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Patrons and Patterns: The Connection between the Aragon Dynasty of Naples and the Hungarian Court of Matthias Corvinus

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Summary

Through the Angevin family, Naples and Hungary had very close relations in the 14th century. Matthias Corvinus (1458–1490) was thus reviving an old connection when he married Beatrice, daughter of King Ferdinand of Naples, in 1476. The Aragon dynasty's patronage of the arts was most notable in book collecting and music, and this found a lively echo in the court of Buda, especially the Corvina Library and the musical life. It was also through the link with Naples that Matthias' li-

brary acquired Renaissance architectural treatises in the 1480s. Beatrice's brother Giovanni d' Aragona may have been instrumental in this. Matthias appointed him Archbishop of Esztergom, the highest ecclesiastical dignity in Hungary (1484–1485). The other intermediary in the study of architecture was the Florentine humanist Francesco Bandini, who lived in Naples and came to the Hungarian court in 1476 in Beatrice's retinue. He brought Filarete's treatise from Italy for Matthias in 1488.

Keywords: *patrons of art, 15th century, Aragon dynasty, Naples, Hungarian court, Buda, Matthias Corvinus, Beatrice of Aragon*

Through the Angevin family, Naples and Hungary had very close relations in the 14th century. After the extinction of the House of Árpád (1301), several European dynasties laid claim to the throne of the Hungarian Kingdom. Charles Robert of Anjou (1307–1342) came out of this power struggle victorious and after a few chaotic years he managed to consolidate his reign. His son Louis the Great (1342–1382) also acquired the Polish throne, but his campaigns against Naples after the murder of his brother Andrew did not have lasting results. After the Anjou rulers, the Neapolitan contacts slackened during the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg (King of Bohemia and Hungary in 1387–1437, Holy Roman Emperor in 1433–1437); he only got as far as Rome in 1433.¹

The first wife of Matthias Corvinus (1458–1490) was Catherine Podiebrad, who arrived in 1463 to Matthias' court at a very young age. At fifteen, she became pregnant, but unfortunately both she and the baby died in childbirth. Just over twenty, the king was naturally intent to marry again, but he wanted to choose someone from a European ruling family. However, as he did not originate from a traditional royal house, he was turned down by both the Habsburgs and the Jagiellonians.²

Matthias' second marriage was preceded by a considerable amount of diplomatic negotiations and legations. In 1474, Matthias joined the Papal-Neapolitan Alliance (*Lega*) against the Holy Roman Empire and France by marrying Beatrice (Beatrice of Aragon, Beatrice of Naples; 1457–1508), daughter of King Ferdinand of Naples, in 1476. The marriage was intended to revive the Neapolitan contacts. This involvement with the Neapolitan court, however, did not benefit Hungary's foreign relations, giving rise to serious conflicts, e.g. with the papacy. However, the cultural-artistic influence of Naples was unquestionably positive. Ferdinand (Ferrante), King of Naples (1458–1494) had good relations with Florence as well: he was in contact with Vespasiano da Bisticci, humanist and librarian, and corresponded with Lorenzo de' Medici.³

Beatrice's grandfather, Alfonso V of Aragon, called the Magnanimous (1442–1458), was a patron of Renaissance culture and humanism. He had acquired the Kingdom of Naples for the Aragonese dynasty, kept it in the teeth of the Anjou and turned the Neapolitan court into a model of Italian Renaissance court. He supported and kept several humanists there, including the Greek George of Trebizond



1. Cola Rapicano, *Diomedes Carafa Offers his Work to Beatrice of Aragon* (source: Diomedes Carafa, *De institutione vivendi*, Naples, ca. 1476, Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Ms. Parm. 1654, fol. 4r.)

