



1985

HUNGARIAN STUDIES

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HUNGARIAN STUDIES

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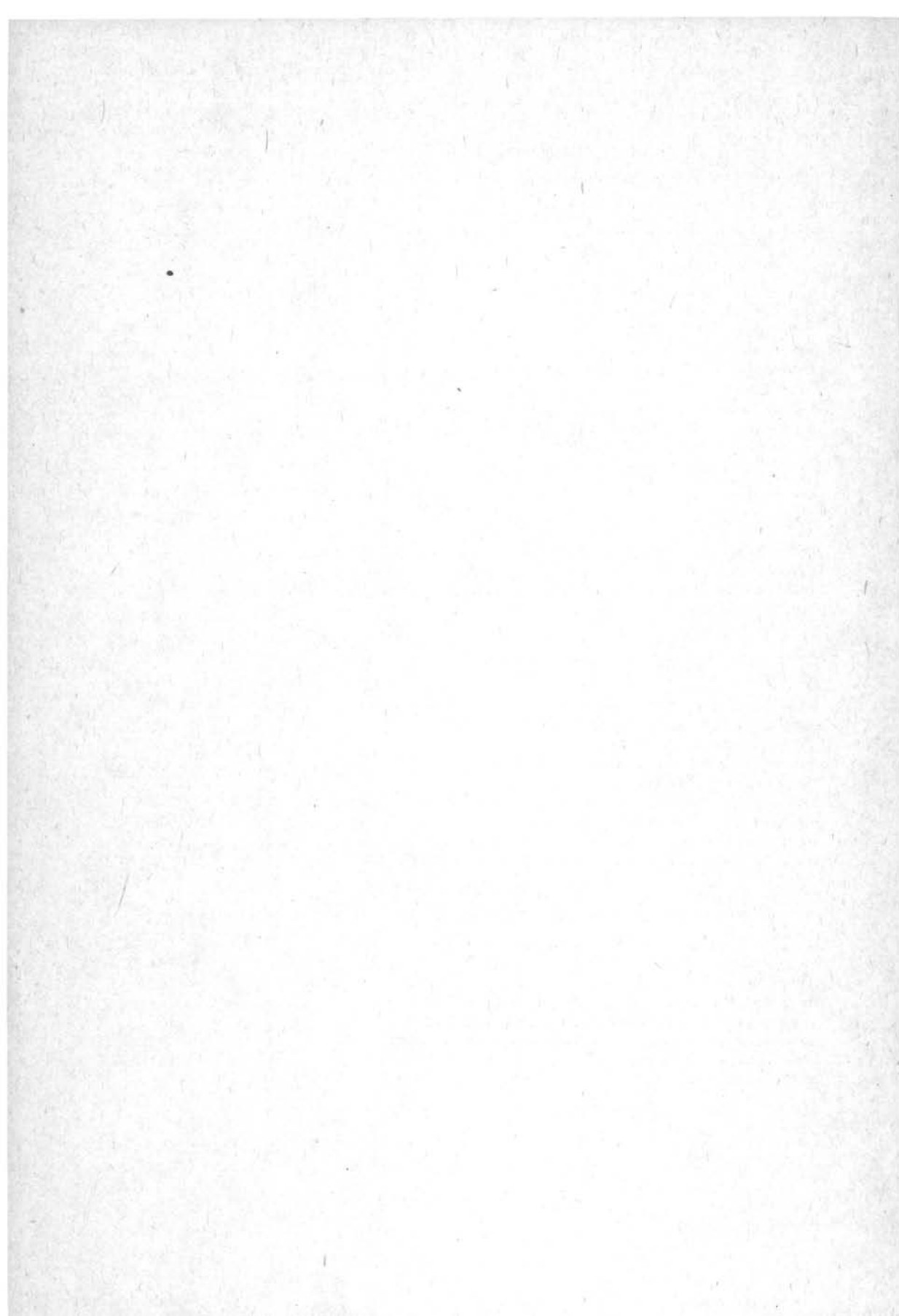
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THE ANGELIC CROWN

PÉTER VÁCZY

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The initiation crown of the Hungarian kings—the “Holy Crown”—is mentioned under different names in the sources over the centuries. It is referred to, primarily in the early sources, as simply “the king’s crown”, or “the royal crown”; then increasingly as “the crown of the country”, or “the crown of Hungary”, but most frequently, up to the present day, as “the holy crown”. There are fewer Latin references to Saint Stephen’s ownership like *corona sancti regis* or *corona sancti regis Stephani*. It is in the Baroque age that the expression “apostolic crown” appears. Of all the names the most puzzling one, however, is “the angelic crown”, in Latin texts *corona angelica*. This emerges, as it were, “from the depths of the nation” in the age of interregnum after the Árpád dynasty died out (1301) and later becomes essential in the independence movements.

When King Andrew III died, the country could easily have become the battle-field of foreign powers and different dynasties. Everybody agreed that the new king must be elected from among the female descendants of the Árpád dynasty. However, there were other pretenders as well as other considerations to be taken into account. The Roman Holy See, saying that Saint Stephen, the first king of Hungary, had received his religion and royal crown from the Roman Holy See, laid a claim to filling in the empty throne. Nor did the German emperor remain idle: remembering the offer made by Béla IV at the time of the Mongol invasion, he considered the Hungarian Kingdom a vacant German feudal tenure. Hungary, in order to preserve its independence, conceded the claim of the female descendants, but retained the right to elect its own king and did not even want to hear about the claims of the pope or the emperor. In the disastrous battle of principles and assumed rights, the popular rendering of the Holy Crown as the symbol of sovereignty, namely, “angelic crown”, became a political slogan in Hungary for the first time.

