

Bálint TERNOVÁ CZ*

Budapest City Archives

Budapest

Hungary

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5869-7718>

HISTORY OF THE LATIN BISHOPRIC OF BELGRADE IN THE MIDDLE AGES**

Abstract: The establishment of the bishopric was urged by Pope Nicholas IV in his bull of 1 August 1290, in which he asked papal legate Benvenuto of Orvieto to replace the Orthodox bishop of the city with a Latin bishop. The establishment of a Hungarian dependent bishopric exercising jurisdiction over internal Balkan territories was also in the interest of Hungarian secular and ecclesiastical foreign policy. The first bishop of Belgrade was Benedict; his name appears in sources in 1293.

At its foundation, the diocese probably exercised spiritual jurisdiction over the territories south of the Danube and south-east of the Kolubara, but its boundaries were not defined. It probably intended to take over the spiritual jurisdiction over the mainland Serbian territories from the weakening ecclesiastical centres of southern Dalmatia by the late 13th century.

It seems that after 1322, Hungarian rulers and the Holy See tried to strengthen the functioning of the Bishopric of Belgrade: from the foundation until the fall of the castle, it was only during the reign of Hungarian kings Charles I and Louis I that real attempts were made to establish a functioning Bishopric of Belgrade, and the Pope wrote several documents trying to help the diocese financially and urging the ruler to support it. However, after the Ottoman advance in the Balkans and the fall of the Kingdom of Serbia, from the end of the 14th century onwards, the space for a missionary bishopric in Belgrade, which was not actually functioning, was no longer existent, and it continued to live as a titular bishopric. It is possible that as early as the late 13th century the Holy See, and in particular Pope Nicholas IV, abandoned their ambitions to put an

* ternovaczb@bparchiv.hu

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end to the Orthodox domination of Belgrade, and the Bishopric of Belgrade became a titular bishopric, sometimes briefly reinforced by papal or Hungarian royal interest.

Keywords: missionary bishoprics, Belgrade, Hungarian Church, Latin Church, ecclesial expansion.

Introduction

Belgrade (in Hungarian: Nándorfehérvár, today: Beograd, Serbia), on the border between Eastern and Western Christianity, has played a key role throughout the last thousand years. The castle built at the foot of Avala mountain, where the Danube and Sava rivers meet, was seen by attackers from the south as the key to Hungary, and for the medieval Kingdom of Hungary, it was the key to the northern Balkans. In addition to its significant military role, Belgrade was also intended to serve as an advanced garrison for both the Latin and Greek-rite churches. The Greek bishopric – which had belonged to the Bulgarian and, from the end of the 13th century, the Serbian metropolitanate – operated there for a long time. In the last decade of the 13th century, a Latin bishopric was also established, endorsed by Pope Nicholas IV, in order to stop the further expansion of the Orthodox Church in the Hungarian-dependent territories of Belgrade and Braničevo–Kučevo, and to pave the way for the expansion of the Latin Church.

The medieval history of the Bishopric of Belgrade is also included in the research in Hungarian only as a lexicon-article-part¹ and in mentions.² In his book *The Late Medieval Balkans*, John Fine discusses the diocese in a few sentences,³ as does Jovanka Kalić-Mijušković in her work on medieval Belgrade.⁴ The works of Mihailo Dinić and Sima Ćirković on medieval Serbian history do not deal with the Latin Bishopric of Belgrade. The archontology of the bishops of Belgrade in the Árpád period has been elaborated by Attila Zsoldos,⁵ the archontology of the bishops of Belgrade between 1301 and 1457 by Pál Engel,⁶ and the archontology of the bishops after 1450 by Norbert C. Tóth.⁷

¹ László Koszta, „Missziós püspökségek”, in: *Korai magyar történeti lexikon*, főszerk. Kristó Gyula, szerk. Pál Engel & Ferenc Makk, Budapest 1994, 459.

² Thus, for example, Vilmos Fraknói only mentions the date of foundation, placing it erroneously at the beginning of the 14th century. Vilmos Fraknói, *A magyar királyi kegyúri jog Szent Istvántól Mária Teréziáig*, Budapest 1895, 368.

³ John Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans. A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century*, Ann Arbor 1994, 220.