Cola Rapicano, Diomedes Carafa predaje svoje djelo Beatrici Aragonskoj

(who received 600 ducats a year for 3 years) and Theodore Gaza.⁴ Alfonso supervised the construction of Castel Nuovo with Vitruvius' architectural treatise in his hand and also built a huge library. Besides books, he collected antique gems, cameos, panel pictures, coins, and medals.⁵

The art patronage of Ferrante was different from his father Alfonso's: he enriched his library, kept several copiers, added 142 new manuscripts to his collection, and supported book printing. He backed his humanists not purely for the promotion of science, but also for political considerations.⁶

In the House of Aragon, girls were provided with the same education as boys. Beatrice's father presented her with a Latin grammar book, Cicero and Virgil manuscripts, and her mastery of Latin and knowledge of citations from Latin authors earned her the admiration of her contemporaries, who looked upon her as one of the cleverest ladies of the Quattrocento. She was fond of poetry and – as will be seen later – of music.⁷ The Italian poet, writer, biographer, and dance instructor Antonio Cornazzano (ca. 1430–1484) wrote a guidebook for Beatrice's elder sister Eleonora around 1476 with the title *Del modo di regere e di regnare*.⁸

Diomedes Carafa was a salient figure of the Neapolitan court, being an adviser and diplomat of the king, the chief controller of his finances, and the tutor of his children, including Beatrice. Before her arrival in Hungary, Carafa wrote a treatise entitled *De institutione vivendi* for the would-be Hungarian queen about how she should treat her future subjects. Since the 1780s, the manuscript has been kept in the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma.⁹

Matthias was probably enchanted by beautiful and clever Beatrice, and following their marriage on December 22, 1476 she thoroughly transformed the life of the court. Before her arrival, anyone could approach the king freely, but now there was a guard. The queen introduced splendour at meals.¹⁰ As the years passed, it became increasingly clear that the young queen was sterile, and Matthias faced one of the greatest blows that could befall a king: he had no legal heir.

In some cases, Matthias and Beatrice acted jointly in art patronage, not only in political decisions.¹¹ An account has revealed that the queen paid a huge sum, 450 ducats, to *Magistro Clementi* for constructions (in Buda?).¹² It was probably none other than Chimenti Camicia of Florence, the chief architect of Matthias'. An explanation for the payment must lie in the fact that the red marble quarry at Süttő, which was used by the Italian stone carvers for the architectonic ornaments in Buda, was the property of the Queen.

Joint patronage is also evident from the commissions of manuscripts. Some of them are known to have belonged to Beatrice's library. Around 1480, the Florentine Francesco Rosselli, who spent two years in Buda in 1479–1481, illuminated six manuscripts at the Buda court for the Corvina Library, three of which – the Psalter, the Origen and the Regiomontanus – contain the Aragon coat-of-arms in addition to Matthias' one, which means that they were made for Beatrice.¹³ Similarly, the Curtius Rufus manuscript of Budapest must have belonged to her.¹⁴ Cristoforo Persona likewise dedicated his translation of Agathias to the Queen.¹⁵ Thus, Beatrice appears as a patron of books on a par with Matthias at the time when Florentine manuscripts started to be adorned *all'antica* upon the order of the Hungarian royal court.

It is also to Beatrice's credit that the emblems of Matthias were created in addition to those of the House of Aragon.¹⁶ Her influence must have been instrumental in the creation of Matthias' emblems. However, they can only be dated to the end of the 1480s and are manifest in two main areas: book illumination and architectural ornaments. An important group of remains of the latter are the ceramic floor tiles from the maiolica workshop in Buda. This decor of Hispanic-Moorish origin had been introduced to Naples by Beatrice's grandfather Alfonso I. In the Castel Nuovo and Castell dell'Ovo, hexagonal and square floor tiles were used along with Alfonso's emblems: the open book, millet, and the burning throne. Motifs of the reconstructed maiolica floor segments include both Matthias' and Beatrice's (the Aragonese dynasty's) emblems. The latter include the burning throne, millet, the diamond mountain, and a bundle of



2. Agathias, *De bello gothorum*, Naples, ca. 1483–1484, Budapest, National Széchényi Library, Cod. Lat. 413, fols. lxx v, 1r.
 Agathias, *De bello gothorum*, *Napulj*, oko 1483.–1484., *Budimpešta*, *Országos Széchényi Könyvtár*, Cod. Lat. 413, fol. lxx v, 1r.

lances, while Matthias' are the hour-glass, the fountain, and the flaming cauldron.¹⁷

