

Hungarian Glances to Hagiography and the Cult of Saints in Scandinavia and in England

In European history it is a well known fact that the first king of Hungary, István (Stephen) was crowned by Christmas 1000 A.D. He became canonized (together with four other persons from Hungary) in August 1083, on the request of the then Hungarian King László (Ladislás), who, again, became later another famous Saint King of Hungary. The first Hungarian royal dynasty, the Árpáds (between 1000 and 1301) could produce three other famous saints: Princess Erzsébet (Elizabeth of Thuringia, as she is used to be referred to in German tradition) – daughter of King Andrew II., Princess Margit (Margaret) – daughter of King Béla IV., and Prince Imre (Emeric) – the son of King Stephen – were canonized too.

The dynasty of the Árpáds has had close and standing contacts with most of the contemporary royal families in Europe: from England and France to Kiev and Poland, and, of course with Germany, Italy and Byzantium. Although Hungary was an undisputable part of Roman Catholic Europe, her contacts with Byzantine and Russian Church were close and long lasting ones too.

Historians, searching a comparative interpretation of royal hagiography and of cult of saints in medieval Hungary, have tried to refer (among other comparative sources) to some parallels in medieval Scandinavian history, especially to the canonization of the „first national” kings in Norway, Danmark and Sweden. It is another well known fact that other East-Central European kingdoms (as Bohemia, Poland, etc., and, to some extent, Kiev Rus/sia/ too) have introduced the similar technique to stress the strength of their Christian monarchy. The first generation of modern, professional historians in Hungary, from the second half of the 18th century, have already made remarks about medieval Hungarian hagiography, trying to find in them traces of mirroring the actual social stratification, referring to several medieval sources, including even some texts from Scandinavia or from England. However, only just recently, Gábor Klaniczay, in a monograph on dynastic cults in medieval Hungary (*Az uralkodók szentsége a középkorban. Magyar dinasztikus szentkultuszok és európai modellek*. Budapest, 2000. – an updated English version: *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses. Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe*. Cambridge, 2002), could make a profound comparative analysis of the topic. Although he does not enter directly into detailed Scandinavian studies, his argumentation is elucidating also culture history in North Europe. Klaniczay, having followed the well known works of Kern, Bloch, Graus, Hoffmann, Folz, Vauchez, etc., and similarly those of the most excellent Hungarian medievalists, was making a comparative historical analysis of key topics, e.g. „from god-king to sacral kinship”, martyr kings and blessed queens of the Early Middle Ages, on the appearance of *rex iustus*: the saintly institutor of Christian kingship, and of the cult of dynastic saints as propaganda, etc. Being a historian, and not a scholar of literature, his interest was to show the political motivation behind comparative hagiography in medieval Europe. His text criticism is primarily not of philological character, and it does not go beyond the social and ecclesiastic history.

It is interesting for Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon studies how Klaniczay is describing the hagiography of St Canute (Canute III of Danmark). When he is showing the very complex background of the canonisation of the two Kievan princes, St. Boris and St. Gleb, he mentions the Viking origins and Scandinavian contacts of eleventh century Kievan Rus. He is characterizing the events in Kiev as typical to the „periphery of Western Christendom”. The same label was used in his chapter on Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian dynastic cults. Summing up the general conclusions, he writes (Klaniczay 2002: p. 99):

The most significant of these, perhaps, is the fact that the cult of royal saints was able to grow into a popular cult form in societies newly converted to Christianity, those whose very newcomer status meant that they – unlike the European core – were unencumbered by paradigms of sainthood inherited from late antiquity. The new saint type that evolved in these regions was neither the adversary of secular power, nor its counterweight; he was, rather at once the manifestation of the alliance between the Church and the new Christian kingships, and the token of this alliance.

In description of the cult of the Saint Kings Klaniczay's scrutiny is concentrated on the events (practically in all cases: martyrdom), then the first historical data of a genuine cult, and the actual political-ideological background of the canonisation. He is stressing the importance of „accumulating ideological capital” for a dynasty, or for a country, when creating a Saint Ruler.