We have to begin our story from the time when the son of the Czech King Wenceslas II, also called Wenceslas, was elected and crowned king of Hungary in Székesfehérvár (August 27th, 1301). Although he was the lawful king of Hungary, he could not defeat his enemies; therefore his father thought it best to take him back to Prague under the protection of his strong army (1304)—but not empty-handed! As a trick he had his son dressed up in the full regalia of the Hungarian king and then left the

country with the treasures acquired in this way. The hurry in which the army left the country with the two Wenceslases excludes the possibility that any of the royal insignia were left behind. The Austrian Rimed Chronicle (written in German) gives an exact list of the pieces Wenceslas was wearing when leaving Hungary. According to this, he was wearing the robe of Saint Stephen (*einen roc heiligen*), to his waist was belted the sword of Saint Stephen (*sant Stephanes swert*), the spurs of Saint Stephen were fastened to his feet (*zwene sporn*), and the Holy Crown was put on his head (*die heilic krone*) which, as the source says, had been worn by Saint Stephen; (the other kings, however, were allowed to wear it only on the three major ecclesiastical holidays). Finally, in one hand he was holding the gold sceptre (*daz zepter guldin*) and in the other the relic made of pure gold and covered with precious stones of the arm of Saint Stephen (*sant Stephans arm*). Obviously, this was the way they tried to replace the orb already missing. According to the author of the Rimed Chronicle, the orb had not yet been lost when Andrew III was crowned (1290). Therefore every word of the assertions of the other two sources (the *Continuatio Zwetlensis III* and *Chronicon aulae regiae*) is true, namely that the two Wenceslases had taken with them to Prague the full regalia of the Hungarian king.

In spite of the fact that he never returned to Hungary, Wenceslas continued to regard himself king of Hungary. By taking possession of the regalia, he wanted to secure his royal rights against anyone else. When, following the death of his father he occupied the Czech throne, he made a solemn declaration, waiving all his rights concerning Hungary (1305), and handed the regalia over to another pretender to the Hungarian throne and a relative of his, namely to Otto, Prince of Bavaria, so that they should not find their way to his enemy Angevin Charles Robert. The Czech king correctly assumed that the Hungarians could only recover the regalia necessary for crowning a king, those much desired ancient relics, if they accepted Otto as their king—no matter how they hated the idea. All these signs go to show that Wenceslas did not keep any of the Hungarian treasures. It is quite certain that the so-called Saint Stephen sword to be found in Prague was not brought to Czech land on this occasion. The sword is mentioned also by the Rimed Chronicle among the objects Otto obtained from Wenceslas. We have to suppose that the relic of Saint Stephen's arm was also returned to Hungary, if not to the abbey named after the Holy Right then, with the other regalia, to Székesfehérvár. According to Osvát Laskai it was kept there around 1480.

Once in possession of the Hungarian relics, Otto, prince of Bavaria pondered about his trip to Hungary with grave concern. Both the supporters of the emperor and those of the Angevins would have liked to stymie his plan and rid him of his treasures. The author of the Rimed Chronicle draws a vivid picture of how Otto hid the crown, the sceptre and the sword: the two latter pieces were hidden in a sheath which looked like a quiver and when he mounted his horse he hung it on his belt. He had a special little barrel made for the crown so that on his way people should think that it contained some kind of a drink. The Hungarian chronicler called this holder *flasco* in Latin and its role was defined in the same way in German by the Austrian Rimed chronicler:

gelich einer flaschen. He, however, described the sheath as a leather bag: *ein liderin taschen* or *der malthen liderin*. The two descriptions, independent of each other, allow us to conclude that: the leather-turned wooden sheath was covered with leather.

It was with this "misleading luggage" that Otto and his suite set out on their dangerous trip. They moved from the Moravian town Brno (*Brunne*) in the direction of Vienna (*Wiennen*) and after passing by Enzersdorf (*Enzestorfe*) they crossed the river Lajta (*Litach*), the Hungarian border, without any trouble. Here, however, they were in for a surprise. The event was recorded also by the Hungarian chronicle, but the Rimed chronicler describes it in a much greater detail. In order to distract the attention of the people, the party hunted during the day and rode on at a fast pace only during the night. And it so happened that in the dark of the night they did not even notice that the little barrel fastened to the pommel of the saddle had disappeared. As a result of the continuous jolting during the ride, the strap which fastened the little barrel to the saddle came undone, and the barrel, together with its precious treasure, fell into the dust of the busy thoroughfare. This, of course, caused great panic. Ignoring the danger of being taken prisoners by the alarmed Austrian guards, they turned back, crossed the Lajta again, and found the little barrel safe on the road at a mile's distance. Only their surprise was greater than their pleasure, because many people were travelling along the thoroughfare—a fact stated by both the Austrian and the Hungarian chroniclers—who, somehow, did not notice the little barrel with its valuable content.