The other area where the use of emblems in Hungary is manifest is book illumination. The arrival of Beatrice (1476) gave a boost to the development of Matthias' library, so that he became the greatest client of Florentine illuminating workshops. Matthias' emblems were designed at Attavante's workshop in Florence after 1485 and were applied in large numbers in the manuscripts made there.¹⁸

Beatrice and her youngest brother Giovanni d'Aragona, who was the archiepiscopal vicar (1480–1484) and the archbishop of Esztergom (1484–1485),¹⁹ also exported to Buda the Aragonese love of books, which played a great role in the efflorescence of the Corvina Library. Moreover, it was Giovanni d'Aragona who introduced the *all'antica* style of ornamentation to the Neapolitan art of illumination through North Italian miniature painter Gaspare da Padova, who was active in Rome.²⁰

Giovanni d'Aragona was born in Naples in 1456 as the son of Ferrante I, King of Naples, and his first wife, Isabelle of Clermont. As the third son, he was meant to be a cleric. In 1477, he was nominated for the administrator of the archiepiscopal see of Taranto. He also received the cardinal's hat from Sixtus IV and was appointed the apostolic governor of Cosenza in 1481. In 1479, the pope delegated him to Hungary as a papal legate.²¹ He first arrived in Hungary in the winter of 1479, accompanied by Felice Feliciano and Raffaello Maffei, later known as the encyclopaedist Volateranus. Felice Feliciano collected the inscriptions of Roman stones in Pannonia. Kristeller has discovered that Feliciano belonged to an enthusiastic scholarly society in Bologna together with Mantegna, who organized excursions to collect ancient inscriptions. In the second half of 1479, he came to Hungary with Giovanni d'Aragona. His collection of inscriptions from ancient Roman stones is kept at the Biblioteca Municipale of Reggio Emilia and was published by Mommsen in volume III of his monumental opus *Corpus*

Inscriptionum Latinarum. The anonymous collector was identified by Charles Mitchell in 1961. The collection also contains inscriptions from Roman stones and drawings of them made on the spot: in Buda, Nagytétény, Szentendre, Győr, Komárom, Tata, Solymár, and Siklós.²²

Matthias welcomed Beatrice's brother, the would-be archbishop of Esztergom, with great pomp. Bonfini claims that Giovanni arrived in Buda at night, but Matthias had ordered illumination that changed the night into daylight.²³ Giovanni stayed until early summer 1480. Matthias appointed him to the supreme ecclesiastic office (apostolic governor) in Hungary in February 1480, and the pope endorsed the appointment in December 1482. Matthias also appointed him the archbishop of Esztergom, the highest ecclesiastical dignity in Hungary (1484–1485).

In 1483, he became the apostolic administrator of Salerno. In 1483, he was again the papal nuncio for Hungary and Germany. He arrived in Hungary in September 1483, and in summer 1484 he returned to Italy and took part in the conclave electing Innocent VIII as the next pope. He died in Rome during the grave epidemic of October 1485, and was buried in the basilica of Santa Sabina on the Aventine Hill.²⁴

Giovanni d' Aragona had inherited his love of books from his father Ferrante, King of Naples, and even more from his grandfather Alfonso V of Aragon. In his *De Cardinalatu*, Paolo Cortesi compares him – with a bit of exaggeration – to Lorenzo il Magnifico as a book collector, ahead of Cosimo de' Medici, Pope Nicholas V, or Federico da Montefeltro. He spent 6000 ducats per year on the copying and decoration of manuscripts. However, only 44 manuscripts and 14 incunabula can be identified as part of his library after much devastation.²⁵ Most are today in Spanish libraries, including the Biblioteca Universitaria of Valencia, which holds a great part of the Aragonese library.²⁶

Giovanni d' Aragona and his retinue also commissioned constructions in Esztergom during his archiepiscopacy.²⁷ It is known from the sources that Matthias donated 10 silver liturgical vessels and a gold chalice to his relative – (...) *inprimis reverende Cardinalis (...) vasis decem argenteis, aureoque calice talentorum duodecim, quae sacrifice usui sunt, in memoriam solennitatis huiusce, meo ac reginae nomine donator*.²⁸ Matthias' historian Bonfini wrote in 1486 that Matthias gave chasubles and a mitre to the archbishop of Esztergom – (...) *sacra veste ex solido auro contexta mitraque preciosissima* (...).²⁹ Matthias also sent silver vessels to Giovanni and his father, Ferrante.³⁰

