

## HUNGARY, DALMATIA AND THE MONGOLS IN 1340

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Dalmatia was under the supremacy of Byzantium until the first millennium, then of Venice. In 1105 Koloman, king of Hungary (1195–1116) occupied a part of Dalmatia, that is why conflicts between Venice and Hungary became frequent from that time onwards.<sup>1</sup> In 1340 Charles I, king of Hungary (1301–1342) was planning to carry out a campaign to Dalmatia in order to reconquer those Dalmatian cities and territories which had belonged to Hungary previously, but which had been fallen under the influence of Venice and the Croatian barons some decades ago.<sup>2</sup> In the end the campaign was not carried out, but through the charters of the year 1340 I try to analyze and explain probably why this undertaking did not occur, obtain an insight into the diplomatic activity of Venice, and show how the problem of the Dalmatian campaign was connected with the Mongols.

The first record of Charles I's arrival to Dalmatia is a decision of the Venetian State on 9 February 1340 by which the *comites* of Nona, Arbe and Zara<sup>3</sup> were ordered to find out informations about the king's coming and make a report to Venice.<sup>4</sup> It needs to be pointed here, this data precedes that record of the pope's – Benedict XII (1335–1342) – collector from 20 February 1340 that the Mongols attacked Poland and that this disturbed Charles I and his kingdom.<sup>5</sup> The Mongols played an important role later but it seems sure that the Hungarian king's prime aim in the foreign affairs in 1340 was the Dalmatian campaign.

The Venetian doge, Bartolomeo Gradonico (1339–1342) and the Venetian Council ordered<sup>6</sup> the *comites* of Arbe, Nona and Zara to find out the intentions of other *comites* of *Sclauonia* (as the charters name Dalmatia). This order was repeated many times, which can mean that Venice possibly feared that Venetian deputies (*comites*) who controlled the Dalmatian cities under Venetian domination, would be unable to handle the conflict and the Dalmatian citizens would support the Hungarian king.

The primary interest of Venice was to prevent the Hungarian attack, so diplomatical steps were taken, because though Venice could have mobilized soldiers and galleys, could not have had too much confidence in the cities and

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<sup>1</sup> For the relations between Hungary, Venice and Dalmatia in XI–XIII. centuries cf. the relevant parts of Kristó–Makk; Makk; Kristó; Engel.

<sup>2</sup> Zs. Teke: Dalmácia. [Dalmatia] KMTL 159–160.

<sup>3</sup> Today Nin, Rab and Zadar in Croatia.

<sup>4</sup> Ljub. II. 59.; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 74.

<sup>5</sup> Mon. Vat. I/1. 433.; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 91.

<sup>6</sup> Wenzel, Dipl. eml. I. 380–382.; Ljub. II. 63–64.; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 136. and 137.

citizens of Dalmatia. Venice hindered the trade of these cities, imposed taxes on them and controlled them politically, too. In these cities the Venetian domination and loyalty was represented only by the local *comes* and his soldiers, not by the citizens, that is why the Venetian army in the Dalmatian cities needed to be strengthened.

Venice could also have feared that these cities under his domination (e. g. Nona, Trau, Spalato, Sebenico, Zara)<sup>7</sup> would open their gates one after the other to Charles I preferring the Hungarian rule which could have supported the trade of these cities rather than merely drawing profit from them. (The situation was same in the case of the ransomed cities under the domination of the Croatian barons.) That is why Venice wanted to keep Charles I far from these cities, and to avoid military confrontation, and against the power of the Hungarian army Venice primarily tried to use diplomatical means in addition to military preparations.

Venice needed to clarify the intensions of Croatian barons, too. Among them the Frangepans: Duym and Bartholomew,<sup>8</sup> *comites* of Veglia and Modrus<sup>9</sup> were particularly important,<sup>10</sup> because their territories lay in those parts of Dalmatia nearest to Hungary. By supporting Charles I militarily and politically, the Frangepans could have made the king's way to Dalmatia much easier. What is more, they had functions in Hungary, too: Duym was *comes* of county Posega, Bartholomew of county Somogy,<sup>11</sup> so they could bring news to Venice about King Charles I's plans.

The Croatian barons (of whom apart from the Frangepans the Subić, lords of Klissa and Scardona,<sup>12</sup> Nelipić, and the Kurjaković ought to be highlighted) were often at war with each other, and their loyalty to Venice seemed to be doubtful. But as their military power was potentially useful against Charles I, the negotiations with the barons took an important role in Venice's diplomacy.

One of the charters dating from 10 March illustrates Venice's strategy in Dalmatia in the case of the Hungarian attack: Venice wanted to cut the Hungarians' route from the cities and places providing food, and at the same time to leave them a free way to retire.