If we sum up his interpretation of St Olaf's case, it will be the following. (For data and their interpretation Klaniczay used the recent monographs by Erich Hoffmann, *Die heiligen Könige bei den Angelsachsen und den skandinavischen Völkern. Königsheiliger und Königshaus*. Neumünster 1975 – *Königserhebung und Thronfolgeordnung in Dänemark bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters*. Berlin – New York 1976.)

Olaf consolidated his power in Norway at a time when Canute the Great was occupied with England. To do so, he relied on the Christian Church, continuing the work of conversion begun by his predecessor, Olaf Trygvesson... (*op. cit.* p. 97).

His refuge in Kiev in the court of his brother-in-law, Yaroslav the Wise, made him known the similar hagiographic, or, better to say, hagiopolitic tendencies there. Klaniczay, while analyzing hagiographies in medieval Europe, is usually trying to find direct familial or local contacts between the persons involved. According to him from the 10th century it was a powerful „new weapon” to create a Saint King both for a country and for a dynasty, and the rulers in different countries have learned its use pretty soon.

„It did not take long after Olaf's death for him to be associated with all the *topoi* ... /of/ the Anglo-Saxon royal saints. His body, like Christ's, was pierced with a lance; his blood worked miracles of healing even as his life ebbed away; wonders, an eclipse of the sun, sought and famine followed upon his death, his nails and hair, like St Edmund's continued to grow; the location of Olaf's body, like St Oswald's, was marked with a shaft of light; and he was canonised a year and five days to the day of his death.” (*op. cit.* p. 98). Klaniczay could even find a candidate for taking over directly the Anglo-Saxon signs of saints to King Olav: „More than likely, the source of all these borrowings was bishop Grimkel, one of the English churchmen Olaf had invited over to Norway.” (*op. cit.* p. 98).

Later Scandinavian historical and literary events will equally follow the same Anglo-Saxon parallels. Archbishop Epstein of Trondheim tells about his visit in England at the Abbot of Bury St Edmunds. Canutes powerful statesmen fostered the cult of Olaf (like Canute himself did it with Edmund's cult in England). They picked up Olaf's son, Magnus (the Good) as King of Norway. The first legends of Olaf were composed by Canute's court scalds. Finally Harald Hardrada (a half-brother of St Olaf's) established the hereditary kingship in Norway, within the framework of the same ideology. St Olaf became *Rex Perpetuus Norvegiae*, and the rulers of Norway would succeed to their royal dignity as St Olaf's vassals.

Klaniczay does not follow up the later development of St Olaf's cult (including its ramification in Norwegian folklore, see: Olav Bø: *Heilag Olav i norsk folketradisjon*. Oslo, 1955). He is not drawing any direct comparison with the cult of St Stephen in Hungary either. But, just by the first glance, the similarities are striking. Even today, in the Hungarian Republic, the cult of our first king, the cult of his „Holy Right Hand”, as being the venerated relic in Hungary, and the cult of the Holy /Hungarian/ Crown (attributed to him, but in fact being one of the hundred years later royal insignia), symbolizing the unity of the Hungarian

history are manifest in everyday life and in political ideology as well. The few Hungarian scholars, who have learned about St Olaf's cult in Norway, made only some short, „comparative” remarks on these similarities, often with reference to Eric the Saint King of Sweden (he died in 1160). But today, after the analysis of the phenomenon by Klaniczay, the similarities seem to be more far and more indirect. St Olaf was a contemporary to St Stephen of Hungary. Olaf's canonisation belongs to the mid of the 11th century, following immediately his death. But Stephen's canonisation started by a generation later, and Eric's even later canonisation belongs to the next century. Hungarian Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret fall into another hagiographic category: the cult of „Sainly princesses” was an innovation only after the twelfth century. It seems to me, the more close we study the 11th century hagiographies in Europe, the similarities between Norway and Hungary will be the more general and less specific.

But, from a different angle, in hagiographic narratives there are other, interesting cases of contacts between Medieval Scandinavia, England and Hungary. In my paper I shall only refer to some of the most striking ones. In order to make my arguments clear, first I have to tell of some of basic facts of Hungarian culture history.