When the Bavarians finally rode into the town of Sopron (*Oedenburc*), Ivan, the powerful count of Némétújvár was informed of their arrival right away. Ivan who used to be the patron of Wenceslas and was now that of Otto, gave thanks to the Lord for the good news and then at once asked the messengers whether the guests had brought with them the coronation relics which the Czech king had taken away with him from Hungary a year before. He made special inquiries about the sceptre, the crown and the sword—it seems that these were the objects he considered most important (*zepter, krone unde swert*). Following this, Otto was escorted first to Buda (*Oven*), then to Fehérvár (*Wizenburge*) where he was duly anointed and crowned king of Hungary (December 6th, 1305). The Hungarians, never enamoured of the Bavarian prince, accepted him as king because they wanted to recover the holy crown of their country together with the other regalia. When he visited the voivod of Transylvania with the intention of asking for the hand of his daughter, he was captured, the crown was taken away from him and then he was chased out of the country ignominiously (1307).

It is interesting to compare what the Austrian and the Hungarian chroniclers have to say about these events. The author of the Rimed Chronicle relates with apparent relish the adventure of Otto and of his suite. He tells the events one after another in a verbose manner similar to that of the adventure stories then in vogue. At the same time he is a reliable chronicler, factually accurate. In the Hungarian version the story of Otto is related very briefly, in an extremely biased manner. There are altogether three chapters (191, 192, 193) devoted to the story of Otto, but even these are not homogeneous. Chapter 191 tells everything worth knowing about Otto. Its partiality is betrayed by the emphasis put on the rightfulness of Otto's rule which the author

supports with good arguments. He attributes Otto's sorrowful fate to having been born under an unlucky star. The other two chapters are actually supplements to the story of Otto, fully discussed already in chapter 191. The paragraph of chapter 192 beginning with "we cannot conceal that. . ." turns the story of losing the crown against Otto; its author supported the interests of the opposing Angevin party. In this author's view, it was in this way that Heaven gave Otto to understand that he was not allowed to keep the crown he had gained possession of; he lost his kingdom together with his crown. Also as a supplement, chapter 193 relates how the people of Buda supporting the Angevins were released from the captivity imposed by the Czech King Wenceslas, and of the murderous revenge that followed.

That these two latter chapters were added subsequently is also shown by the fact that they were missing from the copy which the author of the *Chronicon Posoniense* used as his source. Originally, chapter 191 was directly followed by chapter 194. It was here that the chronicler of the Angevins summarized the events of the new dynasty occupying the throne, but only up to August 27, 1310 when Charles Robert was at last crowned with the Holy Crown. We think it highly probable that chapter 192 (dealing with the loss of the Holy Crown), and the accompanying chapter 193 were written by this pro-Angevin author. After 1311 we find only annal-like entries pertaining to the history of the Angevins, all of which begin with the words *Anno Domini* and whose literary style differs greatly from that of the writer of chapter 194. The following chapters are also the work of another writer.

Having defined the place and date of the writer of chapter 192, let us return to him again, for he still has something to tell us. It is characteristic of him that he should interpret the circumstances of finding the lost holy crown on the road as a real miracle. According to the Austrian *Rimed Chronicle*, the Bavarians were only surprised at their great luck, and did not even think of celestial interference: *daz si die flust funden / ze grozen saelden si daz mazen. . .* Unruffled by these events they continued their journey. The Hungarian writer, however, tries to attribute the lucky occurrence to a real celestial miracle. He emphasizes several times the large number of travellers on the thoroughfare and the fact that the little barrel hiding the crown was lying on the road for a long time. He tries to define the time with utmost care: "The crown must have got lost before midnight, it is beyond doubt, however, that it was found only towards evening on the following day. This is a real miracle which cannot be concealed! Otherwise how could it be explained that it was not noticed by any of the passers-by, except by the one who was looking for it!" The Hungarian writer also draws his conclusion from this: "Pannonia will not lose its angelic crown!" (*data sibi corona ab angelo*).

The belief that the Holy Crown had been brought to the Hungarian people by an angel from Heaven must have been wide-spread when it was first—as far as we know—recorded by the Angevin chronicler in 1310. The "miracle" of finding the crown reminded him of another miracle, of the origin of the crown. Thus he came to the conclusion that the Hungarian crown received from Heaven could not be lost. That is why the Holy Crown was called "angelic crown" (*corona angelica*) for centuries. The

unusual event was turned into a miracle, a celestial sign which became suitable for justifying human actions.

According to the Larger Stephen legend, the foundation of the Hungarian Church and kingdom had been preceded by a miracle. Even Prince Géza had encouraged the spreading of Christianity and the founding of episcopates. It was at that time that he saw a beautiful young man in his dream who gave him the message of the Lord. This message revealed to him that everything he planned to accomplish would be achieved by his son yet to be born, once crowned as king. The author of the legend tried to make the Hungarians forget in this way the pagan Emese's dream which also promised that princes of the Árpád dynasty would rule in glory in the future. In this Christian version we can call the messenger of the Lord an angel, although that is not what the text calls him, and this "angel" brought not a crown from Heaven, but only a message. So, it is improbable that the Hungarians thought of this angel when calling the Holy Crown "angelic crown".

