

Princesses of the Árpád-Family and the Mongol Invasion (1241–1242). Reasons for the Marriages of Béla IV's Daughters

Éva Teiszler

Institute of Hungarian Research, Budapest

ABSTRACT

In 1247, King Béla IV wrote to Pope Innocent IV, claiming that he had to marry off his three daughters to men of lower social status due to the Mongol threat. These assertions have become deeply ingrained in historical literature and have significantly influenced interpretations of Béla IV's foreign policy during the Mongol invasion. This study aims to clarify whether the Hungarian king's letter should be interpreted so categorically and determine whether Béla IV's statements necessarily and fundamentally shaped Hungarian foreign policy in the 1230s and 1240s.

KEYWORDS: Béla IV, Mongol invasion, Saint Kinga, Blessed Constance, Anna of the House of Árpád, Bolesław V, Poland, Halych, Danilo Romanovich, Rostislav Mikhailovich

The so-called Mongol letter of Béla IV

In one of the years after the Mongol invasion of 1241–1242, probably in 1247,¹ King Béla IV of Hungary (1235–1270) addressed these lines to Pope Innocent IV (1243–1254): “As for what could be done, we say that we did everything in our power when we faced the hitherto unknown forces and nature of the Tartars. The accusation of negligence cannot be levelled at us. In the given situation, when the Tartars were still fighting against us on our territory, we turned to the three highest courts of Christendom, namely yours, which Christians revere and profess to be of divine origin, and the teacher of all, and also to the imperial court, and indeed, even offered ourselves as vassals, provided that it would provide sufficient help and support in times of danger. We also approached the French court, but received no encouragement or assistance from any of them, only words. We therefore resorted to what we could: for the sake of Christianity, humbling ourselves in our royal dignity, we gave two of our daughters in marriage to two Ruthenian princes, and our third to a prince of Poland, so that through them and our other Eastern friends we might learn of the Tartars’ deeply hidden innovations and thus be somewhat better prepared to face their intentions and deceitful tricks.”² Since Senga Toru’s study was published in 1987,³ this letter, which does not contain an exact date, has become known in historical literature as Béla IV’s Tartar Letter or the Tartar Letter. The letter was written in Hungarian, but the author was probably a Hungarian scholar who had studied in the Middle East.

This document contains several important pieces of information about both the Mongol destruction of the Kingdom of Hungary and the political ideas of Béla IV. However, our narrower topic, namely the reason for the marriage of the Hungarian princesses, is only touched upon in the sentences quoted above.⁴ The thoughts of the Hungarian king quoted here reveal two facts about the marriage of his unnamed daughters: that he had to marry them off below their rank and that these marriages were forced by the Tartar threat.⁵

Since the end of the 19th century, Hungarian historiography has almost unanimously accepted and emphasized the truth of these two statements, and, accordingly, seeks to explain

1 The document is dated 1247 by Hunyadi 2011, 830–831 and Senga 1987, 584–612; Wertner 1893, 126 dates it to 1248; Reg. Arp. 933a and Gy. Ruitz 1981, 336, among others, date it to 1250, and many others follow them; Karácsonyi 1922–1923, 9–10 dates it to 1253.

2 Gy. Ruitz 1981, 342.

3 Senga 1987.

4 In the Tartar letter, Béla IV also explains and laments the Tartar threat as the reason for forcing his firstborn son, the future Hungarian king Stephen V, to marry a Cuman princess. We will not go into detail on this in the present study, because the roots of Stephen V’s marriage are not to be found solely in foreign policy interests, and doing so would not only overstretch the scope of our paper, but also distract attention from its main message.

5 In this study, I use the words ‘Mongol’ and ‘Tartar’ as synonyms, in accordance with tradition, to refer to the ethnic group that invaded the Kingdom of Hungary in 1241–1242. See B. Szabó 2007, 8–11.

and assess the development of the Hungarian Kingdom's dynastic relations and foreign policy in the period immediately preceding and following the writing of the letter.⁶ The conclusions of research to date can be summarized in the following basic principles: Béla IV's goal in marrying of his three (or four) daughters was, due to fear of a possible (further) Mongol attack, to form alliances with the rulers of other interested territories that had also suffered destruction, to establish an intelligence network, and to secure his rear during his western campaigns,⁷ but even Béla IV's domestic policy decisions within his family may have been influenced by his fear of the Tartar threat.⁸

The unexpected experience of the Mongol campaign of 1241–1242 and the fact that the Hungarians had to reckon with the possibility of further Tartar invasions necessarily led to a rethinking of the situation of the Hungarian Kingdom, prompted certain decisions, and accelerated internal processes that had already begun independently of this and had an impact on the further development and functioning of the country.⁹