Hungarian historiography was started by the late 12th century, in Latin. The Chronicles were written by clergymen, and they clearly reflect the actual social and political motivation. They try to describe the origins of the Hungarians, the events before and after the „conquest” (A.D. 896, when the Hungarians occupied the central parts of the Carpathian basin). The current Hungarian name for the event is *honfoglalás* 'homeland-taking', a semantic parallel to *landnám*. But in Hungarian it is a relatively new word, a 19th century revitalization of the word *hon* 'homeland', which can be dated back in Hungarian written documents from the 13-14th centuries.

Hungarian chronicles deal with the assigned Hun(nian)—Hungarian affinities, and from time to time refer to the events of Ancient and Biblical history – but they do not pay much attention to contemporary European history. They do not attempt to describe the world history (as Scandinavian and English historians do). They are silent about Scandinavia too, as if there were no contacts between North and West Europe and Hungary. On the other hand, there had regularly been such contacts. „Hungarian” coins were found in Viking treasures, Viking swords were found in Hungarian cemeteries. (See *Hungary and Sweden. Early Contacts Early Sources*. Budapest, 1975. See there the summarizing paper by György Székely: *Hungary and Sweden. Historical Contacts and Parallels in the Middle Ages*, pp. 9-36.)

During the 11th century an (ethnic) component of the Hungarian border-soldiers was called in documents as *kulpingoi* (i.e. Scandinavian *kylving/ar*, which is comparable with Old Russian *kolbyag*). Place names, as *Kilbing* in Lower Austria, *Kolbin* (today *Kubin* in West Upper Slovakia), *Kölpény* in Transylvania and in the Banat, fortress *Kölpény* (today *Kulpinovo*) at river Danube in Serbo-Croatia – i.e. just at the borders of the early Hungarian kingdom – support the assumption that they have served the Hungarian rulers as special border-guarding troops. In a document by 958, the Hungarian prince Botond's father was called as „*kölpény*”. (I have to tell that Hungarian linguists, dealing with actual (!) place names in Hungary, suggest other onomastic etymology – from a Turkish person's name – of *Kölpény* in Hungary, but do not speak about the similar medieval place names, around the then Hungarian borders.)

Another place name in Hungary, *Várong*, in documents from 1138 on (see *varyag/vareg/ varang* is Old Russian and Byzantine sources), refers to a different population of Scandinavian origin in medieval Hungary. They were most probably warriors in Hungarian service too, perhaps not specialized only in border control duties. Prince Imre, King Stephen's only son was (about 1030) *dux Ruizorum* 'the leader of the Russians', i.e. the head of the

royal soldiers (*exercitus regis*). *Orosz-* ('Russian', in the Kievan/Byzantine meaning of the word) is common place name along the borderlines of early Hungary. So, there were at least three different Hungarian labels for groups of originally Scandinavian soldiers. It is important to notice, that within a century (from 950 to 1050) several generations of „Varangian” soldiers were present in Hungary. We do not know about neither their actual language, nor about their epic/religious traditions. But a „Viking by origin” presence in the early years of the Hungarian kingdom is beyond doubt. (See, in a summarizing form the references in György Györffy's magistral work on King Stephen: *István király és műve*. Budapest, 1977., also in later, updated editions.) In some later medieval Hungarian diploms the curious phrase *terra Britannorum* occurs. Its proper meaning was often discussed, and the majority of contemporary historians consider it either as a fake (dated back to 1235), or a corrupt spelling, and, hence, not as a valid document of any English (British) settlement in early medieval Hungary. Furthermore, it has been published five documents from 1315 to about 1385 already by 19th century historians, which mention a „*possessio Brythonia*” or „*Brittonia/Brittonya*” in the vicinity of Hátszeg, County Hunyad, Transylvania. In any case, those references are from a hundred years later time, and there is no evidence of living „English” persons there. The recent, magnificent summary of historical geography of medieval Hungary (by György Györffy: *Az Árpád-kori Magyarország történeti földrajza* vol. III. Budapest, 1987. p. 290.) is dating six documents from 1315 until 1417, where the place name occurs in forms of *Brethonia*, *Brythonia*, *Brittonya*, *Brittonia*, *Brytonia*. The later texts add the then new name „*Várhely*” 'place of fortress' too, which is a good correspondence to the actual Roumanian name *Grădiște*, originally a Slavic word. According to Györffy the original form of the place name was „*Bertonia*”, from an old Slavic word *berten* 'bee-keeper', and the settlement was a Hungarian (and not a Roumanian) village in the middle age. Also we can not find Englishmen there.