Since the time of Pope Gregory VII, the papacy had been trying to impose its authority over emperors and kings. In the person of Kálmán (Coloman, 1095–1116) an offspring of the Árpád dynasty, brought up in the spirit of Pope Gregory and trained for an ecclesiastic profession, a king occupied the Hungarian throne who seemed to be more permissive towards papacy than his forefathers. The new Saint Stephen legend, which was compiled by bishop Hartvik on his instructions, related the history of the foundation of the Hungarian kingdom in the way the Holy See expected him to: Stephen became the first king of the Hungarians with the blessing of the pope and was crowned with the crown sent by him. The blessing, if necessary, could be understood by Rome as a dispensation and it could always refer to the crown sent by the pope whenever it wished to dispose of the Hungarian throne by right of the Supremacy. But the Hungarian king never acknowledged the "liege" or any other rule of the pope, although he was ready to accept the Hartvik version of the origin of the crown. In Hartvik's view, the pope had the crown made by his goldsmith and it was already finished when the "messenger of the Lord" (*domini nuncius*) appeared in his dream. The crown, in actual fact, was not given by an angel but by the pope. The task of the angel was merely to tell the pope the will of God: that the crown should not be given to the one it had been ordered for.

We have discussed the Hartvik legend only to compare the angel appearing in the vision of the pope with the angel of the Holy Crown. We think that the question has been duly clarified: the two angels are not the same. It would have been strange indeed if they had had anything to do with each other. Hartvik's intention was to have the Hungarian public opinion accept the view of the Roman court and his attempt was partly successful. The fictitious story of the new Saint Stephen legend about the crown having been sent by the Holy See spread all over the country. It was propagated by the Church and also by the royal court and the ruling circles in agreement with it. The acceptance of the Hartvik legend about the crown was greatly facilitated by the form of the legend to which probative force was attributed in the Middle Ages. The texts of legends were quoted as if they had been official documents. Although Pope

Innocent III had a line he did not like deleted from the text of Hartvik, he had the legend as a whole confirmed. In spite of all this, the consciousness of the Hungarian society retained the memory of the angel having brought the crown to Pannonia, and that the country had received this crown directly from the Lord, "the king of kings", and not from earthly powers.

That this simpler but all the more glamorous rendering of the freedom of the country is actually older and more original than the Hartvik doctrine insinuated by King Coloman, is mainly proved by two points: its Byzantine origin and the popular character of its appearance from time to time.

It was a common idea in the East and in the West that the source of all power is God. This idea was, however, manifested in essentially different ways in the culture of Byzantium and of the Latin hemisphere, because of their different world-views. In the western representations either God's hand appears from behind the clouds of the sky and hands over a crown to the chosen one or Christ himself is sitting or standing, performing the coronation. The first version can be found everywhere among Christians, also in Byzantium. The second version, however, was spread directly under the influence of Byzantium. There was, however, a third version in Byzantium as well which we cannot find in the contemporary representations of the West; here the crown and the other symbols of power are brought by the angels as mediators. As in the East, so the angels are old appurtenances of the hierarchy of heaven in the West, although the sending of crowns was missing from their list of tasks. In Byzantium, however, the sight of angels descending from the celestial sphere with crowns or other objects was not infrequent at all. And if we happen to come across representations of that kind in the West as well, we have to suspect the influence of Byzantium. Let us quote here a few of these pictorial representations.

The angels' exclusion from functions of "state law" of this kind cannot be considered a chance phenomenon in Latin cultural territories. In direct opposition to Byzantium, the inheritor of the Roman Empire, the kings and emperors of the West wished to emphasize that their power came directly from God (*Dei gratia*). They did not want the mediation of angels; their connection with God can be considered personal. The basileus of Constantinople did not need this self-justification therefore he devoted greater space to the angels, these kindly mediators. The crown, brought by the angel descending from Heaven, was filled with special holiness in the eyes of earthly mortals, and it became a holy relic on the Earth. To verify this view let us quote the teaching of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus directed to his son, to be found in chapter 13 of his work about ruling the empire: "These (imperial garments and crowns) were not made by men, neither were they contrived or made by human machination, but as we find written in the secret books of ancient history, when God made Constantine the Great the first Christian ruler emperor, he sent him these robes of state and crowns by his angel. . .". In the following lines we read that these objects—as they are holy relics—must be guarded in Hagia Sophia, the great and sacred cathedral of God, and they may be taken out of it only on the great religious holidays of the Lord.



Fig. 1 Basileos Bulgaroktonos II.

Miniature from *Codex gr. 17*, fol. 3. Manuscript, Venice, Bibl. Marciana, after 1017 A. D.



Fig. 2 Emperor Constantinos Monomakhos with Zoe and Theodora.
Miniature from *Codex Sinait.* 364. Manuscript, 11th century A. D.



Fig. 3 Detail from a miniature portrait of an unknown emperor. *Psalterium Barberini*.
Cod. Barb. gr. 372, fol. 5^r. Rome, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana.
After Manuel I (died in 1180 A. D.)



Fig. 4 The Bulgarian Tzar Ivan Alexander (1331–1371 A. D.).
Illustration from the *Manasses-Chronicle*. About 1345 A. D.
Rome, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana.



Fig. 5 St. Edmund, King of England.
Miracula Sancti Edmundi. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. About 1125–1145 A. D.