The borders of Hungary had previously been subject to attacks of varying intensity from the East. The Mongol invasion of 1241–1242 was the first such destruction that the Hungarian king was unable to repel, mitigate, or stop.¹⁰ Before the attack on Hungary, Béla IV, the Western Christian states, and the Pope had already been informed of the Mongols' planned western campaign, but based on the preliminary information, no one could assess the extent of the danger posed by their arrival.¹¹ No one assumed that the Kingdom of Hungary would face an organized attack, a full-scale invasion across several national borders. Béla IV did not believe this either, so he prepared for the attack on the Eastern border in accordance with his preliminary information and based on previous experience, trusting in his own army and the previously established and proven border defense system.¹² The part of the Tartar letter that talks about the marriage of Béla IV's children is undoubtedly a (political) accusation.¹³ Here, a ruler expressed his thoughts to the Pope who, as a Christian king—as was expected of him—considered the protection of the faith (the Roman rite) to be his fundamental duty, and who himself sent mendicant monks to the East with the intention of Christianizing them, and who, moreover, came from a father who, based on this idea, led a crusade to the Holy Land, far from his own country. After these events, Béla may have felt that he was left on his own, while it seemed that the papacy had more important goals than

6 Szende 1999, 266–267. (With a summary of earlier literature.) The 13th-century relations of the Kingdom of Hungary with the contemporary Czech and Austrian territories have recently been examined in a monograph by Veronika Rudolf (Rudolf, 2003).

7 Szende 2003, 555–556.

8 Szűcs 1993, 13–15. or in other regards Zsoldos 2007, 17.

9 Szűcs 1993, 3–33., 50–75.

10 See Csorba 2003, 362–364.

11 Bárány 2020, especially at 488.

12 Teiszler 2024.

13 Szócs 2010, 17.

a possible crusade against the Mongols.¹⁴ In addition, the German-Roman Emperor Frederick II, from whom he had previously sought help, not only called the Hungarian king idle and frivolous, but also sought to take full advantage of his situation.¹⁵ By emphasizing his isolation and the constant threat posed by the infidels from the east, Béla drew a clear imaginary line between the Kingdom of Hungary and the territories beyond its eastern border.¹⁶ He established two fundamental ideas of Hungary being the bastion of Christianity that would reappear in later ages, and it appears here in written form for the first time.¹⁷

All this may well have encouraged Béla IV to establish closer ties with his immediate neighbours in order to unite against the Tartars, yet it is thought-provoking that writings analysing the ideological background of the letter,¹⁸ the survival of the military potential of the kingdom,¹⁹ or focusing on the Mongols' encirclement of Hungary²⁰ paint a completely different picture. It is therefore worth asking the question: did Béla IV really marry off his daughters solely out of necessity, exclusively due to the threat posed by the Tartars, and did he really consider these marriages to be beneath his status?

The family relationships of Béla IV's daughters

The marriage of Béla IV and his wife, Maria Laskaris, was blessed with many children. The royal couple had a total of eight daughters and two sons. Two of the former (the second-born Margit and the fourth-born Katalin) died when the family fled to Dalmatia from the Tartars who were pursuing them. The younger Margit,²¹ who originally became a Dominican nun at her parents' suggestion, later resisted taking off her nun's habit, thus remaining unmarried until the end of her life.²²

Among the daughters who married, Kinga/Kunigunda,²³ considered the firstborn child of Béla IV, married Bolesław from the so-called Lesser Poland branch of the Piasts, the Prince

14 About the crusades organised against the Mongols see Almási-Kosztá 1991., Kiss 2015., Jackson 2003., Veszprémy 2003, 388–389, in general Hunyadi 2020.

15 Sinor 2003, 320.

16 Szűcs 1978, 158.

17 Berend 2003, 612–615; Száraz 2012, 54.

18 Berend 2003.

19 Bertényi 1997, 70; Bertényi 2003. For a summary of older literature on this topic, see Borosy 2003.

20 Dénes Sinor specifically assesses that the Tartar attack on Poland in 1241 was a preliminary and diversionary strike preceding a large-scale attack against Hungary, as Poland was considered a potential ally of the Hungarians due to the marriage of Kinga and Bolesław (Sinor 2003, 318.).

21 For the practice of name giving, see Slíz 2000, 25.

22 ML 113–115.; Magyar 2010, 12. See furthermore Szűcs 1978, 181. About *oblatio puerorum* and the personal decisions of Margit, see Keréjártó–Klíma 2022.

23 About the versions of the name and about the names of the other daughters of Béla IV see Slíz

of Kraków and Sandomierz, son of Leszek the White, in 1239.²⁴ Due to his Josephite marriage, he was also given the epithet “Chaste,” and ruled the area known as Lesser Poland, which bordered directly on the Kingdom of Hungary and Halych. Anna, the third daughter, married Prince Rostislav of Chernigov in 1243.²⁵ Erzsébet, the fifth child of the Hungarian royal couple, was married around 1245 to Henry, Duke of Lower Bavaria,²⁶ while the sixth child, Konstancia, married Prince Lev of Halych in the autumn of 1246,²⁷ and the seventh, Jolánta/Ilona, married Prince Bolesław the Pious of Kalisz, a descendant of the Piast dynasty of Greater Poland and later prince of Greater Poland, in 1256.²⁸

Thus, prior to the Tartar invasion of 1241–1242, Béla had married off only one of his daughters, Kinga. It has already been suggested that, after news of Mongol movements began to reach Europe in the 1220s, and by 1239 Julianus and others had reported to the Hungarian king,²⁹ his alliance with Bolesław was due to the Tartar threat. It seems obvious to explain the marriages of the daughters (Anna and Konstancia) to Russian princes with this reason, since these marriages took place shortly after the Tartar destruction, although, considering the chronological order, Erzsébet’s wedding, which took place between Anna’s and Konstancia’s, somewhat contradicts this idea.