⁴ Jovanka Kalić-Mijušković, *Beograd u srednjem veku*, Beograd 1967, 67–68.

⁵ Attila Zsoldos, *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1000–1301*, Budapest 2011, 92.

⁶ Pál Engel, *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1301–1457*, I, Budapest 1996, 72. The archontology of the bishops of Belgrade of this period has been improved and supplemented by a number of accurate corrections. For the complete medieval archontology of the bishops of Belgrade see: B. Ternovác, „A nándorfehérvári püspökség a középkorban”, 126–127.

⁷ Norbert C. Tóth, *Magyarország késő középkori főpapi archontológiája. Érsekek, püspökök, illetve segédpüspökeik, vikáriusai és jövedelemkezelőik az 1440-es évektől 1526-ig*, Győr 2017, 83.

In the literature on the Hungarian missionary bishoprics, we find the same few brief definitions of the Bishopric of Belgrade: it was founded before 1290 for the province of Macho (in Hungarian: Macsó, in Serbian: Mačva), it was dissolved in 1295, when the territory came under Serbian control, but was re-established in 1322 by Hungarian King Charles I. Its first bishop was Martin, a Franciscan friar, and the bishops of Belgrade were mostly from the Franciscan order.⁸

While it is true that very few sources have survived on the Bishopric of Belgrade compared to other missionary dioceses in the south, such as the Latin dioceses of Syrmia (Serbian: Srem, Hungarian: Szerém) and Bosnia, it can be said that the surviving sources refute all the definitions of the Bishopric of Belgrade presented above in literature. In the present paper, I will attempt to describe the circumstances and medieval history of the foundation of the bishopric on the basis of the surviving sources.

Belgrade before the creation of the Latin Bishopric

Until the mid-13th century, the Belgrade and Braničevo–Kučevo (in Hungarian: Barancs-Kucsó) areas were part of the Byzantine and later Bulgarian sphere of interest, and their inhabitants were predominantly adherents of the Greek-rite Christian Church.⁹ There must have been an orthodox bishop in Belgrade, as a suffragan of the Bulgarian archbishopric of Ohrid: since the two settlements were in Bulgarian hands before the Hungarian dependence, they belonged to the Bulgarian archbishopric of Ohrid and not to the then existing Serbian archbishopric.

Stefan (Stephen) Dragutin (Serbian king 1276–1282, the king of Syrmia 1284–1316), who was deposed from the Serbian throne in 1282 by his brother Stefan II Uroš Milutin (Serbian king 1282–1321), received Belgrade in 1284 from his brother-in-law King Ladislaus IV of Hungary, along with other territories in Macho and northern Bosnia.¹⁰ Dragutin, like the Nemanjićs in general by this time, embraced the Greek rite and did much to spread Orthodoxy as widely as possible in his own territories. The building of the major ecclesiastical institutions in Belgrade is dated to Dragutin's reign there,¹¹ as it was always stressed that it was then that Belgrade first came into Serbian hands.¹² During the reign of Dragutin, according to Serbian

⁸ L. Koszta, „Missziós püspökségek”, 459.

⁹ For more details about the history of Belgrade in the 7–13th centuries see: J. Kalić-Mijušković, *Beograd u srednjem veku*, 24–65.

¹⁰ For more details about the 13th-century history of the territories of Syrmia Ulterior, see: Bálint Ternovác, „A macsóí és barancsi területek története 1319-ig.”, in: *Micae Medieuales VI. Fiatal történészek dolgozatai a középkori Magyarországról és Európáról*, szerk. Laura Fábián et al., Budapest 2017, Mihailo Dinić, *Srpske zemlje u srednjem veku*, Beograd 1978, 123–147.

¹¹ J. Kalić-Mijušković, *Beograd u srednjem veku*, 67–68.

¹² See e.g. Boris Stojkovski, „A szerb-magyar viszonyok 1321-ig középkori szerb elbeszélő források tükrében”, in: *Micae Medieuales IV. Fiatal történészek dolgozatai a középkori Magyarországról és Európáról*, szerk. Judit Gál et al., Budapest 2015, 238.