On the other hand we do not know of Hungarians staying in Medieval Scandinavia. To England university students came first from Hungary. Direct dynastic contacts did not exist between Denmark, Norway or Sweden and Hungary. But there had been close ties between England and Hungary. The veritable contacts could be extended by imaginative ones. This is the reason why even in our days it is difficult to say, to what extent there are trustworthy moments in some old narratives?

One of the most complicated stories is about the sons of the Anglo-Saxon king Edmund Ironside, and on the Hungarian (?) origin of St Margaret of Scotland. According to old sources from England, when Edmund Ironside died (1016), his widow, with her two small sons, E(ad)mund and Edward, were sent by Canute, King of Denmark first to Sweden, and from there to the East. They arrived to Kievan Rus in 1016-17. For about forty years we do not have precise data upon their lives. Edmund died young. Edward married to a certain Agatha, who bore him three children: Margaret, Christine and Edgar. They returned to England in 1057, but Prince Edward died there soon, before he was able to see his uncle, King Edward the Confessor. According to some assumptions Edward and his family lived for many years in Hungary, and the children got their education there.

When, after the battle of Hastings (1066) Agatha's family was again forced to flee, first they wanted to return to Hungary. But a storm drove their ship back to the coast of Scotland. Then King Malcolm III of Scotland fell in love with the beautiful Margaret, who became his wife, and then St Margaret of Scotland.

Hungarian historians (already in the 18th century) have tried to fill in the years of the English royal family „in Hungary” with events. Some of them assumed that Agatha was the daughter of St Stephen. The trouble of that identification is the fact that no historical document mentions that the Hungarian King ever had a daughter. The topic of „Hungarian

origin of St Margaret of Scotland" was raised again and again by Hungarian philologists (Kropf 1887, Fest 1939 etc.).

It was connected with another story, according to which after the battle of Hastings a group of noblemen from England (*multi nobilium Anglorum regis*) fled to Byzantium (*Miklagardr*), and as soldiers to the Byzantine empire they there have founded their own territory, called „East English”, which they have labeled with English place names.

[...] incolis universam incoluisse, Angliamque appellasse; similiter urbibus. quas occupabant, & iis, quas ipsi statuebant, nomina urbium Anglicarum aptasse. Ibi Londinum, ibi Eboracum, aliorumque principalium oppidorum nomina resuscitata. Quod vero codicem Pauli, qui Constantinopoli in usu, fastidiverint, accersitos ex Hungaria viros ecclesiasticos, qui sacra obirent; eorum posteros ibi deinde habitasse. Hæc quamvis fabulosa, originem tamen ex vero habent." Quoted after Laszlovszky p. 247. – for further comments see below.)

Once they have sent their envoys to the king of Hungary, asking him to make possible the consecration the „East English” bishops there. (*Angli orientales nolentes Grecorum patriarche subesse miserunt clericos suos ad Hungariam in episcopos consecrandos, qui sunt sub iurisdicione Romani pontificis, que res multum displicuit imperatori et Grecis.* Quoted after Laszlovszky, p. 63. – for further remarks see below.) Their perfectly understandable wish, after the schism between Rome and Byzantium, gave to the Hungarian historians another argument of stressing the existence of „several generations long ties between Hungary and England”.

But there are difficulties in building up such a historical hypothesis. The primary sources are old and not always very accurate. Adam Bremensis and *Flateyjarbók* (on „East England”) leave much room for fantasy. There is no evidence that the children of Edmund Ironside have ever lived in Hungary. They could have spend all the time of their exile in Kiev or elsewhere. When there were organized the negotiations concerning their return to England, it was not the King of Hungary, but the Holy Roman Emperor Henry III, to whom the King of England had to send his emissaries. Agatha could have been a German woman too. There are hints that in fact she was a daughter of the Emperor. (Or, perhaps she was even not of a high rank family, and this might be the reason, why we do not know more about her ancestors.) There is no historical trace of any daughter of St Stephen. There is no real indication either that Agatha’s family wanted to go back indeed to Hungary. The English noblemen in „East England” could not have much other choice in finding in their vicinity „Roman Catholic” bishops than in Hungary (or perhaps in Poland). Hungary, exactly at the time of (St) Ladislas, was an important local power northwest from Byzantium and west from Kiev. So, there is no need to suppose the impact of „long Anglo-Hungarian contacts” in choosing Hungary for ecclesiastic help to the „East English” noblemen.