“In our royal dignity, humbly...”

The Tartar letter has long been known to Hungarian historians. It was first published in Hungarian by Zsigmond Rosty in his work published in 1856,³⁰ but he did not justify the marriage of Béla IV’s daughters with the contents of the letter. In his work describing the family relationships of the Árpáds, Mór Wertner explained the marriages of Jolánta/Ilona,³¹ Kinga,³² and

2015. *passim*.

24 Magyar 2010, 11. About those opinions according to which Kinga and Boleslav only betrothed each other, see Brewer 2011, 43.

25 Makk 1993, 586.

26 KMTL 65; see Szende 2003, 557.

27 Senga 2018. According to Márta Font, the marriage happened in the spring of 1247 (Font 2005). Both dates can be accepted according to Kádár 2021, 422. Furthermore, see Senga 1986, 763.

28 A. Fodor et al. 2001, 549.

29 Györfy 1965, 5–38.

30 Rosty 1856, 123–127.

31 “In 1241, Béla IV painstakingly restored his country, which had been completely devastated by the Tartars, and formed powerful dynasties through marriage – he could not form alliances. The growing fear of invasion by the Tartar hordes made it necessary to form a close alliance with the Polish and Russian princes against their common enemy. Bolesław’s marriage to Ilona was a consequence of this political necessity.” (Wertner 1892, 490.)

32 “He [i.e. Bolesław] himself justified his marriage in a document dated March 2, 1257, as follows: ‘...quod nos ab ineunte aetate ... ut melius et quietius ... possemus nostri Principatus gubernacula

Konstancia,³³ daughters of Béla IV, using the reasons given in the Tartar letter, and in his monograph on Béla IV, he explained the marriages of Konstancia and Anna.³⁴ Contrary to the contents of the Tartar letter, he increased the number of daughters married off because of the Mongol threat from three to four. Bálint Hóman definitively stamped these Polish and Russian marriages with the mark of morganatic marriage.³⁵ The ideas of these two authors, who remain highly influential to this day, found their way into most of the historical works that followed them. Béla IV considered his three daughters (Kinga, Anna, and Konstancia) useful – and thus valuable – in the Tartar letter, yet he clearly considered them to be of low status.

The question is why, because although we have little information about how the Hungarian court viewed the value of marriages with the Ruriks and Piasts in his time, some of the following thoughts call into question, or at least cast doubt on, Béla's statements. Since Andrew I, the Hungarian throne had been occupied by descendants of Vazul, but not wanting to acknowledge their actual ancestor, the chronicles refer to Vazul as the brother of László the Bald, while his wife, a girl of the Tátony clan – presumably because their union did not comply with the Christian marriage laws that had developed in the meantime – was replaced by an alleged wife from Kievan Rus.³⁶

possidere ... de consilio maturo ... Domini Vislai, Cracoviensis episcopi, decretoque omnium optimatum et Baronum ... conjunximus nobis copula maritali generosissimam Dominam Cunnegundim, Illustrissimi regis Hungarie Domini Bele, filiam, non solum auro...' In Hungary, apart from Prince Kálmán's marriage, other circumstances were probably also taken into consideration. In 1239, news of the Tartars' fierce plans spread throughout Hungary. What could be more natural than to form a community of interests with neighbouring Bolesław – through marriage – against the prospective enemy?" (Wertner 1892, 480–481.)

33 "After his father Daniil returned from his journey of homage to the Tartars [...] and received his country as a fief from the mighty Batu [...], his prestige grew greatly in the eyes of his subjects and neighboring foreign rulers. They believed that, as a favorite and vassal of the Tartars, he reflected some of the feared Tartar power. We know that Béla IV was very afraid of the Tartars and was at war with Ottokar II of Bohemia over Austria. Now, in order to win Daniil over to his cause (namely, against the Tartars), he sent Jordan, the chief magistrate of Szepes, to intercede with the Russian and Polish courts on behalf of the Hungarian royal court in the matter of an alliance through marriage, and to bring it about." (Wertner 1892, 487–488.)

34 "Béla hastened to seal the engagement of his daughter Konstancia to Daniil's heir to the throne, Lev, which had probably taken place years earlier, by marrying the couple." (Wertner 1893, 126.) "This is the only way we can understand Béla's letter to the Pope, dated November 11, 1248, in Patak. It mentions his daughter who was married to two Russian princes. Anna was one of them; Konstancia was probably the other." (Wertner 1893, 126, note 4.)

35 "These connections were not to the king's liking, and even less so to the queen's. In Béla, the blood of the Árpáds and his French and German ancestors rebelled against such demeaning connections, as did in Mária all the arrogance and pride of the Greek imperial house. Ratislav and Leo were sent back before the Mongol invasion when they came to ask for their hands. However, the changed circumstances forced him to reconsider, and Béla bowed to political necessity. [...] Béla's calculations proved to be correct. His Russian and Polish relatives loyally assisted him in his western campaigns and always provided timely information about the Tartars' preparations." (Hóman–Szekfű 1935, 565. The relevant section is from the work of Bálint Hóman.)