Orthodox Archbishop Danilo II, there was a large metropolitan Sabor church (i.e. cathedral) in Belgrade,¹³ but no other source mentions the existence of a cathedral in the city. According to Jovanka Kalić-Mijušković, if we accept Archbishop Danilo II's description of the existence of the Orthodox Archbishop's Church in Belgrade, it can be dated between 1284 and 1315.¹⁴ The city's Orthodox church already had a very important icon of the Virgin Mary, dating from the 1070s and attracting many pilgrims of Greek rite to the city.¹⁵

Establishment of the Bishopric of Belgrade

Pope Nicholas IV, learning of the situation in Belgrade and the spread of Orthodoxy, wrote to the papal legate, Franciscan Benvenuto of Orvieto on 1 August 1290,¹⁶ urging its containment.¹⁷ The Pope described conditions in Belgrade, the strengthening of the Orthodox Church and the fact that the Episcopal Church of Belgrade was headed by a schismatic. He ordered his legate to depose the Orthodox bishop and replace him with a Catholic.¹⁸ In his bull of 1290, the Pope called for the establishment of a Latin bishopric in Belgrade: the view of the literature that the diocese was founded before 1290 seems to be overturned.¹⁹

¹³ "И тако ова благочастива идући са таквом великолепном славом царском кроз све државе своје, и дође у славни и сјајни град звани Београд српски, који стоји на обали реке Дунава и Саве. И ту се у великој саборној цркви митрополитској поклонеше са умилењем чудотворној икони пресвете Богородице." Данило II, Животи краљева и архиепископа српских, превео Лазар Мирковић, Београд 1935, 73.

¹⁴ J. Kalić-Mijušković, *Beograd u srednjem veku*, 67.

¹⁵ Ibidem, 67–68. For the mention of the icon see footnote 14.

¹⁶ Augustinus Theiner (ed.), *Vetera monumenta historica Hungariam sacram illustrantia* I, Roma 1859, 366.

¹⁷ For more details about Franciscan friar Benvenuto of Orvieto, Bishop of Gubbio and papal legate see: Delegat Online <http://delegatonline.pte.hu/search/persondatasheet/id/124>.

¹⁸ "Venerabili fratri episcopo Eugubino, apostolice sedis legato (...) Fide digna relatione didicimus, quod in terra, quae Albulgarica litteraliter nuncupatur, ecclesia quedam episcopalis existit, que per quendam Scismaticum, qui iamdudum in eam per quorundam nobilium scismaticorum partium illarum potentiam intrusus extitit, detinetur, quique suis nephandis erroribus circumstantem patriam inficere nititur, capellas erigendo de novo et presbiteros ac clericos sui sequaces erroris ad eas ausu dampnabili ordinando, ac alia commitendo nepharia, que oculos divine maiestatis offendunt, cedunt in fidei Christiane dispendium, et fidelium animos graviter scandalisant. Cum itaque tante perversitatis audaciam et tam execrabilis presumptionis ausum sustinere nolimus, (...) fraternitati tue per apostolica scripta mandamus, quatenus, prefato scismatico ab eadem ecclesia auctoritate nostra per te prosus amoto, alium virum fidelem et idoneum scientia, moribus et etate, de illis aut aliis partibus oriundum, de quo tua viderit expedire discretio, preficias eidem ecclesie in episcopum et pastorem, eique, adscitis duobus vel tribus vicinis episcopis gratiam et communionem apostolice sedis habentibus (...)." A. Theiner (ed.), *Vetera monumenta historica Hungariam sacram illustrantia* I, 366.

¹⁹ L. Koszta, „Missziós püspökség”, 459.