A more complicated issue is the Englishmen’s protest against the „Paulian” way of church in Byzantium, and therefore their search for bishops from Hungary (*...þeir vildu ekki hafa Páls-bók, som gengr i Mikligardi, ok sótu biskupa i Ungaria ok adra kemmimenn...* and the last Latin sentences, quoted above, see Laszlovszky *op. cit.* pp. 246 and 247). We know that Bogumilism in Bulgaria -- then more or less a vassal state to the Byzantine Empire -- can be dated back (around 930) to bishop Theophilus/Bogumil. Bogumilism was understood in the Byzantine Church as a continuation of the earlier Dualistic heresy. When (between 933 and 956) Peter, Tzar of Bulgaria, was interrogating the theologians in Byzantium, how to deal with the „new heretics” in Bulgaria, in the answer they have equating the Bogumils with Paulicianians, adherents of an earlier heretic movement in Asia Minor. In the 10th century both Bulgaria and Byzantium were fighting the dualistic heretics, whom they have associated with „devil-worshippers”. However, their influence was significant, and in the 11th century we find Bogumils in various territories of the Balkans. The church was against them, so we could not await a positive „Paulian” trend in Byzantium during the 11th century either. Hungary

organized wars against Balkan Bogumils too, but it happened only from the 12th century. Thus the „anti-Paulian” clame from „East England” seems simply not to be understandable. Perhaps, it is just a reference to the complicated theological debates in Byzantium, or an excuse for preferring Roman and not Byzantine religious trend. (See Dimitri Obolensky: *The Byzantine Commonwealth. Eastern Europe 500-1453*. London, 1974, which is still one of the best introductions, with further references on the very complicated ethnic history of the region, including Vikings/Varangians, Kievan Rus, Hungarians, and even the Englishmen as warriors there.

But, with all the doubts concerning the continuous and direct contacts between English and Hungarian medieval hagiography, there are still in the texts some motives, which deserve further consideration.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (started to compile before 890) about the year 1057 writes on Edward and his family: „Her com Eadward Atheling to Englelende. Se waes Eadwerdes brothor sunu Kynges. Eadmund cing Irensid waes geclypod. For his snellscipe. Thisne aetheling Cnut haefde fersend on Ungerland to beswicane. Ac he thaer geteh to godan man swa him God udhe & him well gebyrede, swa he beogat thaes caseres maga to wife &e bi thaere faegerne bearteam gestrynde. Se waes Agathas gehaten...” (*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Text D, which was closed in 1079 = Tiberius. B. IV., quoted after Fest, Sándor: *Skóciai Szent Margittól a walesi bárdokig. Magyar-angol történeti és irodalmi kapcsolatok*. Szerkesztette Czigány, Lóránt és Korompay, H. János. Budapest, 2000. p. 517. The original paper *The Sons of Eadmund Ironside Anglo-Saxon King at the Court of St Stephen. St Margaret of Scotland*. of Fest was written in 1938. Thus he was not able to use the new or revised translations by G. N. Garmonsway /1953/ or by Dorothy Whitelock /1962/. Fest’s rendering of the Old English text is simplyfied too.) Two phrases are important in the text: they were sent „to Ungerland”, where Edward grew up („he thaer geteh to godan man”) and Agatha was „caseres maga”, i.e. from the Emperor’s kin/family/relation. Hungary explicitly occurs in the text, but there is no direct reference to Hungarian origin of Agatha.