36 See Teiszler 2021. The 14th-century chronicle composition wrote the following: *Tradunt quidam istos tres fratres filios fuisset Vazul ducis ex quadam puella de genere Tatun et non de vero thoro ortos esse,*

We do not have any reliable information about László the Bald's wife. Due to the use of the word *dicitur*, the chronicle does not state with complete certainty that László the Bald married a Russian woman. Apart from the fact that he “allegedly took a wife from Ruthenia,” it reveals nothing about his family.³⁷ The Zagreb and Várad Chronicles have handed down to us the information that László the Bald's son was Bonuzlo,³⁸ and since, according to foreign sources, Premislava, the daughter of Vladimir I (the Great), Grand Prince of Kiev, was the wife of the Hungarian prince, and in the absence of other known persons, considering it as confirmation that the name of László the Bald's son (similar to others belonging to the Mihály branch) was Slavic,³⁹ this princess was provisionally included in the Árpád family tree as the wife of László the Bald.⁴⁰

Regardless of whether László the Bald actually married the daughter of Grand Prince Vladimir I or not, changing the memory of the ancestor of the Vazul sons may have been justified for the Árpáds during the reign of King Kálmán, because it was during his reign that it was made law that marriages must be concluded in a church, in the presence of a priest and suitable witnesses.⁴¹ Vazul certainly married in a manner considered lawful in his own time, according to the customary law of the time, but the procedure at the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries no longer met the criteria for a lawful marriage, since only a legal marriage could produce a legal heir, which may have made the identity of Vazul's wife and the form of his marriage crucial for his descendants. In fact, Simon Kézai also discusses this in his gesta, written between 1282 and 1285, presumably for use in Italy,⁴² when he reflects on the nobility of the sons of Vazul. In his opinion, it is irrelevant who Vazul married and how, since, according to him, the reigning Árpáds are the descendants of László the Bald.⁴³ In Kézai's narrative, the woman's personality is insignificant, so he omitted any information about her from his account. Nevertheless, he did address the issue, which clearly indicates that the written tradition of his time still preserved the true genealogy of the Vazul branch.

et ob hanc coniunctionem illos de Tatun nobilitatem accepisse. Falsum pro certo est et pessime enarratum. Absque hoc namque sunt nobiles, quia isti filii sunt Calvi Ladizlai, qui uxorem de Ruthenia dicitur accepisse, ex qua tres isti fratres generantur. (SRH I 344.)

37 KK 114.

38 “*Dux autem Ladislaus [In Várad Chronicle added: Calvus], de quo supra, habuit filium, qui vocatus est Bonuzlo.*” (SRH I. 206.)

39 Szentpétery 1934, 422, 425; Slíz 2000, 9.

40 KMTL 61; Makk 1996, 228; Lenkey-Zsoldos 2003, 89, however, Premislava is not included in the family tree on the inside front cover of the volume. Further see Font 2015, 304–306.

41 Point 15 of Kálmán's so-called *Second Book of Laws* states that *De desponsatione conjugali placuit sanctae synodo: omnis conjugalis desponsatio in conspectu ecclesiae, praesente sacerdote, coram idoneis testibus, aliquo signo subarrhationis, et consensu utriusque fieret; aliter non conjugium, sed opus fornicationis reputetur.* (CJH 126.)

42 Veszprémy 1999, 157–158.

43 *Quidam autem istos fratres ex duce Wazul progenitos asseverant ex quadam virgine de genere Tatun, non de vero thoro oriundos, et pro tali missitalia illos de Tatun nobilitatem invenisse. Frivolum pro certo est et pessime enarratum. Absque hoc namque nobiles sunt et de Scitia oriundi, quia isti sunt filii Zarladislai.* (SRH I 178.)

The topic of marriage was addressed in several synodal decrees as well from the time of Kálmán, and Monika Jánosi did not consider it a coincidence that one of these decrees dealt with the possibility of dismissing an adulterous woman.⁴⁴ In 1112, Kálmán married his second wife, Eufemia, the daughter of Vladimir Monomakh, Grand Prince of Kiev, whom he soon repudiated.⁴⁵ The chapter of the *Chronicon Pictum* discussing the incident attempts to exonerate the king on the basis of this law.⁴⁶ The incident involving Kálmán and Eufemia had a strong impact on Hungarian-Russian relations, and in this context, on Hungarian-Polish relations as well,⁴⁷ yet the chronicle tradition representing court historiography did not later delete the report concerning László the Bald's wife, who was of Kiev origin. The modification of the bloodline of the Vazul branch was certainly part of the chronicle composition around 1200,⁴⁸ and this version can also be found in Anonymus's work, which was written around 1210.⁴⁹ During the reign of Béla IV of the Árpád dynasty (and later, according to the 14th-century chronicle composition), it was believed that after the death of Saint Stephen, royal power was inherited by László the Bald's branch of the family, and that he had a Ruthenian wife. This kind of awareness of origin certainly played an important role in the thinking of the kings of the Álmos branch, including Béla IV. Hungarian sources do not mention a similar early Polish-Hungarian relationship, although Polish sources have been touting the Piasts since the 10th century.