It was also through the link with Naples that Matthias' library acquired Renaissance architectural treatises in the 1480s. Beatrice's brother Giovanni may have been instrumental in this. His library included Filarete's treatise³¹ and he may have influenced Matthias to acquire a copy of it.³² The treatises of Alberti and Filarete surely came to the Corvina Library in the second half of the 1480s. Two of Alberti's *De re aedificatoria* and one of Filarete's treatises survive from that library.³³ Another possible intermediary of Alberti's treatise is Francesco Bandini, who brought Filarete's treatise to Matthias from



3. Quintus Curtius Rufus, *Res gestae Alexandri Magni*, Naples (?), ca. 1471–1475, Budapest, ELTE University Library and Archive, Cod. Lat. 4, fol. 1r.

Quintus Curtius Rufus, *Res gestae Alexandri Magni*, Napulj (?), oko 1471.–1475. Budimpešta, Sveučilišna knjižnica i arhiv ELTE, Cod. Lat. 4, fol. 1r.

his trip to Rome in 1487–1488, as the preface to Bonfini's translation suggests. Bonfini translated the work from the *volgare* into Latin for the king.³⁴ Bonfini also noted that the king ordered the Filarete treatise in order to learn all the rules of true proportion and all kinds of architectural structures from it.³⁵ The date of inclusion of these three manuscripts in the Corviniana Library verifies that Matthias' interest in architecture became intensified after 1485, possibly owing to Bandini's influence.

As Rózsa Feuer-Tóth has discovered, the neo-Platonist humanist thinker Francesco Bandini dei Baroncelli of Florence was the king's chief counsellor on artistic (especially architectural) matters.³⁶ He came to Hungary in 1476, in the retinue of Queen Beatrice, from the Neapolitan court, where his father, opposed to the Medici, had also been employed.³⁷ In Naples, Bandini had frequented the circle of Giovanni Pontano, the humanist of Alfonso, Duke of Calabria. Bandini, a leading humanist of the age, who had also been on friendly terms with Marsilio Ficino earlier in Florence, eventually spent almost fifteen years at the court of Buda.



4. Maiolica tiled floor with emblems of Matthias Corvinus and Beatrice of Aragon, between 1480 and 1490, Budapest History Museum
Podne pločice u majolici s amblemima Matije Korvina i Beatrice Aragonske, između 1480. i 1490., Povijesni muzej Budimpešte

Bandini was an initiative humanist of the “mediator” type, but few of his written works survive.³⁸ He had close relations to the Italian artists, and thus was ideal for the adviser role, needed by Matthias for the *all’antica* transformation of his Buda residence.³⁹ A weighty piece of evidence shows that he brought Filarete’s treatise to Matthias from Italy in 1488.⁴⁰

The Aragon dynasty’s patronage of the arts was most notable in book collecting and music, and this found a lively echo at the court of Buda, especially the Corvina Library and the musical life. Ferrante employed the most outstanding musicians and music theoreticians of the age at his court, paying them more than other rulers did. The Flemish singer, cantor, composer, and music theorist Ioannes Tinctoris spent

some 15 years, from 1472–1487, at the Neapolitan court and was the music teacher of Beatrice. He dedicated three of his treatises on music theory and six masses to her.⁴¹

Similarly to her father Ferrante I, an important area of Beatrice’s art patronage was music, and she seems to have controlled the music life at the court of Buda.⁴² In her letter of January 31, 1484 to Lorenzo, she writes about her organist, the Dominican Stefano Paone da Salerno, and informs him that she had reported about the incurred costs to Gondi.⁴³ It was upon her invitation that one of the most famous lute players of the time, Pietro Bono, came around 1487 from the court of Ferrara to Buda, and she tried to bring Paul Hofhaimer to Hungary, too.⁴⁴ Another Flemish singer and



composer, a friend of Tinctoris', Johannes Stockem, likewise served at the Hungarian royal court in the mid-1480s.⁴⁵

After Matthias' death, his successor Vladislav II married Beatrice, but it soon turned out that she was no longer needed in Hungarian politics. She moved to the court of her nephew Ippolito d'Este, the new archbishop of Esztergom, which had an Italian retinue and functioned similarly to Matthias' court, only on a smaller scale.⁴⁶ While he was alive, Ferrante prevented the pope from annulling the marriage, but after his death in 1494 Beatrice's hopes vanished. In 1500, she returned to Naples and withdrew to a nunnery. She died in 1508 and was buried in Naples, at the church of San Pietro Martire.