It looks very much as if this passage by the Byzantine emperor is about the Holy Crown of Hungary. The Hungarian crown was also seen in the glory of sanctity since people thought it had been given by the angel and it was guarded as a relic in the Maria Church in Székesfehérvár. All the kings were crowned with it and they were allowed to wear it on the three major holidays, Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. They also wore a crown on other days and for other events as well, but this was not considered holy by their subjects as it had not been given by an angel. From this it is obvious that the Holy Crown was not surrounded by sanctity because it was considered as belonging to Saint Stephen by common knowledge. For when the Holy Crown was retained by Elizabeth, widow of Albert, in vain did they crown Wladislas I in 1440 with the crown taken off the head relic of Saint Stephen: it could in no way replace the sanctity of the Holy Crown. The sanctity of the Holy Crown was bestowed by the fact that it had been brought by an angel from Heaven. Strangers—writes Péter Révay, keeper of the



Fig. 6 Knut, King of Denmark and England, with Queen Aelfifu.
Liber vitae (Hyde Abbey). London, British Museum,
 Stowe Ms. 944, fol. 6r. 1020–1030 A. D.

crown, in his book published in 1613—"often smile or even look at us angrily when hearing that we call the crown holy, angelic, apostolic or other similar names". He wrote this work primarily with the intention of "making other peoples understand better why we, Hungarians, talk about the religion of our crown (*Religionem hanc nostrae Coronae*) and why we believe in it". If, however, the Hungarians were able to believe in the angelic origin of their crown like the Byzantines, the spreading of this belief cannot be supposed to have taken place later than the 11th century. Saint Stephen had issued documents in Greek which were still understood in the age of Coloman, although by then were translated into Latin.

Furthermore, it is also significant that as the name "angelic crown" was mainly used by the common people it was primarily adopted by those writers who had closer connections with the common people. Accordingly, we come across the expression more frequently when the political events stirred the large masses of society into motion. Official Hungary, the aristocracy and the prelates, would rather call our crown "the crown of the country" or "the holy crown of Hungary".

The social significance of the names of the Hungarian crown was already manifest at the beginning of the Angevin age when the chronicler supporting the Angevins refers to the crown as "the crown given by the angel" which Otto, Prince of Bavaria lost on his way to Hungary. At the same time the nobility arguing with the legate of the pope never called the Holy Crown "angelic" officially, but used the following names in their documents: *corona regni*, *corona sacra regni Ungarie*, etc. If, as many believe, the chronicler quoted did belong to the Franciscan order (which was close to the common people and the urban citizens from the beginning), it is easier to understand why he mentions the crown given by the angel.

In this respect it is no less illuminating to consider how György Szerémi refers to the Holy Crown in his memoirs on the "decay of Hungary". He consistently calls the Holy Crown "angelic crown". It is characteristic of him how he describes the scene when King John of Hungary demonstrated the Holy Crown to the "emperor of the Turks" in the Assembly Field of Rákos. When the king left, the crown remained in the tent of the Turks. Pál Váradi, Archbishop of Esztergom and Péter Perényi, keeper of the crown, happened to enter the tent, and catching sight of the crown, asked in surprise: "What is our Hungarian crown (*corona nostra Hungarorum*) doing here?" The Sultan answered: "Even if it used to belong to the Hungarians, now it belongs to me, to the Turks. And the reason for this is that I wanted to see what the angelic crown was like, for in the Turkish empire angels are held in high esteem."

Let us turn our attention to the expressions used. The aristocrats entering the tent speak about the "crown of the Hungarians", while Szerémi, recording the scene, calls it "angelic" both here and elsewhere. What comes out of the scene, whether it did happen or not, is that the Holy Crown received the name "angelic" because an angel had given it to Pannonia. This belief was still vivid in the 16th century, although at this time the country was already bleeding from a thousand wounds as a consequence of the Turkish invasion. The Turks also learned about this, at least that is how we have to interpret the words of the Turkish *fethnâme* about the military campaign of 1529: "Hungary . . . has an imperial crown decorated with gold and precious stones left from the old times known as 'the crown', guarded near Buda in a castle named Visegrád which is the object of the vain pride and bragging of the Hungarian kings . . .". Very probably, Hungarians were "bragging" to the Turks that their crown had not been man-made, but had been brought to them by an angel. In spite of this, the Turkish writers fail to mention the angelic origin of our crown; all they say about it is that it was known by the name of "the crown".

The most characteristic feature of György Szerémi as a chronicler is his popular orientation, and undoubtedly this is what explains his stubborn usage of the "angelic

crown". It is easy to understand why it is just this adjective "angelic" which is so dear to the common people. The role of mediator of the angel was mainly talked about among the common people, but the celestial origin of the crown was believed and acknowledged by everybody in Hungary, including the aristocracy and the court. In her memoirs Mrs. János Kottaner, maid of honour of Queen Elizabeth, widow of king Hapsburg Albert writes that "God sent the Holy Crown to Saint Stephen in Hungary and He intended it for him" (*von got gesandt vnd gemaint ist*). Elias Berger, whom Matthias II appointed the historian of the court, also takes us to the world of the court, and what is more, to that of the Hapsburgs. "The crown of Hungary is rightly called holy and angelic"—he writes in his book published in Latin. And then he continues as follows: "It was sent to us by Heaven and brought to us by the angels . . . The wisest authors call it apostolic". At the same time, he also refers to the crown having been sent by the pope, along the lines of Hartvik.