Hungarian sources do not mention any similar early Polish-Hungarian kinship, although Polish sources have been touting the close relationship between the Piasts and the family of St. Stephen since the 10th century. According to the *Annales Kamenecenses*, which records events up to 1165, the first Polish king, Bolesław the Brave, married a Hungarian woman, and St. Stephen's mother was Bolesław the Brave's sister.⁵⁰ According to another Polish source, Prince Imre also married a Polish woman.⁵¹ The validity of these reports cannot be verified,⁵² but the two dynasties did establish strong political and family ties with each other in the 11th–13th centuries, and we also find references in Hungarian chronicles that describe the family connection with the Piasts as particularly distinguished: this is the case, for example, with Béla I.⁵³

Looking through the Árpád family tree, we can see that the majority of the thirty Hungarian queens of the Árpád era came predominantly from German, Czech, Byzantine, and French families,⁵⁴ but the Rurik and Piast houses are also prominently represented in the marriages

44 Jánosi 1986.

45 Makk 1996, 160.

46 Font 1993, 136–138.

47 Makk 1998, 180–189.

48 This is indicated by the fact that the text refers to the origin of the girl of the Tátony family with the expression *de genere*. (Györffy 1966, 27–29.) The same phrase is used to indicate the origin of the sons of Vazul in the greater Gellért legend (SRH II 501) and Kézai (SRH I 178).

49 *Andreas rex filius calvi Ladislai* (SRH I 55.)

50 *Annales Kamenecenses* 777; Dlugoss 136.

51 *Rocznik Świętokrzyski* 61.

52 Kristó 2000, 1–9.

53 Bagi 2017, especially 366.

54 On summative data, see Zsoldos 2005, 183–192.

of our kings.⁵⁵ Until the end of the 13th century, until the reign of András III, the Hungarian kings had Rurikid wives: András I, Géza II, and Kálmán the Learned, while Béla I and András III chose their (first) spouses from the Piast dynasty.⁵⁶ However, the family ties of these three ruling houses, which essentially became state-forming in Central and Eastern Europe at the same time,⁵⁷ do not end there, as the marriages of Béla III and András III were also significant, as their further intertwining resulted in a series of marriages between Hungarian princes and princesses and Polish and Russian princes and princesses on the other side.⁵⁸

The “classic” German, Czech, Polish, Russian, and Byzantine orientation of the Árpáds is evident in the marriages of Béla III, King Imre, András II, and István V, as well as the children of Géza I, László II, András II, and István V. Without exception, these marriages were based on current political considerations, and no intention of increasing prestige can be detected behind them. Without exception, these marriages were based on current political considerations, and no intention to raise their status can be detected behind them. The development of the network of relationships was fundamentally determined by the need to form alliances in the current situation, and like other families, the Árpád dynasty did not and could not break away from the atmosphere of its immediate environment and its own region.

Halych, the sphere of interest of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary

Hungarian foreign policy had a clear trajectory in the region even before the Mongol invasion of 1241–1242. At the time of the founding of the Christian Hungarian state, Kievan Rus was located on the northeastern border of the country. This state, ruled by the Ruriks, included the Halych region, which bordered directly on the Hungarian Kingdom and consisted of several centers of power (Peremyśl, Terebovl, Zvenigorod, Halych), which only became a unified principality in the 1140s, and then, by the 13th century, had more or less successfully gained independence from the Kiev center, and even sought to conquer it at times. The history of Halych is closely linked to that of Volhynia, which borders it to the north and is adjacent to Lesser Poland, especially since it was itself a direct neighbor of the Lesser Polish territories to the northwest. Thus, together with Volhynia, it was subject to the continuous

55 A generation-by-generation analysis of the Árpáds’ marriages to other dynasties up to the beginning of the 12th century was carried out by Báling 2021, 91–170.

56 KMTL 61–65.

57 See Font 2007, 50–53; Font 2009, 11–19.

58 See KMTL 547–549 (work of Engel Pál); KMTL 61–65 (work of Gyula Kristó and Ferenc Makk); Makk 1993, 584–589.

conquest efforts of the Polish princes, and in addition, both the princes of Halych and Volhynia regularly sought to unite each other's territories under their own rule.

During the period of state organization, István I (Saint Stephen) sought a peaceful foreign policy with his neighbors. In 1000, together with papal and Bohemian envoys, he himself sent a delegation to Vladimir I (the Great), Grand Prince of Kiev, with whom, according to Russian annals, he lived in peace.⁵⁹ Of the children of the blinded Vazul, András and Levente, and later, after the death of Sámuel Aba, presumably his family as well, fled to the territory of Kievan Rus to escape retaliation.⁶⁰ The future András I, who married Princess Anastasia, daughter of Rurik, presumably returned to Hungary in 1046 with a Russian escort to Újvár, built by Aba, to seize power from Péter Orseolo.⁶¹

The first to actively intervene in the internal affairs of Rus was (Saint) László I, who supported Prince Sviatopolk of Turov (Volhynia),⁶² later Grand Prince, against Prince Vasilko of Terebovl, and even gave one of his daughters in marriage to Sviatopolk's son,⁶³ Yaroslav. This policy was also reflected in the marriage of Prince Álmos, whom László had designated as his successor, to Predslava, the daughter of Sviatopolk, in 1104.⁶⁴ Later, Kálmán, István II, and Géza II also intervened significantly in the internal affairs of Halych-Volhynia.⁶⁵