On March 28 the Venetian Council promoted three constables to Dalmatia who had many tasks: to exhort the citizens to guarantee Venetian domination, to get to know the intensions of the cities and the barons, to establish a coalition among the barons against Charles I, essentially to organize the defence, to secure the territories and to obtain more news on the movements of

<sup>7</sup> Today Nin, Trogir, Split, Sibenik, Zadar in Croatia.

<sup>8</sup> On the situation of the Frangepans between Hungary and Venice, and the expectations of both sides towards them cf. Wenzel 1890. 210., 214.

<sup>9</sup> Today Krk and Modruš in Croatia.

<sup>10</sup> The role of Duym and Bartholomew is accurately discussed by Wenzel 1890. 211–214.

<sup>11</sup> Engel 1996. I. 164.

<sup>12</sup> Today Klis and Scradin in Croatia.

the Hungarian king.<sup>13</sup> Venice took the possibility of the Hungarian attack seriously, because this attack could have led to Hungarian repossession of the Dalmatian cities.

Anyway, it is not only Venetian data which can be related to the plan of the Dalmatian campaign but also a charter of Charles I dated from 28 March 1340 by which the king delayed the discussion of the trial between the bishop of Zagreb, Leslie and the bishop's dependants to the day when the king would arrive in Zagreb.<sup>14</sup>

It is quite sure that the king wouldn't have not left for Zagreb because of the trial – this reference was in connection with the Dalmatian campaign. After Zagreb the road went in the direction of the coast, to the territory of the Frangepans. So all these data show that Charles I still wanted to leave for Dalmatia in the end of March, not as yet disturbed in this sense by the Mongols, whose activity close to Hungary is also highlighted by the data of the pope's collector mentioned above.

Venice started the military fortification of Dalmatia, too: by a command dated from 10 April two pedestrian *banderia* were sent to defend Nona.<sup>15</sup> The Venetian Council ordered the *consul* of Zengg<sup>16</sup> and local traders to send emissaries to Hungary for news.

So Venice was not satisfied with the news from the Frangepans only, wanted the trasers to spy on the king's plans, and the Council even wrote a letter to the Venetians being at Charles I's court to obtain information and send it to Venice by messenger as to (as the source says) „why the king wants to come to Dalmatia and on whose demand”.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps Venice was afraid that Charles I would come not only of his own decision but also by invitation of the Dalmatian citizens. The sources do not answer this question but it is not impossible that some of the cities had somehow asked the king to liquidate the domination of Venice or that of Croatian barons over them.

As it is shown, Venice did not have exact information at this time (and for a long time) despite its widespread diplomatic activity, about how far the king wanted to go, what his aim was, how strong his army was, by whom he was supported, and, if so, when he would start. Venice was alarmed at this lack of clearness, because the arrival of the king and his army could be more and more likely as the end of spring approached.

On 13 May the Council of Venice ordered ten galleys for the constables in order to defend Dalmatia in the case of the king's arrival.<sup>18</sup> It is known from a decision of the Council dated from 20 May that on 13 May the constables negotiated with the Kuriaković, namely *comites* Budislav, Paul and Gregory,

<sup>13</sup> Wenzel, Dipl. eml. I. 382–383.; Ljub. II. 64–65.; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 182.

<sup>14</sup> CD Croaciae X. 533.; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 181.

<sup>15</sup> Ljub. II. 66.; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 223.

<sup>16</sup> Today Senj in Croatia.

<sup>17</sup> Wenzel, Dipl. eml. I. 67–68.; Ljub. II. 66–68.; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 235. and 236.

<sup>18</sup> Wenzel, Dipl. eml. I. 386–387.; Ljub. II. 69–70.; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 307.



who proposed a coalition against Charles I between the Kuriaković, the Frangepans and Nelipić, to deter the king from setting off.

In this matter the constables sent envoys to these barons, and the Venetian Council decided that if this coalition could be brought about, Venice would give military support. The Council also ordered that if the Frangepans would not enter the coalition, the constables should go ahead it with other barons.<sup>19</sup>

In the end, however, the envoy of Nelipić did not go to the constables, the Frangepans were considered by Venice as an uncertain element, *comes* Gregory Kuriaković expected extreme claims for the coalition and Mladen Subić was not asked to join the league – so the coalition of the barons seemed to be failed by this time. What is more, the seriousness of the situation is shown by the fact that the constables asked Venice to let them return to Venice, because their stay in Dalmatia was unsuccessful and local loyalty towards Venice was diminishing.<sup>20</sup>

Of course, Venice did not let the constables return, but ordered them to continue their work, and moreover nominated three envoys to negotiate with the representatives of the king of Serbia,<sup>21</sup> Stephen Dušan (1331–1355). Venice and Serbia, as opponents of Hungary found each other.<sup>22</sup>

The Serbian king assured Venice of his friendship, moreover he suggested a military and commercial alliance<sup>23</sup> which was accepted by the Venetian Council on 8 June, when they received the king as „citizen of Venice”.<sup>24</sup> What Stephen Dušan probably had in mind was, that a Hungarian attack on Dalmatia could be linked with an attack on Serbia as well, possibly with aid from Bosnia, as there were close and friendly ties between Hungary and Bosnia.