5. Unknown South Italian master, *Portrait of Giovanni d'Aragona*, Taranto, Palazzo Arcivescovile, 17th–18th century
Nepoznati južnotalijanski umjetnik, Portret Giovannija Aragonskog, Nadbiskupska palača u Tarantu, 17.–18. stoljeće

Notes

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About the music patronage of Ferrante, see: JERRY H. BENTLEY (note 3), 72–76.

42

Ibid., 75; THOMAS HAFFNER (note 19), 35. The six Mass compositions of Tinctoris are to be found in a manuscript in Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emmanuele III: Ms. VI, E. 40. Cf. *Matthias Corvinus* (note 2), 428–431, Cat. No. 10.13 (VINCENZO BONI – ZOLTÁN MIZSEI).

43

Stephanus Pavonus de Salerno was the organist and organ builder of Ferrante's: JOLÁN BALOGH (note 12), I, 583; THOMAS HAFFNER (note 19), 52. Matthias asked Lorenzo de' Medici in 1484 to send Stefano da Salerno to Buda in order to build an organ; cf. THOMAS HAFFNER (note 19), 52, n. 92. In 1485, Fra Stefano Giovanni d'Aragona is mentioned as a *capellanus familiaris et continuus commensalis*. Cf. THOMAS HAFFNER (note 19), 89, n. 50

44

ÁRPÁD MIKÓ (note 16, 2008), 252.

45

Magyarország zenetörténete, I, Középkor [The history of Hungarian music, I: The Middle Ages], (ed.) Benjámín Rajeczky, Budapest, 1988, 113 (MÁRTA SZ. FARKAS).

46

ÁRPÁD MIKÓ (note 16, 2011), 419–425.

Sažetak

Péter Farbaky

Pokroviteljstvo i umrežavanje: Veza između napuljske aragonske dinastije i ugarskog dvora Matije Korvina

U četrnaestom stoljeću Napulj i Ugarska bili su u vrlo bliskim odnosima putem anžuvinske obitelji. Matija Korvin (1458.–1490.) pridružio se 1474. godine papinsko-napuljskom savezu (*Lega*) protiv Svetog Rimskog Carstva i Francuske, a 1476. uzeo je za ženu Beatricu Aragonsku (Beatrica Napuljska, 1457.–1508.), kćerku kralja Ferdinanda (Ferrantea) Napuljskog. Njihov je brak značio ponovno jačanje ugarskih veza s Napuljem. To, doduše, nije pogodovalo međunarodnim odnosima Ugarske i uzrokovalo je ozbiljne sukobe, između ostaloga s papinstvom. Međutim, kulturno-umjetnički utjecaj Napulja nedvojbeno je bio pozitivan. Beatricin djed Alfonso V. Aragonski (poznat i kao Velikodušni; 1442.–1458.) bio je pokrovitelj renesansne kulture i humanista. Ferranteovo po-

kroviteljstvo bilo je drugačije od onoga njegova oca Alfonsa, budući da on nije podupirao humaniste samo radi znanosti, nego i iz političkih razloga. Aragonsko pokroviteljstvo na području umjetnosti najviše je došlo do izražaja u sakupljanju knjiga i glazbi, što se na budimskom dvoru manifestiralo u obliku knjižnice Corvina i živog glazbenog života.

Beatrica je imala izrazito dobro klasično, latinsko obrazovanje. Diomede Carafa, Ferranteov savjetnik i diplomat, napisao je za buduću kraljicu traktat pod naslovom *De institutione vivendi* o tome kako bi trebala postupati sa svojim podanicima. Beatrica je potpuno promijenila život na ugarskom dvoru. Matija i Beatrica nastupali su zajednički i kao pokrovitelji umjetnosti, a ne samo u političkim odlukama.