The first Hungarian ruler to make a claim to this territory was Béla III. From his reign onwards, Hungarian foreign policy clearly sought to establish lasting rule in Halych,⁶⁶ but neither Béla nor his son, András II,⁶⁷ succeeded in this endeavour.⁶⁸ The greatest chance of acquiring this territory, which was plagued by constant internal power struggles and exposed to Hungarian and Polish attempts at occupation, was for András II after the death of his father, Béla III. András II had the best chance of acquiring the territory, fighting constant internal power struggles and being exposed to Hungarian and Polish occupation attempts after Roman Mstislavich, who had briefly united Halych and Volhynia under his rule, died in 1205, and his widow, wanting to divide her father's inheritance among her sons, turned

59 Hungarian historiography attributes this to István's peaceful foreign policy and considers the marriage of László the Bald and Vladimir's daughter, Premislava, to be a success (Makk 1996, 55–56; Lenkey-Zsoldos 2003, 89). It can be assumed that one of Vladimir's sons, Svyatoslav, also had a wife of Hungarian origin (Font 2002, 9).

60 Makk 1996, 77.

61 Makk 1996, 80; KK 108.

62 According to KK, (Saint) László I "attacked Ruscia because the Cumans invaded Hungary on their advice." (KK 172.). However, the reason for the Hungarian attack given in domestic sources was probably only used as a justification, since Vasilko was most likely not involved in the Hungarian invasion of the Cumans. On the invasion of the Cumans, see Kovács 2014, 225–230.

63 Makk 1996, 136–137.

64 Makk 1998, 180–189.

65 Makk 1996, 149–150, 155–156, 167–171, 175–189.

66 In detail, see Font 2017.

67 Regarding András II's policy in Halych, Márta Font stated that "we can clearly use the term feudal expansion" (Font 1991, 134) and that in this regard, "At the beginning of the 13th century, András II pursued a consistent policy of expansion." (Font 1991, 136.)

68 In detail, see Font-Barabás 2017.

to the Hungarian and Polish rulers for help. Polish Prince Leszek the White and András II, who had previously been at odds over the Halych-Volhynia issue, realized that their battles against each other were fruitless, so they came to an agreement. Under the terms of the 1214 Treaty of Szepes, the two rulers married their children: Hungarian Prince Kálmán and Polish Princess Salomea, who were the children of András II and his wife, the daughter of the Polish king. Under the 1214 Treaty of Szepes, the two rulers married their children: Prince Kálmán of Hungary and Salomea of Poland, who, according to the joint vision of the two contracting countries, could have ruled the territory together. However, after his defeat in 1219, Kálmán had to leave Halych for good.⁶⁹

The Hungarian royal court often provided refuge to rulers who had fled from neighbouring countries for political reasons. This was the case with the aforementioned son of Roman Mstislavich, Daniil, whom his mother fled to Hungary with upon his father's death in 1205. In 1211, András II sent Daniil back to his homeland with Hungarian auxiliary troops, but the child was unable to permanently regain Halych. At this time, the Russians also raised the idea of marrying Daniil to a Hungarian princess, but András II had other plans: he wanted to place his own sons, Prince Kálmán or Béla, on the throne of Halych, and presumably rejected the marriage plan mentioned in the Russian chronicles for this reason.⁷⁰ However, András's attempts remained unsuccessful in the long run, because the people of Halych did not want Hungarian rule, and Daniil did not renounce his paternal inheritance.⁷¹

Béla IV realized that his father's intention was impossible to achieve, but he did not give up on the idea of binding Halych more closely to Hungary. To this end, he needed to continue the policy he had previously begun with Lesser Poland, so in 1239, he married off his daughter Kinga to Leszek's son, Bolesław the Chaste. However, there were other reasons for the marriage between Bolesław and Kinga. Her Polish biography sheds light on the background to this. The source makes no mention of the impending Tartar invasion, explaining the marriage of the two young people of Kinga as the "scheming" of (Blessed) Salomea, daughter of Leszek the White, sister of Bolesław the Chaste, and wife of Prince Kálmán of Hungary.⁷² The legend does not clearly indicate – perhaps intentionally, as the source does not want to reveal this – whether the need to strengthen the marriage and the existing alliance was expressed by the Hungarian or Polish side, i.e., we do not know from it whether

69 Font 1991, 125; Font 2005, 204–210; Font–Barabás 2017, 41–44; Fedinec–Font–Szakál–Varga 2021, 19–47.

70 Rostislav also sought to marry into the Hungarian ruling family, but this only resulted in marriage in 1243. See Font 2017a, 276–278.

71 For a detailed account of the conquests of Béla III and András II, see Kristó 2003, 126–146. For details on Daniil and his succession, see Font 2017a.

