, so-called *Corona Graeca*, is a Byzantine female crown which can be dated to the 1060-70s. The upper part, the so-called *Corona Latina* is more difficult to date and several hypotheses have been formulated. One of them, published in 1966 by Josef Deér, compared the enamels of the *Corona Latina* to objects which were inspired by Byzantine enamels of the 12th century. Deér suspected that these Byzantine prototypes arrived to Venice after 1204 thus they were copied in the early 13th century. Deér localized this workshop to Venice and attributed them the enamels plaques of the Linköping mitre in Stockholm and the figures on the episcopal glove of Brixen. He argued that the enamels of the *Corona Latina* are following this Venetian style but not consequently thus they were produced in Hungary in the early 13th century.³⁴ I cannot analyse the whole problematic now, however, it must be stressed that dating to the 11th and 12th century is more accepted. Moreover, the enamels localized to Venice by Deér have been connected to Constantinople by more recent literature.³⁵

Deér also supposed that the enamels of the *Corona Latina* were not the only works produced in Hungary under Venetian influence during the 13th century.³⁶ The famous cross of Saint Kinga is preserved in the Wawel Cathedral in Cracow. According to her legend, Saint Kinga (1224-1292), the daughter of King Béla IV of Hungary and the widow of Prince Boleslaw V of Cracow offered her own crown to turn it to a cross. In reality, the cross is composed of two crowns, both of them to be dated to the mid-13th-century. One of them, forming the horizontal arm, is decorated with special small figures in floral ornament (fig. 16). The other one, utilised for the vertical arm, is simpler and decorated with eagles. A third crown, stylistically related to the first two, has been used for the head reliquary of Saint Sigismund in the cathedral of Plock. Finally, a fourth crown is known after a photograph which has been stolen from the cathedral of Seville in 1873. The origin of these crowns is much disputed.³⁷ Their style seems to go back to the Maas region, however, it has been suggested that they were produced in the court of Friedrich II. Recently, Rainer Sachs interpreted the small figures in the horizontal crown of the Cracow cross as heroes of the medieval roman Erec and Enide. According to this reconstruction, it followed the version of Hartman von Aue which would support to localize the crown to the circle of the Stauf dynasty.³⁸ Etele Kiss, who accepted this

³³ D. DERCSÉNYI, *A székesfehérvári királyi bazilika* (The royal basilica of Székesfehérvár), Budapest, 1943; E. MAROSI, M. TÓTH (eds.), *Árpád-kori kőfaragványok* (Stone carvings from the age of the Arpadians) Budapest, Székesfehérvár, 1978, p. 107-111 (M. TÓTH); S. TÓTH, *Román kori kőfaragványok a Magyar Nemzeti Galéria Régi Magyar Gyűjteményében* (Romanesque stone carvings in the collection of the Hungarian National Gallery), Budapest, 2010, p. 67-84; K. MENTÉNYI, *Szőlőleveles kőfaragványok. A királyi prépostsági templom új építkezései a 12. század elején* (Carvings with vine leaves. New buildings of the royal collegiate church at the beginning of the 12th century), in A. Smohay (ed.), *Könyves Kálmán és Székesfehérvár*, Székesfehérvár, in press.

³⁴ J. DEÉR, *Die Heilige Krone Ungarns*, Wien, 1966, p. 166-170.

³⁵ P. HETHERINGTON, *The enamels on a mitre from Linkoping Cathedral, and art in thirteenth-century Constantinople*, in Id., *Enamels, crowns, relics and icons*, Aldershot, 2008, p. 1-16.

³⁶ J. DEÉR, *Rezension. Lotte Kurras: Das Kronenkreuz im Krakauer Domschatz*, in *Kunstchronik* 17, 1964, p. 343-352.

³⁷ See more recently I. TAKÁCS, *Opus duplex in der Goldschmiedekunst des 13. Jahrhunderts und die höfische Kultur*, in *Ars Decorativa* 26, 2008, p. 7-37. with previous literature.

³⁸ R. SACHS, *Treści narracyjne na krzyżu z diademów ze skarbcza Katedry Krakowskiej na Wawelu* (Narrative scenes on the diadem cross in the treasury of the Cracow cathedral in the Wawel), in *Katedra Krakowska w Średniowieczu*, Krakow, 1996, p. 181-196; see also J. MÜHLEMANN, *Die "Erec"-Rezeption auf dem Krakauer Kronenkreuz*, in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 122, 2000, 76-102,



Fig. 17. The Coronation Cross of Esztergom, detail of the front side
(photo Attila Mudrák)



Fig. 18. The Coronation Cross of Esztergom, detail of the back side
(photo Attila Mudrák)

identification, argued that the roman was widespread in Central Europe.³⁹ Moreover, it seems that the figures return stereotypically in each compartment thus they cannot be put into a narrative order.