Another important source, *Chronicon ex Chronicis* by Florence of Worcester (he died in 1118) tells the story that King Canute was sending the sons of Edmund to the king of „Suuavorum” in oder to kill them there: „Dedit etiam consilium Edricus ut clitunculos Eadwardum et Eadmundum, regis Eadmundi filios necaret. Sed quia magnum dedecus sibi videbatur ut in Anglia perimerentur paruo elapso tempore ad regem Suuavorum occidendos misit. Qui licet foedus esset inter eos, precibus illius nullatenus uoluit acquiescere; sed illos ad regem Hungarorum, Salomonem nomine, misit nutriendos, vitaeque reservandos. Quorum unus, scilicet Eadmundus, processu temporis ibidem vitam finivit: Eadwardus uero Agatham, filiam germani imperatoris Henrici, in matrimoniam accepit; ex qua Margaretam Scotorum reginam et Christinam sanctimonialem virginem, et clotonem Eadgarum suscepit.” (Fest *op. cit.* pp. 518-519.)

The two important motives here are the following ones. With the precise name of the Hungarian king, Solomon, we can date the presence of the princes in Hungary, as for 1058 or between 1063-74. On the other hand, Agatha occurs here as „filia germani imperatoris Henrici”. But, as Fest argues, „German” (more correctly Holy Roman) Emperor Henry II lived in saintly matrimony, and thus he had no children. Hence the Latin word *germanus* might mean here ‘brother, close relation, brother-in-law’, and not ‘German’, as it was used indeed in Latin texts of 11th-12th centuries. We know from other documents that the word *germanus* was known in that „familial” meaning in Medieval England too. According to Fest the reference fits to St Stephen of Hungary, who, in fact, was brother-in-law of Henry II. According to my opinion, we can accept that Agatha was not the daughter of Emperor Henry II, but only a close relative to him, and this reference must not involve St Stephen at all.

The text of Florence of Worcester reflects the common knowledge in England on Hungary by about 1118, i.e. one or two generations later than the events mentioned in the chronicle. Thus, even if by about 1057-58 Agatha could not be the daughter of the Hungarian king, however by 1118 the intellectuals in England could know that Solomon was in fact a king in that far away country. Fest, who was puzzled by the fact that Florence of Worcester knew about King Solomon, but did not mention King Stephen, tried to find another reasoning, but his construction was neither simple, nor convincing.

If we are not blindfolded by the „excellence and importance” of Hungarians always and all the time, we could find in some of the „false” references more value, than in some of the „word-by-word” correct informations. Fest and other Hungarian historians blamed even William of Malmesbury (he died in 1143), who in his *Gesta Regum* wrote a „confused” version of the same story. The most interesting part of his text is the following: „Fillii ejus /i.e. of Eadmund Ironside/ Edwinus et Edwardus missi ad regem Swevorum ut perimentur sed miseratione ejus conservati, Hunorum regem petierunt; ubi dum benigne aliquo tempore habitii essent, major diem obiit minor Agatham reginae sororem in matrimonium accepit.” (Quoted after Fest *op. cit.* p. 521.) Fest is bluntly listing the errors in the text. William of Malmesbury was naming the first Prince as Edwin (and not Edmund). He speaks only about the two princes going into exile, but in fact, they were babies, who could not travel alone. Agatha was not a younger sister of the Queen in the country, because Gisela, the wife of St Stephen has not had any sister. Of course, the equation „Hunni – Hungarici” was a common place in Medieval Europe. But I find it more important that even the erroneous sentences of William of Malmesbury testify some acquaintance with Hungary in the generally well informed English historical knowledge.

In later works, as e.g. in *Historica Ecclesiastica* by Ordericus Vitalis (between 1124 and 1142), in the Chronicle of North England written in Old French (*L'Estoire des Engles*) by Geoffrey Gaimar (about 1140) and among the references on *Genealogia Regum* by Ethelred or Ailred, Abbot of Rievaulx (from 1147 on) the staying of the princes in Hungary and Agatha's Hungarian origin is repeated as an evidence. In the texts we find curious additions: persons and place names, as it is usual in medieval narratives. It would be in vain to try to identify all the details. We could only say again: at least until the second half of 12th century chronicle compilers in England knew about Hungary by the time of „King Stephen and King Solomon”.