Between 1293 and 1295 Benedict, the bishop of Belgrade, chapel priest and royal secretarius, appears in our sources.²⁰ We can reject the hypothesis that the first bishop was a Franciscan friar named Martin.²¹ A bishop named Martin is mentioned only in a document of 1306,²² but there is no information that Bishop Martin belonged to any order. Although no source has survived, it can be assumed that at the time of its foundation (like other missionary dioceses in the south, such as the bishoprics of Syrmia and Bosnia),²³ the Bishopric of Belgrade was under the archdiocesan jurisdiction of Kalocsa.²⁴

As John Fine, an American historian dealing with many medieval problems in the northern Balkans, points out, Dragutin sought to maintain good relations with the West, Hungary and the papacy, and therefore invited the Franciscan order to Bosnia, and allowed the establishment of a Catholic bishopric in Belgrade. He also notes that Dragutin's good relations with the Latin Church, including the Franciscan order, were probably due to his mother, Queen Mother Helen (Jelena) of Anjou, who may have been descended from the French House of Valois.²⁵ In my opinion, this view cannot be fully supported with certainty: I have already discussed Dragutin's commitment to Orthodoxy, as well as the positive tone in which Danilo II, the Serbian Archbishop, writes about Dragutin in his biography, praising the king's commitment to the Greek-rite Church. It would be difficult to imagine that Dragutin had particularly supported the Catholic Church at this time, when there was no prospect of a church union, decades after the fall of the Latin Empire of Constantinople (1261).

The establishment of the Latin Bishopric of Belgrade (and at the same time, the appearance of the Franciscan order in the northern Balkans) is much more due to the motivation of Pope Nicholas IV, whose original name was Girolamo Masci, who

²⁰ *Az Árpád-házi királyok okleveleinek kritikai jegyzéke* II/4, (1290–1301), szerk. Imre Szentpétery & Iván Borsa, Budapest 1987, 113, Nr. 3919. A. Zsoldos, *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1000–1301*, 92.

²¹ L. Koszta, „Missziós püspökségek“, 459. We are not aware that Bishop Benedict belonged to any ecclesial order.

²² *Anjou-kori oklevéltár [=AOKI]* II, 1306–1310, szerk. Gyula Kristó, Szeged–Budapest 1992, Nr. 97.

²³ About the fact that the bishopric of Syrmia was founded by the Archbishop of Kalocsa see: Bálint Ternovác, „A szerémi latin püspökség alapításának és korai történetének vitás kérdései“, *Századok* 147/2 (2013) 460–462; about the question of the metropolitanate over the Bosnian bishopric see: Bálint Ternovác, „A boszniai latin püspökség története 1344-ig.“, in: *Micae Mediaevales V. Fiatal történészek dolgozatai a középkori Magyarországról és Európáról*, szerk. Laura Fábíán et al., Budapest 2016, 221–224.

²⁴ Árpád Bossányi also includes it here, see: *Regesta supplicationum. A pápai kérvénykönyvek magyar vonatkozású okmányai. Avignoni korszak* II, összegyűjt. és feldolg. Árpád Bossányi, Budapest 1918, 221.

²⁵ J. Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans. A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century*, 220. The derivation from the House of Valois is erroneous; for a detailed description of the origin of Serbian Queen Mother Helen see: Dániel Bácsatyai, „A 13. századi francia–magyar kapcsolatok néhány kérdése“, *Századok* 151/2 (2017) 249. See also: B. Stojkovski, „A szerb-magyar viszonyok 1321-ig középkori szerb elbeszélő források tükrében“, 236–237.

entered the Franciscan order at a young age. He studied in renowned schools, and his talent was noticed by Pope Gregory X. At the age of 45, in 1272, the Pope sent brother Girolamo to Constantinople to invite the Greek clergy to the Council of Lyon. He also participated in numerous diplomatic missions and was appointed by Pope Nicholas III in 1281 as the Latin Patriarch of Constantinople, though this was only a titular and short-lived position.²⁶ Based on all this, it is evident that Pope Nicholas IV strongly supported the Franciscan order and had first-hand knowledge of the Orthodox ecclesiastical situation. Therefore, in my opinion, he advocated for the establishment of the Bishopric of Belgrade, as well as the creation of the Franciscan mission in Bosnia and the northern Balkans.²⁷

Of course, the establishment of a bishopric had to be backed by a secular power, but in the case of the Bishopric of Belgrade, secular support can be sought in the motivation of the Hungarian royal court rather than in the alleged benevolence of King Dragutin of Serbia, loyal to the Orthodox Church until his death and in a vassal status towards the Kingdom of Hungary, i.e. the Latin Church. This can also be seen in the fact that the bishop, as a chaplain and royal secretary, probably spent time at the Hungarian royal court and never visited Belgrade. From the perspective of the Catholic Church, the Belgrade bishopric was a noble cause based on the conversion of Belgrade and the Belgrade–Braničevo region to the Latin Church. However, based on the sources, it seems that it was only a titular bishopric even at its establishment. There are no data to suggest that any Latin ecclesiastical institution or church operated in Belgrade in the late 13th century.