Iz izvora doznajemo da je kraljica isplatila golemu svotu od 450 dukata Chimentiju Camiciji, glavnom arhitektu kralja Matije. Njihovo zajedničko pokroviteljstvo očituje se i u narudžbama rukopisa, a za neke od njih poznato je da su pripadali Beatricinoj knjižnici. Oko 1480. godine Firentinac Francesco Rosselli, koji je u Budimu proveo dvije godine (1479.–1481.) oslikao je šest rukopisa za knjižnicu Corvina na budimskom dvoru, od kojih tri – Psaltir, Origen i Regiomontanus – nose aragonski grb uz Matijin, što znači da su bili napravljeni za Beatricu. Ona je bila zaslužna i za Matijine ambleme koje nalazimo uz one aragonske, i to osobito na dvama područjima: u iluminaciji knjiga i u arhitektonskoj plastici. Važni ostaci ove potonje uključuju keramičke podne pločice iz radionice majolike u Budimu.

Beatrica i njezin mlađi brat Giovanni Aragonski (1456.–1485.) također su u Budim prenijeli ljubav prema knjigama koja je bila karakteristična za aragonski dvor, a to je uvelike utjecalo na procvat Corvine. Giovanni Aragonski rođen je u Napulju 1456. kao treći sin Ferrantea I. Papa ga je 1479. poslao kao papinskog legata u Ugarsku, kamo je stigao u jesen iste godine. Matija ga je imenovao nadbiskupskim zastupnikom (1480.–1484.), a zatim i nadbiskupom Ostrogona (1484.–1485.). Godine 1483. ponovo ga nalazimo kao papinskog nuncija u Ugarskoj i Njemačkoj. U Ugarsku je stigao u rujnu 1483., a u ljeto 1484. vratio se u Italiju. Giovanni je bio jedan od najznačajnijih sakupljača knjiga talijanske renesanse. Njegova je knjižnica posjedovala Filareteov traktat i možda je upravo on utjecao na Matiju da nabavi primjerak za Corvinu.

Neoplatonistički humanistički mislilac Francesco Bandini dei Baroncelli iz Firence bio je glavni kraljev savjetnik za pi-

tanja umjetnosti (osobito arhitekture). U Napulju je Bandini pripadao krugu Giovannija Pontana, humanista kalabrijskog vojvode Alfonsa. Došao je na ugarski dvor 1476. godine u Beatricinoj sviti i živio je na ugarskom dvoru sve do kraljeve smrti (1490.). Upravo je on Matiji donio Filareteov traktat iz Italije 1488.

Poput svoga oca Ferrantea I., Beatrica je bila velika pokroviteljica glazbe. Flamanski pjevač, skladatelj i teoretičar glazbe Johannes Tinctoris bio je njezin učitelj glazbe u Napulju, a posvetio joj je i tri teorijska traktata i šest misa. Beatrica je uvelike poticala glazbeni život na budimskom dvoru. Njezin orguljaš bio je dominikanac Stefano Paone da Salerno. Na njezin je poziv jedan od najčuvenijih svirača lutnje toga doba, Pietro Bono, došao oko 1487. sa dvora u Ferrari u Budim. Još jedan flamanski pjevač i skladatelj, Johannes Stockem, služio je na ugarskome kraljevskom dvoru sredinom 80-ih godina 15. stoljeća. Nakon smrti kralja Matije Beatrica se udala za njegovu nasljednika Vladislava II., no ubrzo se pokazalo da za nju više nema mjesta u ugarskoj politici. Preselila je na dvor svoga nećaka, Ippolita d'Estea, novog nadbiskupa Ostrogona, koji je sa svojom talijanskom svitom funkcionirao poput onoga kralja Matije, samo u skromnijem opsegu. Nakon Ferranteove smrti 1494. godine papa je poništio brak između Beatrice i Vladislava II. te se ona 1500. vratila u Napulj i povukla u samostan. Umrla je 1508. godine i pokopana je u Napulju, u crkvi San Pietro Martire.

Ključne riječi: pokrovitelji umjetnosti, 15. stoljeće, aragonska dinastija, Napulj, ugarski dvor, Budim, Matija Korvin, Beatrica Aragonska