The constables reported on 30 May that they had negotiated with the Frangepans who said that Charles I would not go to Dalmatia that year. On the other hand, the constables were informed on 5 June by *comes* Gregory Kuriaković that the king would start. The basis for this information was (says the source) a letter sent by the Hungarian king to *comes* Gregory, and information from people close to the king.<sup>25</sup>

There is no more information about this letter of Charles I, so I cannot say what it contained and why the king wrote to *comes* Gregory. Possibly I can

<sup>19</sup> Wenzel, Dipl. eml. I. 387–392.; Ljub. II. 71–74. ; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 323.

<sup>20</sup> Wenzel, Dipl. eml. I. 392–393.; Ljub. II. 74–75. ; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 355.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>22</sup> Stephen Dušan made Serbia a powerful state and he titled himself firstly in Serbia as czar. In the fourteenth century there were conflicts between Serbia and Hungary because of boundary problems. Cf. P. Rokay–M. Takács: Szerbek, Szerb-magyar kapcsolatok. [Serbs, Serbian-Hungarian connections] KMTL 638–641.

<sup>23</sup> Wenzel, Dipl. eml. I. 394–395.; Ljub. II. 75–76. ; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 364.

<sup>24</sup> Wenzel, Dipl. eml. I. 396–397.; Ljub. II. 76–77. ; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 366.

<sup>25</sup> Wenzel, Dipl. eml. I. 397–398.; Ljub. II. 77–78.; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 369.

interpret apparently these two inconsistent pieces of information, that the king's primary aim by this time was not the Dalmatian campaign, but he did not abandon the plan finally, and tried to find a convenient way out to carry out the campaign in the situation created by the Mongol problem.

This can be confirmed by the letter of the Council from 12 June which clearly says that Charles I will definitely not go to Dalmatia that year, because of his weakness of his physical weakness and the attack of the Mongols (*propter sui corporis infirmitatem et propter invasionem quam fecerunt Tartari versus partes suas*).<sup>26</sup>

Though the attack of the Mongols against Hungary surely was not as powerful as those against Poland, Charles I was careful, that is why he decided in the interest of security of Hungary that he would not start the Dalmatian campaign. The exact date of this Mongol attack is not known but the data and relations mentioned above suggest that it could have happened in April, or at the beginning of May. So, the Mongols surely influenced the king's plans after the beginning of May.

On 17 July the doge wrote to the *comes* of Arbe that he had received letters from the *consul* of Zengg and the *comes* of Zara, and these letters had contained reliable news on the king's arrival. That is why the doge ordered the *comes* of Arbe to remain prepared and obtain news on the king's movements.<sup>27</sup>

It cannot be known what this „reliable information” was, anyhow the doge himself wrote a letter in this affair and this shows that Venice still did not ignore the possibility of a Hungarian attack. On 3 and 12 August the Council ordered the constables to continue their work as previously, with especial regard again to reach agreement among the barons against Charles I.<sup>28</sup> However, there are no further news in the sources on the king's coming in 1340 to Dalmatia, so the Venetian precaution was addressed to the future – Charles I by this time had finally cancelled the idea of the Dalmatian campaign.<sup>29</sup>

Glancing over the relevant Venetian sources, let us see those events that influenced and changed the king's original plans.

In Hungarian charters of the year 1340 there are data (mainly for the first half of May) which show that some trials were postponed to the fifteenth or twenty second day after disbanding of the royal army (*residencia exercitus regis*),<sup>30</sup> i.e. to 1341. This means that military preparations were made in the first half of May in Hungary. These postponing charters do not mention Dalmatia, but name an other target: one of the charters says that some litigants were to set off in

<sup>26</sup> Wenzel, Dipl. eml. I. 400.; Ljub. II. 79.; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 380.

<sup>27</sup> Wenzel, Dipl. eml. I. 401.; Ljub. II. 82.; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 449.

<sup>28</sup> Wenzel, Dipl. eml. I. 402., 403; Ljub. II. 83–84.; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 476. and 483.