72 For the relevant parts of the biography, see Kinga 65. In addition to those already cited, Tamás Nagy also expressed a contrary view: "In 1239, Béla IV found a husband for his older daughter in accordance with the political situation. The impending Tartar threat prompted the Hungarian ruler to choose the equally endangered Prince of Kraków as his son-in-law instead of the European elite dynasties." (Nagy 1992, 42.)

the Hungarian king found his way to the Polish king through Salomea, or vice versa. In any case, it is a fact that this marriage served to strengthen the existing alliance and, later, to continue it after Prince Kálmán's death due to wounds sustained in the Battle of Muhi. The fact that Bolesław himself justified his marriage by retaining his own power suggests that this demand arose first on the Polish side rather than the Hungarian side.⁷³ In order to retain his possession of Lesser Poland, Bolesław had to enlist the help of his father-in-law in 1243 against Konrad of Mazovia and his Russian allies. In return, he made his country available to his father-in-law as a staging area and provided him with auxiliary troops for his campaigns in Halych.⁷⁴ Bolesław continued to need his father-in-law's support later on, as he himself fled to Hungary in November 1259, among other things.

In Halych, Danyiil, during the reign of Béla IV, whose coronation Daniil attended as a young man according to the *Chronicon Pictum*,⁷⁵ had to contend primarily with Prince Mikhail of Chernigov and his son Rostislav, who sought to gain the throne of Halych.⁷⁶ Béla supported Rostislav in these internal conflicts, believing that he would prevail in the battles that had been raging for years. As a sign of his alliance with him, he married off his daughter Anna to him in 1243,⁷⁷ but Rostislav was unable to hold on to Halych, despite the fact that during the final battle between the pretenders to the throne in 1245, Béla's other son-in-law, Bolesław the Chaste, sent reinforcements to his aid.⁷⁸ After Rostislav's defeat, he moved with his family to Hungary, where he received the principality of Macsó from his father-in-law, took part in Béla's western campaigns, and directed Hungarian expansion towards Bosnia and Bulgaria.⁷⁹

After his son-in-law's defeat, Béla IV could have decided to withdraw from Halych politics, but he did not choose this path: With the change of fortune, he sought to strengthen his relationship with Daniil by establishing another family connection, which is why the marriage of Daniil's son, Lev, and Béla IV's daughter, Konstancia, took place in the autumn of 1246.⁸⁰ Pauler explained that Konstancia's marriage to Lev, a figure shrouded in myth at the time,⁸¹ was arranged so that the Hungarian king could obtain relevant information about

73 Wertner 1892, 480–481. Short descriptions of the events see Barabás 2015, 8.

74 Bertényi 2003, 546–547. In Bertényi's opinion, all this was also a manifestation of Béla IV's plans for conquest in the northeast.

75 "His brother, Prince Kálmán, respectfully carried the royal sword beside him, while Daniil, prince of the Ruthenians, led his horse before him with great reverence." (KK 222.) According to Gyula Kristó's assessment, this act by Daniil, who had fled from Halych to Hungary at the time, "was an expression of his willingness to accept the Hungarian ruler as his feudal lord in exchange for further assistance." (Kristó 2003, 145.)

76 For details on Rostislav's personality and his relationship with Daniil, as well as with the Hungarian Kingdom and the Mongols, see Font 2020.

77 Pauler 1899, 215–217.

78 Pauler 1899, 218.

79 Gál 2013, 478.

80 Senga 1987, 587–589.

81 Fonalka 1993, especially 42.

the Tartars' plans from Daniil, who was visiting Batu's court in 1245–1246 and had accepted vassalage.⁸² It is certain that the family relationship facilitated the flow of information, but this seems insufficient to explain why the Hungarian king, who was so afraid of another Tartar attack, would take such a step and incur the wrath of the Mongols once again. In Halych, long considered part of the Hungarian sphere of influence, the desire to maintain Hungarian influence after the Tartar invasion may have been related to the fact that the area was seen as a bastion of the Hungarian Kingdom beyond its borders.⁸³

However, there were other reasons behind Lev and Konstancia's marriage, not least of which was Daniil's need for Hungarian support.⁸⁴ He and his son, Lev, sought allies in the West to maintain their rule and the independence of their state,⁸⁵ in addition to gaining power in Halych. Danyiil, who only ostensibly accepted Mongol vassalage, fought against the Mongols several times with the support of Hungarian auxiliary troops. Lev's commitment to Konstancia provided a good basis for gaining further allies, as did the marriage between Lev's brother Roman and Margarethe, heiress to the House of Babenberg, which was arranged by Béla IV.

The Hungarian princess, who had received a deeply religious upbringing and represented Western Christian rites alongside her Orthodox husband, may have helped open other doors for Daniil and Lev. Although we cannot know what role Konstancia or Béla played in these events, Konstancia's father-in-law turned to the pope for the crown despite his Orthodox faith, and after receiving it, he was crowned king in 1253. His son, Lev, did the same later. In 1269, he still held the office of grand prince, but in 1293, like his father, he also had himself crowned according to the Western rite. A controversial question that has arisen in Hungarian literature is whether the papacy's reluctance towards the Eastern Church and the Hungarians' intention to convert Orthodox territories, which was already evident in the time of Béla III, could have been the basis for expansionist ambitions.⁸⁶ Prince Kálmán's acquisition of the royal title may point in this direction.⁸⁷ However, since Béla IV had already been forced to admit that he could