Fest's interpretation was sharply criticized in Hungary in 1939 by József Herzog, director of the Hungarian Archives, who refuted the reference to Emperor Henry II, and maintained the old equation with Henry III, displacing thus the story of the Anglo-Saxon princes and of Agatha's marriage from the time of St Stephen. Fest wrote 1940 a long reply. (See Fest *op. cit.* pp. 537-590.) He did not revoke any of his ideas, and could find even more supporting references. Nevertheless, majority of Hungarian historians until now remained sceptical about Agatha as the daughter of King Stephen. The actual, „academic” history of Hungary mentions the princes Edward and Edmund only in one half sentence, placing their staying in Hungary to the time of King Endre (Andrew) I, i.e. between 1046-1060, which is might be accurate. (*Magyarország története. Előzmények és magyar történet 1242-ig.* Főszerkesztő: Székely, György. Budapest, 1984. p. 863. The references on p. 1665.) The chapter was written by the best expert of the history of early Hungarian kings, György Györfly, who in the references was speaking about „two opposite views” as regards the truth behind the story. He was mentioning the „critical” study by Szabolcs de Vajay (1962) and the „believer” study by Kázmér Nagy (1971). It seems to me, the princes in fact could stay in Hungary for a while, and Agatha was a living person. But who? We do not know.

As regards the ecclesiastic contacts between „East England” and Hungary, it was again Sándor Fest, who has first noticed the curious story, mentioned already above. In his

short article (1937, see Fest *op. cit.* pp. 101-102, combined with further assumptions in his last published paper from 1944, see *op. cit.* pp. 96-100, especially p. 99) he was using E. A. Freeman's classical books on the history of Norman conquest. As for the text itself, he refers to the *lätvardar saga* in the edition of Vigfusson, i.e. to its old publication, and, of course, Fest could not see the new edition (1950, by Jón Helgason), nor the current English edition (1972 by Christina Fell). As for general information concerning the English warriors in Byzantine Empire (by about 1075 on) he refers to the then good summarizing paper by A. A. Vasiliev *The opening stages of the Anglo-Saxon immigration to Byzantium in the XIth Century*. In: *Seminarium Kondakovianum IX* (1937) pp. 39-70., which serves as the major summary, even in Obolensky's monograph, mentioned above.

Since then relevant new publications appeared. R. M. Dawkins, Ad. Stender-Petersen and others gave a more detailed description of the „Varangian” soldiers in Byzantium. Dawkins made also direct reference to the problem of „Roman versus Byzantian” priests for the Varangians. (His first paper on the topic, „*Greeks and Norsemen*”, was published in 1936, in the *Festschrift* for R. R. Marett.) It is a well known fact that *Flateyjarbók* is a 13th century compilation, in which the final part of the *Játvardar saga helga* contains the narrative on the „East England” warriors. Since the saga mentions Gizurr Hallson (who died in 1206), his contribution to the compilation might be placed before that time. After some preliminary remarks in 1954 Ciggaar has published an other Latin text on the same topic. (In fact, it was a part of his unpublished dissertation.) The manuscript (existing in two versions) *Chronicon Universale Anonymi Laudunensi*, dated to the beginning of the 13th century and was written in Laon. The described events could happened after 1072 and before 1075. The Latin version tells more or less the same as the Old Icelandic story does, obviously with differences in names (Miklagard – Constantinople, Kirjalax – Alexis etc.). There is an important sentence about Hungary, missing from the Old Icelandic saga: „Hungari regem suum Salomonem regno deturbatum sub custodia excruciant et imperatori rebellant”, i.e. about Hungarians revolting against King Solomon. (Solomon was King of Hungary between 1064 and 1074, but he was playing a very complicated political activity until his death, in 1087. Thus, the „revolts” against him could be placed into different years.) The English historian, Jonathan Shepard (1974) tried to identify more precisely the place, where „East English” soldiers could have been settled down. If fact, there are several candidate territories: from Azovian Sea and Crimea to the Delta of Danube or even to the Bulgarian part of today's Dobruđja, etc. A noted Roumanian historian, Razvan Theodorescu (1981) tried to compile the more recent data on Englishmen in early medieval East Europe. Unfortunately, he was not aware of the critical voices against the straightforward statements by Sándor Fest, who, among others, took as granted the validity of the medieval Hungarian place name *terra Brittanorum*. Theodorescu's attempt to map and to interpret the position of the Englishmen on the today's Roumanian territories was serving the actual Roumanian historical trend concerning the history of Transylvania in the 10th-12th centuries. Of course, the *Brythonia* place names in County Hunyad, between 1315 and 1385, can not be connected with „East English” settlements from a hundred years earlier time.