So far we have seen that the origin and sanctity of the crown of Hungary was understood differently by ordinary people, the court and the aristocracy. The concept of the former stemmed from the image of the crown having been given or brought by the angel, while that of the latter originated in the written tradition of the crown having been sent by the pope on celestial instructions. The contrast between the two views seems to be dissolving at the beginning of the 17th century. Berger, quoted above, considers that the crown was brought down from Heaven by the angels (thus), but he still inserts towards the end of his story the Hartvik version about the crown having been sent by the pope.

The history of the crown is related by Péter Révay in a similar way. The crown of Hungary is "holy, angelic, apostolic". The copper engraving of Wolfgang Kilian in the 1613 Augsburg edition of his book shows the scene of the two angels descending from Heaven with the crown. The caption is the same: SACRA, ANGELICA, ET APOSTOLICA REGNI HVNGARIAE CORONA. In the text, however, the author describes the crown as coming from the pope, who is induced by "divine revelation and angelic command" to make this donation. The Holy Crown is "angelic" as it "was given by God" and not because it was in actual fact brought by the angel as had been advocated before. In this way reality was transformed into an allegory by baroque imagination.

The final word in the history of the "angelic crown" was spoken by the fast gaining ground of enlightenment and scientific way of thinking which was felt at the end of the 18th century. The crown loses the adjectives "apostolic" and "angelic": by the 19th century the crown has only one widely used name: the Holy Crown.

The last trace of the old concept could be seen when the Holy Crown "arrived home" again from its "Hapsburg captivity". During the reign of Joseph II Emperor and Hungarian king (1780–1790) Hungary was threatened by the real danger of becoming one of the inherited territories of the Hapsburg house for ever. The Holy Crown, the symbol of the Hungarian state and independence, or essentially that of "Hungarian freedom", spoken about so frequently, was locked among the imperial treasures. So the Hungarians were extremely cheered when the emperor, right before

his death, permitted the crown and the other regalia to be transported to Buda, the capital of the country. All the Hungarians were moved and overjoyed by the glorious return of the Holy Crown. As József Keresztesi writes in his diary, the boundless pleasure made a poet out of everybody. In the poems written at that time, the adjective "angelic" is to be encountered occasionally (English translations by the editors):

*Rejoice, Magyar, and guard this treasure of yours,
Like you guard the sight of your two eyes;
Because that is what God wants you to do:
When making you the keeper of this angelic treasure.*

And another poem begins thus:

*Welcome our angelic ancient Holy Crown!
Rejoice our apostolic, embittered homeland!
And press your treasure to your bosom in Buda
So that your enemy may see the hope in your eyes.*

At that time the Holy Crown representing the symbol of "Hungarian freedom" is still referred to as the "angelic crown".

Since the belief that the crown was brought to Pannonia by an angel has such deep roots, let us try to find—in the hope that we shall succeed—the angel, who, according to the belief of the Hungarians, descended from Heaven under the orders of the Lord. This event—as it has been proved in the course of this study—was not familiar to the Saint Stephen legends; chapter 120 of the 14th century chronicle, however, seems to hint at this. This chapter can be found in both chronicle versions (*S* and *V*), therefore it may have been included in the *Gesta* continuation which followed the thread of events up to the death of King Coloman (1116). So we are justified in our belief that the story was recorded early.

Princes Géza and László (Ladislás) were preparing for a decisive battle with king Solomon when Ladislás had a vision. He caught sight of the angel of the Lord (*angelus Domini*) as he was descending from Heaven and placed a gold crown on the head of his brother. Turning to Géza he told him his vision with great pleasure and also explained it: They would win the battle and Géza would get the crown and the kingdom of Hungary (*regnum vero et corona*). Actually they did win the battle at Mogyoród and after the battle Géza was crowned king (in the middle of March 1074). But with which crown? King Solomon had taken the crown of the country with him and since then nobody had an idea where it was. So Géza had a crown made for himself from the gift he had got from Byzantine emperor Michael Dukas VII. This is obvious from the circlet (i.e. the *corona graeca*) of the Holy Crown, even if not in its original state. His subjects must have been aware of the fact that his crown was not the same as the one bequeathed by Saint Stephen. But since it had been brought by an angel, its sanctity was beyond doubt, and therefore it was worthy of substituting for the old crown consecrated by tradition. The appearance of the angel bringing the crown in Ladislás' vision gave Géza what he lacked for his reign—legitimity. In vain would he have

occupied the throne, if Solomon was still alive and remained the anointed and crowned king of Hungary. The miracle of the crown given by the angel, however, made it obvious to everybody that Géza was the chosen one of the Lord and as such he was entitled to the title and crown of king.

It was not long before this Holy Crown of Géza was talked about as the crown of Saint Stephen. In the company of the relics of Saint Stephen, Géza's crown itself was transformed into a relic of King Stephen. Because, if Saint Stephen was the founder of the Hungarian kingdom, the Holy Crown could not have originated from anybody else but him.