82 Pauler 1899, 215.

83 Kristó 1981, 111.

84 Bertényi 2003, 548; Sroka 2016, 24.

85 Senga 1987, 589.

86 "... it would be a mistake to believe that this motivated Hungarian expansion in Halych..." (Makk 1996, 219–220.) See Font 1998, especially 505: "The union ideas of Pope Innocent III and the popes who followed in his footsteps found resonance in the Hungarian royal court because they coincided with its expansionist ambitions." A pathetic tone is represented in this regard by Bertalan Korompay, for example, who writes that "after the Mongol invasion, Béla IV gave his daughter's hand in marriage to Daniil's son in order to strengthen his ties with Russia. His decision was guided by the need to defend his country against the still looming threat of another Mongol invasion. His far-sighted hopes of keeping Halych for Western Christianity were dashed by the changed circumstances in Russia following the Mongol invasion." (Korompay 1956, 77.) Emma Lederer takes a similar position, stating that while the pope pursued an extensive international policy after the Tartar conquest, "on the one hand, he sought to find a *modus vivendi* with the Tartars, to reach some kind of agreement with them, at the same time he tried to persuade the princes of Halych to form an alliance against the Tartars, thus holding two irons in the fire, in order to extend his power over Russian lands in one way or another." (Lederer 1952, 345.) On this topic, see also Kovács 2020, 15–61.

87 According to Russian sources, Kálmán expelled Orthodox priests from churches and replaced

not conquer Halych, it is unnecessary to look for intentions of power expansion behind the marriage of Konstancia. However, since Béla IV had already been forced to admit that he could not conquer Halych, it is unnecessary to look for intentions of power expansion behind his marriage to Konstancia. Nevertheless, it is indisputable that he played a significant role in spreading the Western rite and establishing the Dominicans in this area.

To sum up the above: although the Mongol invasion reevaluated the role of Halych, Béla IV basically followed in his father's footsteps in his Northern and Northeastern foreign policy, but instead of the impossible conquest, he only sought to gain political influence in Halych, and the marriage of Anna and Konstancia indicates that he did not want to give up on that.⁸⁸

As a result of the Tartar invasion of 1241–1242, the route, which had been called the Russian Gate by the Hungarians and the Hungarian Gate by the other side for centuries,⁸⁹ and which had been an important military, trade, and transport route, along which the main Tartar army had entered the country and then partly left along the same route,⁹⁰ undoubtedly gained importance in the 1240s from a defensive point of view. In the second half of the 13th century, the old border defense system, which was still able to hold back the Mongols for months in 1241,⁹¹ was further strengthened by the transformation of the so-called “border counties”⁹² located in the immediate vicinity of the Russian Gate. A similar process, which continued into the 14th century, took place in the area around the so-called “old Polish road” in Sáros and in the other former northern forest areas.⁹³ To defend the eastern and southeastern borders, Béla took back and settled the Cumans, while entrusting the defense of Szörénység to the Knights of the Order of Saint John.⁹⁴ All this leads us to believe that Béla IV, in addition to reorganizing the internal military structure⁹⁵ and renewing the internal fortification system,⁹⁶ saw the strengthening of the country's immediate border defenses as the primary means of deterring a possible new invasion along the Carpathians.

them with Latin rite priests. (Kristó 2003, 136–137.) Even after being forced to relinquish his rule over Halych, Kálmán continued to support the papal policy of conversion. See Barabás 2017.

88 According to Gyula Kristó, “The impact of the Mongol invasion and military considerations led to a reassessment of previous foreign policy guidelines in certain respects. The most important change was a radical shift in policy toward Halych. It is true that Béla, who was related to Prince Mikhail of Chernigov through his son Rostislav [...], continued to support Rostislav even after the Mongol invasion [...], which ultimately ended in complete failure, but as early as 1246, Béla IV formed a political alliance with Daniil. This [...] would have helped IV. This [...] would have been of help to Béla IV and Hungary in the event of a Tartar attack.” (Kristó 1981, 111.) “The alliance was mainly anti-Tartar in nature.” (Kristó 2003, 175.)

89 See the latest Fedinec–Font–Szakál–Varga 2021, 165–166.

90 B. Szabó 2017, 135.

91 B. Szabó 2007, 113.

92 Fedinec–Font–Szakál–Varga 2021, 58–62.

93 Kristó 1981, 109; Marsina 1984, especially 312.

94 Kristó 1981, 109; Bertényi 2003, 548.

95 Zsoldos 2003, 528–539.

96 Laszlovszky 2003, 462–464.

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KIVONAT

Árpád-házi királylányok és a tatárjárás (1214–1242). IV. Béla lányai kiházásításának okai

Egy 1247-es, IV. Ince pápához intézett levelében IV. Béla király azt írta, hogy a mongol veszély miatt három lányát rangjuk alatt volt kénytelen kiházásítani. A magyar király állításai mélyen beágyazódtak a történeti irodalomba, és jelentős hatásuk van IV. Béla tatárjárás utáni külpolitikájának értékelésére. A tanulmány azt vizsgálja, hogy a magyar király levelében kifejtett nézetet valóban ilyen kategorikusan kell-e értelmeznünk, s hogy olyan tényezőnek kell-e tekintenünk, amely szükségszerűen és alapjaiban befolyásolta a magyar külpolitikai döntéseket az 1230-as és 1240-es években.

KULCSSZAVAK: IV. Béla, tatárjárás, Szent Kinga, Boldog Konstancia, Árpád-házi Anna, V. Boleszláv, Lengyelország, Halics, Danyilo Romanovics, Rosztyiszlav Mihailovics