A Hungarian historian, József Laszlovszky, in his (unpublished) dissertation (1991) gave a detailed evaluation of the publications by Ciggaar, Shepard and Theodorescu. According to his opinion, the Anglo-Saxons in fact have visited the then new Hungarian bishopric of Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia in Transylvania. The founding might be dated back to the very beginning of 11th century, and its first bishop, whose name we know (from 1075, i.e. just at the time of the request of the Englishmen), was Franco, a Wallonian person, who was born in Liege. The phrases on the difference between Roman and Greek church, or upon the revolt against King Solomon, can easily be understood from the Anglo-Saxon contacts with

the diocese of Gyulafehérvár, where the actual political events in Hungary must have been well observed.

Laszlovszky's two key remarks are of great importance. He says (p. 73 of his manuscript dissertation) that the World Chronicle of Laon supports so much the text of the Old Icelandic Saga, that today we can understand both texts as reliable ones about historical facts and not only as fabulous stories. According to his second remark (*ibidem*) hitherto the detailed references to Byzantine religious practice, e.g. in the text of the *Breviarium Nidrosiense*, could be understood only in a roundabout way. E.g. when the Norwegian source speaks about the prayer of the Byzantine Emperor „to the Virgin and to St Olaf”, and the latter appears thereupon riding on his horse and with the crown upon his head, the striking vision can be the result of the presence of Norseman in Byzantium. Here Laszlovszky mentions the publications by Hungarian Byzantinologists, György Sántha and Mátyás Gyóni. They supposed an influence of the cult of Byzantine „Saints-Warriors” upon old Icelandic literature. (See the summarizing paper by Gyóni *Les variantes d'un type de légende byzantine dans la littérature ancienne-islandaise* in: *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 4 /1956/ pp. 293-312.) In important works of the old Icelandic saga literature, St Olaf is helping the *Kirjalax*, i.e. the Byzantine emperor in his wars against the heathen.

Laszlovszky deals also with the questions of Viking or Anglo-Saxon coins in Hungary, respectively Hungarian coins in West and North Europe too, but it is a topic outside of the frames of my paper. In the *Appendix* to his dissertation he quotes the involved text references too, and we can agree with his evaluation of the „East England” story variants, as historically reliable ones. Still I do not see any reason of ascribing the Byzantine topics in Snorri or in the *Heimskringla* to the Anglo-Saxons, who fled after Hastings to the Black Sea! The numerous Byzantine motifs in Old Icelandic literature have already been interpreted in a convincing way within the general European frames of Old Norse culture and literary history. (See the already „legendary” summary by Ole Widding, Hans Bekker-Nielsen and L. K. Shook: *The Lives of the Saints in the Old Norse Prose. A Handlist*. *Mediaeval Studies* 25 (1963) pp. 294-337.)

To sum up the aforesaid: Hungarian data concerning Medieval European hagiography are not any more surprising, and they give further details to common understanding the common European forms of cults of saints. When discussing the debates among Hungarian historians concerning the „Hungarian” data, we learn more on the then actual uses of hagiography in medieval Europe. My brief account is the first attempt to single out the facts concerning Scandinavian, Anglo-Saxon and Hungarian comparative hagiography. I hope, I could show that dealing with some Scandinavian or Anglo-Saxon source material, it is advisable to notice, what had to say Hungarian historians and philologists on the themes in question. Hungarian scholars might not know all the details of Old Icelandic or Old English philology, but they know about the Hungarian circumstances, which appear in those texts. To combine North and West European medieval studies with Hungarian ones, is a nice topic, which deserves further, detailed researches.

Literature

In my text I have indicated the most recent secondary sources, where we can find the references both to older literature and to the primary sources. In quotations I kept the orthography of publications I was actually referring too. I think, it was not necessary to mention here all the general bibliography on Old Icelandic, Anglo-Saxon, Hungarian or Byzantine hagiographic narratives.