Furthermore, another argument shows that the establishment of the Belgrade diocese was due to the interests of Pope Nicholas IV and the Latin Church, as well as the Hungarian foreign policy towards the south, rather than the goodwill of Dragutin. In her 2013 study, Judit Gál explains the dispute that took place in the early 13th century between the archbishoprics of Antivari (today Bar, Montenegro) and Ragusa (today Dubrovnik, Croatia): among other things, this conflict was fought for nominal spiritual authority over the few Latin-rite believers and churches located in the inland Serbian territories.²⁸ King Uroš I fought to have the Latin churches located in Serbian territories placed under the spiritual authority of Antivari, which was under Serbian influence, while the Archbishop of Ragusa wanted this privilege for himself. Although the Antivari archbishop emerged victorious from the long litigation,²⁹ by the end of the 13th century,

²⁶ G. Barone, „Nikolaus IV.“, in: *Lexikon des Mittelalters*. München–Zürich 1993, 1171.

²⁷ It should be noted that there is no record of the Franciscan order present in Belgrade during Dragutin's time. For more information on the appearance of the Franciscans in Bosnia see: Bálint Ternovác, „Domonkosok Boszniában a rend megtelepedésétől a 14. század közepéig“, in: *Az első 300 év Magyarországon és Európában. A Domonkos-rend a középkorban*, szerk. József Csurgai Horváth, Székesfehérvár 2017, 258–262.

²⁸ Judit Gál, „A dalmáciai egyházszerkezet jellemzői és 11–13. századi átalakulása“, in: *Micae Medievales III. Fiatal történészek dolgozatai a középkori Magyarországról és Európáról*, szerk. Judit Gál et al., Budapest 2013, 104–108.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, 107–108, 113.

the Serbian side had clearly taken a position in favour of the Greek rite, and the strengthening of the Kingdom of Serbia made the Latin Archbishopric of Antivari in Serbian territory increasingly impossible to operate. It is possible that Pope Nicholas IV wanted to replace the already very distant Antivari ecclesiastical centre with Belgrade, on the border of Latin Christianity and in vassalage with the Catholic Kingdom of Hungary. The expansion of the Hungarian Church also required bringing the remaining northern Balkan territories under its ecclesiastical control, after the establishment of the diocese of Syrmia in the Macho region and the annexation of the Bosnian bishopric.

It is clear from the sources, especially the works of Archbishop Danilo II, that the establishment of the Latin bishopric in Belgrade did not mean the end of the Orthodox bishopric: for example, in the above-quoted excerpt, Archbishop Danilo describes the pilgrimage of Serbian Queen Simonida, the wife of Serbian King Milutin, to Belgrade in 1315.³⁰

Bishopric of Belgrade in the 14th century

The next problematic statement in historiography is that the new bishopric ceased to exist in 1295, when the city fell into Serbian hands, because Serbian King Milutin conquered Belgrade, with King Charles I restoring it only in 1322.³¹ The Serbian takeover in 1295 can be fundamentally refuted: Dragutin had already been in possession of Belgrade since 1284, as mentioned above. The relationship between the two brothers, Milutin and Dragutin, was particularly good at this time: Milutin had come to Dragutin's aid during the Cuman rebellion in Braničevo,³² and Dragutin had helped Milutin in the war with Byzantium.³³ The Bishopric of Belgrade did not cease to exist in 1295, regardless of military reasons: although there are indeed some blank spots in the archontology of the bishops, the above document of 1306 mentions Bishop Martin of Belgrade. The date of Bishop Martin's death is not known, but it probably occurred between 1316 and 1319: after his death, the Hungarian-Serbian wars³⁴ left the episcopate vacant until 1322. King Charles I of Hungary may have played a significant role in reinstating of the episcopate in 1322. In the autumn of 1322, Pope John XXII wrote to the elected bishop of Belgrade, Andrew,³⁵ who was

³⁰ Данило II, *Животи краљева и архиепископа српских*, 73.