The first entry testifying that the crown of Géza I was identified with the crown of Saint Stephen can be found in the so-called Sambucus (S) codex of the 14th century chronicles about the reign of King Coloman. Chapter 142 mentions that Prince Álmos was blinded "so that he should not be worthy of wearing the crown of the saint king" (*ut non sit dignus portare coronam sancti regis*). As this text version relates the events in greater detail only up to 1108, the reference to the crown of "the saint king", i.e. king Saint Stephen cannot be older than this date. The fact that the remark refers to the so-called lower "Greek" part of the Holy Crown is proved by chapter 156 of 14th century chronicle which relates how the Byzantine king Ioannes Comnenus (1118–1143) offended the Hungarian King Stephen II (1116–1131). He stated that "the king of Hungary was his vassal". How could the emperor come to this idea? The reason for this was that Stephen II was wearing the picture of the Greek emperor of the Holy Crown on his crown. And if somebody had the picture of the emperor on his crown, the Byzantines had the right to consider him the subject of their emperor. This fact has been preserved by the history of the Álmos line which closes with the reign of Géza II (up to 1162).

Notes

Concerning the role played by Wenceslas Czech and Otto Bavarian princes, see *Die Königsaalger Geschichtsquellen* ed. Joh. Loserth, *Fontes rerum Austriacarum* I. Abt. *Scriptores* Bd. VIII, Wien, 1875. *Libr.* I. c. 68. p. 167–168; *Anonymus Leobensis a. 1302* ed. H. Pez, *Scriptores rerum Austriacarum* I. p. 875; *Annales Austriae. Continuatio Zwettlensis tertia a. 1302, 1304, 1305, 1308* ed. MG SS IX. p. 660, 662; *Reimchronik* ed. MG SS qui vernacula lingua usi V/2 lines 80270–80300, 83370–83510, 86480–86500, 87040–87160, 87320–87390, 87590–87620. That the orb had not yet been lost when Andrew III was crowned king, see *ibid.* lines 41220–41240. Cf. J.M. Bak, *Sankt Stefans Armreliquie im Ornat König Wenzels von Ungarn* in: *Festschrift P. E. Schramm zu seinem 70. Geburtstag*, Bd. I, Wiesbaden, 1964. p. 175–188. *Annales Mechovienses a 1304* is obviously mistaken when stating that *caput sancti Stephani regis et lanceam et coronam* were taken to Bohemia (MG SS XIX. p. 668). Concerning the value of the sources in question see A. Lhotsky, *Quellenkunde zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte Österreichs in Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, Ergänzungsband XIX* (1963). The Hungarian chronicles mention only the crown (*corona regni*) among the regalia that had been taken out of the country (p. 481): *Chron. s. XIV. c. 188–193.* ed. E. Szentpétery, *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum* I. p. 479–495. An excellent summary of this question is given by J. Deér, *Die heilige Krone Ungarns*, Wien, 1966. p. 215–224. We considered it necessary to separate the parts

from the chronicles dealing with the Angevin age according to the authors supporting the different parties. The latest undertaking of this task is the work of Gyula Kristó entitled *Anjou-kori krónikáink* published in *Századok* 98 (1967) p. 457–502. We quoted the Pozsony (Bratislava) Chronicle as a version with a different view, i.e. its chapters 78–82 from *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum II*.

Among the Hungarian legends we did not find the data of *Legenda s. Ladislai regis* useful (ed. *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum II*, p. 515–527), although our most important datum about the miracle of the angel descending from Heaven is connected with Saint Ladislav (*Chron. s. XIV*, c. 120). However, originally the legend ended with chapter 8 (burial in Várad) and the further chapters, concerned only with the description of the miracles, were written much later, at the end of the 12th century, or even later, at the beginning of the 13th century. All the attempts of the author of the original legend are aimed at justifying that the reign of Saint Ladislav was legitimate. His visions and religious manifestations were recorded by the chronicler who himself refers to this legend, and who wrote the history of king Coloman up to his death. The early cult of Saint Ladislav appeared already at the time of Coloman and his son Stephen II. They had the name, though not the picture of Ladislav put on the reverse of their Denars. See: L. Huszár, *Münzkatalog Ungarn*, Budapest, 1979, Nos 31, 33–35, 40, 45, 49, 59.

The Larger Legend of Saint Stephen and the biography by Hartvik can be found in *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum II*, under the editorship of Emma Bartoniek. In chapter II of his work, Hartvik adopted without any changes the vision of prince Géza from the third chapter of the *Legenda maior* but also added to it the vision of the pregnant princess for the sake of greater credit. She received the good news from the martyr Stephen that she would give birth to a son, *cui primo in hac rege corona debetur et regnum* (p. 406). The wording *regnum vero et corona tibi tradetur* . . . of *Chron. s. XIV*, c. 120 bears a conspicuous resemblance to the above rendering of Hartvik which confirms our thesis that the parts of the chronicle on Saint Ladislav were written right after the death of Coloman. The coronation of Saint Stephen is treated in the Larger Legend c. 9, p. 384 and in the Hartvik supplement c. 9, p. 412–414. In the literature dealing with these legends an outstanding place is occupied by the study of József Deér *Der Anspruch der Herrscher des 11. Jahrhunderts auf die apostolische Legation in Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 2 (1964) p. 151–167 = *Byzanz und das abendländische Herrschertum*, hrg. v. P. Classen, Sigmaringen, 1977, p. 467–480, and also by his book on the crown 197 sqq. quoted above, as well as by the writing of József Gerics (*Judicium Dei a magyar állam XI. századi külkapcsolataiban*. In: *Athleta patriae. Tanulmányok Szent László történetéhez*, ed. by L. Mezey, Budapest, 1980, p. 113–134). Innocent III makes a correction in the text of the Hartvik legend: Theiner, *Vetera Monumenta Slavorum Meridionalium* I, 1863, p. 57 (abstract). Under the pressure of the pope's legate the court finally surrenders to the Holy See concerning the origin of the crown: 1233 Andrew II, the agreement in Bereg. (Theiner, *Mon. Hung. Sacr.* I, No. 198, p. 116); in 1279 Ladislav IV acknowledges that Saint Stephen became king not *auctoritate propria* but because he received the royal power and crown from the pope (*ibid.* I, No. 556, p. 339).