Another branch of the research connected these crowns to Venetian workshops. Irene Hueck identified the term “opus duplex” with a group of Venetian liturgical objects from the 14th century. She argued that their origin can be found in the above mentioned crowns and the connection between the two groups is formed by such objects as the Cross of Saint Atto in Piacenza and the reliquary of Charroux.⁴⁰ The feet of these objects are really related to the decoration of the crowns; however, we must realize that the Venetian production is considerably later than the objects of Cracow and Plock. These crowns, on the other hand, are all related to the Hungarian court. Saint Kinga/Kunigunda was the daughter of the Hungarian king Béla IV and two of his other daughters, Constance and Yolanda married to other Polish and Lodomerian princes. It is highly probable that these three Hungarian princesses were the original owners of the three Polish crowns. The crown of Seville can

be connected to another Yolanda/Violant, the sister of Béla IV, who married King James I of Aragon in 1235. We should also keep in mind that a considerable number of other jewellery was found in Hungary which is related stylistically to the crowns. Therefore a significant group of scholars, most notably Lotte Kurras in 1963, Éva Kovács in 1971 and Imre Takács in 2008, regarded reasonably this group the product of a Hungarian workshop.⁴¹ Irene Hueck, who identified the two crowns of the Cracow cross with those mentioned in the account of Syr Wullam, did not know yet that the source dates from 1264, much later than the crowns themselves. On the contrary, Imre Takács suggested that the Venetian objects were created by Hungarian goldsmiths who escaped to Venice during the Mongol invasion.⁴²

Another group of goldsmithwork from the same period has been connected to Venice, too. An important piece of this group is the Coronation Cross of Hungary, today kept in the Cathedral Treasury of Esztergom. The front side is decorated with rich three-dimensional filigree ornament (fig. 17) which is characteristic to a circle around Friedrich II, e.g. to the crown offered by him to the reliquary of Saint

³⁹ E. KISS, *Ötvösség és fémművesség Magyarországon a tatárjárás idején* (Goldsmithwork and metalwork in Hungary in the period of the Mongol Invasion) in Á. Ritoók (ed.), *A tatárjárás (1241-42)*. Budapest, 2007, p. 63.

⁴⁰ I. HUECK, *De opere duplici venetico*, in *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz* 12, 1965, p. 1-30.

⁴¹ L. KURRAS, *Das Kronenkreuz im Krakauer Domschatz*, Nürnberg, 1963; É. KOVÁCS, *Über einige Probleme des Krakauer Kronenkreuzes*, in *Acta Historiae Artium* 17, Budapest, 1971, p. 136-172; TAKÁCS *op. cit.* (n. 37).

⁴² TAKÁCS *op. cit.* (n. 37) p. 23.



Fig. 19. Detail of the diptych of King Andrew III of Hungary, Bern, Historisches Museum (after Kerny 2007)

Elisabeth of Hungary in Marburg. The other side, however, is decorated with a filigree work of concentric circles (fig. 18), typical for Venice.⁴³ Another related cross is connected to Závíš of Falkenstein, a Bohemian aristocrat who donated it in 1290 to the Cistercian Abbey of Vyšší Brod. The origin of the cross is usually connected to his wife, Kunigunda of Hungary, grand-daughter of King Béla IV and widow of King Ottokar II of Bohemia. This would explain the similarities of the front sides of the Esztergom and the Závíš crosses. However, the back side of the Závíš cross has a different decoration which is called Würmchen-filigree, known in the courtly art of Palermo. Dana Stehlíková suggested that the cross was brought to Bohemia by a Venetian merchant or was created there by Venetian masters.⁴⁴ Therefore Etele Kiss regarded these two crosses as import objects, which does not exclude their connection to the Hungarian royal court.⁴⁵

Finally, the last object to be connected to a Hungarian ruler of the Árpád dynasty has also Venetian connections. The diptych of King Andrew III is kept in Bern today but its style and technic is typically Venetian (fig. 19). It is composed of two large cameos representing the Crucifixion and the Ascension and further 44 miniatures under crystal cover. The frames are decorated with filigree and precious stones. The iconographic program is complex, covering the different groups of saints, including prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, hermits, virgins and saint widows,

newly canonized saints of the mendicant orders (Francis, Anthony, Dominic, Peter Martyr) as well as local saints of Venice and Hungary. In this later group St Stephen of Hungary, St Emeric, St Ladislav and St Elisabeth of Hungary can be found. Therefore the object was undoubtedly created for a Hungarian commissioner, King Andrew III or his father, Prince Stephen in the second half of the 13th century. The significance of this object is that this is the first known common representation of the Holy Kings of Hungary. While unquestionably a Venetian product, this program suggests some sort of Hungarian participation in the creation process.⁴⁶

To sum up the results of this brief overview: Venice was undoubtedly a highly important commercial centre for the Hungarian Kingdom in the Middle Ages, especially after 1204. It transmitted not only the goods of Levant but also products of the West. In the meantime, the art of Venice was also under the influence of East and West which was transmitted toward Hungary. Nevertheless, Hungary itself lied on the border between Eastern and Western Christianity therefore it was under similar artistic influences. That's why it is so complicated to decide whether certain objects or stylistic tendencies originated in Hungary or Venice. Or, in other words, these two territories were culturally comparable and that's why objects, ideas and tradesmen moved so easily between the harbour of Venice and the Hungarian Kingdom.

⁴³ KISS, *op. cit.* (n. 39), p. 64.

⁴⁴ W. Seipel (Hrsg.), *Nobiles Officianae. Die königlichen Hofwerkstätten zu Palermo zur Zeit der Normannen und Staufer im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert*. Milano 2004, p. 239-242 (D. STEHLÍKOVÁ).

⁴⁵ KISS, *op. cit.* (n. 39), p. 64.

⁴⁶ D. BLUME, *Hausaltar des Königs Andreas III. von Ungarn*, in D. Blume, M. Werner (Hrsg.), *Elisabeth von Thüringen: eine europäische Heilige*, Petersberg, 2007, p. 308-312; T. Kerny (ed.), *Szent Imre 1000 éve, Katalógus* (1000 years of Saint Emeric, exhibition catalogue), Székesfehérvár, 2007, no. 19 (T. KERNY).