³¹ L. Koszta, „Missziós püspökségek“, 459.

³² J. Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans. A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century*, 220. On the campaign against Dorman and Kudelin, the lords of Braničevo, see: Данило II, *Животи краљева и архиепископа српских*, 86–88.

³³ M. Dinić, *Srpske zemlje u srednjem veku*, 141. On Milutin's wars with Byzantium see: Данило II, *Животи краљева и архиепископа српских*, 81–86.

³⁴ For more details about the Hungarian-Serbian war over the territories of Macho see: B. Ternovác, „A macsói és barancsi területek története 1319-ig.“, 237–238.

³⁵ A. Theiner (ed.), *Vetera monumenta historica Hungariam sacram illustrantia* I, 484. About the register of the charter see: AOKI VI. Nr. 764.

probably a Dominican monk of non-Hungarian origin, that the Church of Belgrade had no chapter, no clergy, and no Christian people, and that King Charles had only recently torn it from the hands of the infidels. Andrew was consecrated by Bishop Berengarius of Porto at the Apostolic See, and after the consecration, the Pope instructed Bishop Andrew to go to the Church entrusted to his care.³⁶ Bishop Andrew had not previously been included in the archontology of the 14th-century bishops of Belgrade.³⁷

Following the death of Bishop Andrew, Pope John XXII, in his bull of 19 February 1331, placed Augustinian hermit Paul of Chesluk, the son of Luke of Chesluk, at the head of the missionary diocese of Belgrade.³⁸ The previous archontology of Bishop Paul can be completed.³⁹ Pope John XXII's bull of 9 March 1332 reveals that Bishop Paul had requested to receive the revenues of the monastery of Bela and Clus, belonging to the Benedictine order, because the "schismatics had seized his revenues" and his revenues were very small for his rank.⁴⁰ Brother Paul must have died in 1341, and after a five-year vacancy, the bishopric was again filled by a brother named Paul.⁴¹

An important addition to the history of the Bishopric of Belgrade is that in January 1346 there was a dispute in which the then newly appointed Bishop of Cattaro (today Kotor, Montenegro), Sergius, invoked his ancient right to claim jurisdiction over the inner Serbian territories, singling out by name Golubac (in Hungarian: Galambóc), Macho⁴² and Belgrade, and several other places across the Sava and Danube rivers towards "Rassia", which were claimed by King Louis I. In his letter of complaint to the Pope, the bishop of Cattaro notes that many people, with the support of King Louis, were obstructing the work of the bishop and his tithes collectors.⁴³ Although Clement

³⁶ A. Theiner (ed.), *Vetera monumenta historica Hungariam sacram illustrantia* I, 485. About the register of the charter see: *AOKI VI, 1321–1322*, szerk. Gyula Kristó, Szeged–Budapest 2000, Nr. 824.

³⁷ P. Engel, *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1301–1457*, I, 72. Bishop Andrew probably died in 1330.

³⁸ *AOKI XV, 1331*, szerk. Ildikó Tóth, Szeged–Budapest 2004, Nr. 64.

³⁹ The first mention of hermit Paul, the son of Luke of Chesluk, is the already quoted bull of 19 January 1331. Cf. P. Engel, *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1301–1457*, I, 72.

⁴⁰ A. Theiner (ed.), *Vetera monumenta historica Hungariam sacram illustrantia* I, 549–550, Stanko Andrić, „Benediktinska opatija Svete Margarete u Grabovu i njezin odnos prema benediktinskom samostanu u Bijeli“, *Scrinia Slavonica* 5 (2005) 78–79.

⁴¹ See below for more details.

⁴² It is mentioned in the charter as *Mazonia*, see: *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae* [=CDCr] XI, 1342–1350, coll. et dig. Tadija Smičiklas, Zagrabiae 1913, 267. The identification of *Mazonia* as Macho is confirmed by the fact that on the same day Pope Clement VI writes to the *Ban of Mazonia* a very similar text to the bull quoted, in which he describes the towns mentioned and the territory beyond the Sava and the Danube towards Rassia as under the rule of the Ban, who governed them as *diocesanus* of these places from time immemorial. Aloysius L. Tăutu, *Acta Clementis PP. VI*, Vatican 1960, 110–111. *AOKI XXX, 1346*, szerk. Ferenc Piti, Szeged–Budapest 2014, Nr. 19.