The book of Constantine VII, Byzantine emperor *De administrando imperio* was quoted from the edition of Gyula Moravcsik (Budapest, 1950, p. 66–67, c. 13, 24–48). In Hungary Saint Stephen acquired the same role as Constantine the Great did in Byzantium: his bequest is considered holy and is guarded by the Church.

On the head relic-crown of Saint Stephen at the initiation of Vladislav I see: M.G. Kovachich, *Vestigia Comitiorum apud Hungaros*, Budae, 1790, p. 235–243.

Petrus de Rewa, *De Sacrae coronae regni Hungariae ortu, virtute, victoria, fortuna* . . ., Avgustae Vindelicorum . . . Anno M. DC. XVIII. Avtor ad lectorem, and p. 5.

Acta legationis cardinalis Gentilis: Mon. Vatic. Hung. 1/2, No. 39, November 27, 1308, Pest. According to the legate, *coronam regni primus rex Ungarie sanctus Stephanus a Romano pontifice consecratam acceperit*. It is on the basis of this that the Holy See claims the *potestas directa* or the right of free disposal over Hungary which, however, the barons and the noble were not willing to

acknowledge *sub specie tuende libertatis eiusdem regni*; May 8–July 14; 1309, *Const. synodales* c. 3. *De corona regis: sacra corona* (p. 273); No. 64, June 4, 1309, *regni corona* (p. 303); December 25, 1309, *corona sacra regni Ungarie* (p. 373); July 6, 1311, similarly (p. 387); etc. Similarly, according to *Chron. s. XIV.* c. 188 (*Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum* I. p. 480) the freedom of the country is threatened by the Holy See.

The memoirs of György Szerémi about the decay of Hungary, *Szerémi György emlékirata Magyarországról*, ed. by Gusztáv Wenzel, Pest, 1857, c. 79. p. 270 sqq. The Holy Crown as *corona angelica*: c. 41 about the election of John king. Only the crown is "angelic", the robe, the sword are those of Saint Stephen; the sceptre, and the orb, however, are not defined like the *vexillum regale* (p. 137–139); c. 42 p. 139, etc.

József Thury, *Török történetrók*, vol I, Budapest, 1893, in: *Okmánytár* XI. Fethnéme on the campaign of 1529 (p. 385–391). See also vol. II. pp. 86, 187, 192, 344, 381, etc.

The memoirs of Mrs. Kottanner: K. Mollay, *Die Denkwürdigkeiten der Helene Kottannerin (1439–1440)*, Vienna, 1971. p. 20 (23) *die heilige Kron*; p. 27 (20)–28 (24), etc.

Elias Berger, *Jybilaevs de origine, errore, et restitvione s. coronae Hynghariae regni . . . Anno M. DC. VIII.* p. A/3, A/4: *coelesti et Angelorum revelatione coronam hanc . . . S. Stephano monitus contulit* (the pope). See also M. Schmeizel, *Commentatio historica de coronis, tam antiquis, quam modernis usque regis, Speciatim de origine et fatis Sacrae, Angelicae et Apostolicae Regni Hungariae Coronae*, Jena, 1713. p. 237.

A good example for the intellectual change that took place toward the end of the 18th century is the bulky study of Sámuel Decsy, writing as "the doctor of sober and medical sciences": *A magyar szent Koronának és az ahoz tartozó tárgyaknak históriája*, in Vienna, in the year of 1792. In chapter 28 (p. 42) he points out: "From the beginning the Hungarians have been full of splendid ideas . . . about their glorious crown. As almost all of them believe that it was sent by God, they attribute extraordinary holiness to it and accuse those who dare to doubt or deny this of daring infidelity and heresy."

About the return of the Hungarian crown (1790): the original contemporary diary of József Keresztesi, *Magyarország polgári és egyházi közéletéből a XVIII-dik század végén*. New edition. Budapest, 1882. pp. 202–203. Cf. Kálmán Benda–Erik Fügedi, *A magyar korona regénye*, Budapest, 1979. pp. 176–177.

Concerning the chapters 120, 142 and 156 of 14th century chronicle writing, see: *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum* I. pp. 388, 421 and 439–440. Concerning the Byzantine connections of Géza I, his Greek marriage and the gift of the emperor: Gy. Moravcsik, *Die byzantinische Kultur und das mittelalterliche Ungarn*, Berlin, 1956, pp. 17–18. Concerning the Byzantine marriage of the daughter of Saint Ladislav called Piroška: *ibid.* pp. 17–18.