<sup>29</sup> The plan of the campaign is very briefly mentioned by Dobos 34. and Domanovszky–Vértes 786.

<sup>30</sup> Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 289., 291., 292., 299., 311.

the campaign of the kingdom with palatine<sup>31</sup> William Drugeth (...*in quadam expeditione regni ... in Rutheniam unacum Wyllermo palatino ... profecturos fore...*)<sup>32</sup>.

In my opinion this is a very important point because it directs the discussion towards the conflicts between Poland and Mongols (the Golden Horde).<sup>33</sup> The palatine's military task would have been to lead a Hungarian army to Ruthenia, which was under the Mongols not so far from the Hungarian border, and make a side movement against the Mongols who attacked Poland and made an inroad into Hungary in Spring 1340.<sup>34</sup>

The palatine's military movement would have served either the security of Hungary or the friendship between Hungary and Poland. Though the sources mention „royal army” or „army of the kingdom”, the task would not have been carried out by the whole Hungarian army. It seems that in 1340 it was not called together solely for this task, mainly because of the problem of Dalmatia. In this case „army of the kingdom” only means the so called *honor-army*<sup>35</sup> of the palatine, i.e. the soldiers of the castles and possessions controlled by him as a palatine. William Drugeth would have been the leader of this operation, not the king – sources do not mention the king's intentions to lead any army to Ruthenia by himself.

So at the beginning of May Charles I put the Dalmatian campaign aside to concentrate on the defense of Hungary because of the Mongol attack. However, Venice, as I pointed, despite its diplomatic activity did not receive notice until Summer 1340 that Hungarian foreign policy was primarily focused on the Mongols since May. Though in May Charles I did not totally abandon the idea of the Dalmatian campaign, but tried to decide if the Hungarian army could be divided to carry out both tasks. Another attack of the Mongols could have been expected (not to mention the great fear for the Mongols among the Hungarians since 1241/42, when the Mongols occupied almost the whole Hungarian Kingdom).<sup>36</sup> In this situation the problem of Mongols pushed the carrying out of Dalmatian campaign into the background.

<sup>31</sup> The palatine was the highest ranked secular judge and political person (after the king) in medieval Hungarian Kingdom, who had military tasks, too. Cf. I. Petrovics: Nádor. [Palatine] KMTL 473.

<sup>32</sup> Anjou IV. 26.; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 286. The campaign was thought as a fact by Wertner 436. and Pór 947–948.

<sup>33</sup> On the Golden Horde see Spuler; Vásáry.

<sup>34</sup> One can suggest that the real aim of the Hungarian army (beside helping Poland and repulsing the Mongol attack) would have been to acquire the principedom of Halich which was in the interest of Hungary for long time, and whose throne became empty in Spring 1340. I think that is just a theory without any base in the sources: no Hungarian army seems to have fought in Halich in 1340, which anyway was conquered by Poland that year. On Halich cf. M. Font: Halics. [Halich] KMTL 252.

<sup>35</sup> For the honor-system in fourteenth century Hungary and the military organization see Engel 1981.; Engel 2001.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. T. Almási: Tatárjárás. [Mongol Raid] KMTL 664–665.

The campaign against Dalmatia was finally abandoned in July 1340. The reasons were the activity of Venice, the illness of Charles I and above all the the Mongols. Charles I thought that he could not divide the military forces to fight in Dalmatia and in Ruthenia at the same time. So military preparations began in May 1340, but it was not connected with Dalmatia or Halich, but with the Mongols.

Procrastination and discussions certainly characterised the planned campaign against the Mongols, too. Charles I had to make a decision: which was more secure for Hungary. He chose defense, though fortunately no more Mongol actions affected Hungary in 1340. So there were plans to both directions, but no Hungarian army set off in 1340 either against Dalmatia or against Ruthenia – no exact data from charters or narrative sources which support movements of Hungarian forces abroad in 1340.<sup>37</sup> The armies stayed in Hungary and did not attack foreign territories. However, Dalmatia remained a target of Hungarian foreign policy, and finally Louis I (1342–1382), son of Charles I reconquered it later on.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Anyway, the standard Polish historical literature places the origin of conflicts between Poland and the Golden Horde in the possession of Halich, which was finally conquered by Casimir III, king of Poland (1333–1370). As far as I know, no Hungarian military help or presence in 1340 is mentioned by Polish historians or narrative sources. Cf. for example Mantauffel 450.; Wyrozumski 79.; Grodecki 42.; MPH II. (I owe Dániel Bagi for interpreting the scholarly literature written in Polish.)

<sup>38</sup> On the military connections in the Anjou era between Hungary and the territories mentioned in this article see Kristó 1988.

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