⁴³ *CDCr XI, 266–267*. About the register of the charter see: *AOKI XXX. Nr. 18*.

VI placed these cities under the metropolitanate of Cattaro, two months later he had already appointed a new bishop at the head of the diocese of Belgrade – whose authority extended precisely to the areas east of the Kolubara river and south of the Danube, “towards Rassa”, including Belgrade and Golubac.⁴⁴

We have no further information on the borders of the diocese of Belgrade. In my opinion, the Latin Bishopric of Belgrade was probably intended to convert the Orthodox population of the northern Balkan territories to the east and southeast from the Kolubara to the Catholic Church, taking over the spiritual jurisdiction over the interior Serbian territories from the declining archdioceses of Antivari, Ragusa and Cattaro, with its southern borders open.

On 8 March 1346, Pope Clement VI wrote to the Chapter of Belgrade, the residents of the city and the diocese, the vassals of the church of Székesfehérvár, the Archbishop of Esztergom, the King of Hungary, and others,⁴⁵ appointing Paul, the son of Ada de genere Ada, as bishop, once again from the Hospitaller church of St Stephen in Esztergom.⁴⁶

As can be surmised, the Bishop of Belgrade was in a pitiful situation. In his bull issued in November 1354, in response to a request from Louis, the King of Hungary, made in May 1352, asking the Pope to help the bishop,⁴⁷ and a request from Bishop Paul dated 14 October 1354,⁴⁸ Pope Innocent VI wrote that the Bishopric of Belgrade, located on the borders of Hungary, was constantly suffering losses due to infidels to such an extent that it could not maintain its episcopal status, carry out its tasks, or take care of its needs. For this reason, Pope Clement VI had already given the canonry and prebend of the Eger church, as well as the possessions of the vacant archdeaconry of Ung, along with all its rights and appurtenances, to the Bishop of Belgrade. Later, Pope Innocent VI also gave all of this to Bishop Paul for two years, with the provision

⁴⁴ The Macho territories were under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Bishopric of Syrmia, see: B. Ternovác, „A szerémi latin püspökség alapításának és korai történetének vitás kérdései“, 463–466, B. Ternovác, „A macsói és barancsi területek története 1319-ig.“, 233–234.

⁴⁵ „...*Capitulo Albensi, clero et populo civitatis et diocesis Albensis, vasallis ecclesie Albensis, archiepiscopo Strigoniensi et regi Ungarie...*” A. Theiner (ed.), *Vetera monumenta historica Hungariam sacram illustrantia* I, 708. We do not have any information about the existence of Catholic institutions and churches in Belgrade, or whether there was a chapter – it was certainly not the case.

⁴⁶ The archontology of the bishops of Belgrade can be clarified in the case of Frater Paul of Ada: according to Pál Engel, the bishopric of Belgrade was vacant between 29 January 1341 and 21 January 1345; between 2 July 1340 and 3 October 1347 the bishop is not mentioned; and in the case of “Frater Paul” only the date of 22 October 1347 is given. Bishop Paul’s name also appears in a document of Pope Innocent VI of 14 October 1354, when the Holy Father granted him and five persons to be named by him a single full dispensation at the time of their death (see: *AOKI XXXVIII, 1354*, szerk. Éva B. Halász, Szeged–Budapest 2013, Nr. 445), and again on 2 November of the same year (see: *ibidem*, Nr. 460).

⁴⁷ *Regesta supplicationum. A pápai kérvénykönyvek magyar vonatkozású okmányai. Avignoni korszak I, összegyűjt. és feldolg.* Árpád Bossányi, Budapest 1916, 237–238.

⁴⁸ *Regesta supplicationum II*, 287–288.

that if he still could not financially recover after two years, he could enjoy the Eger and Ung assets for another two years.⁴⁹ By the harassment of the infidels, the Pope meant the campaigns of Serbian Tsar Dušan,⁵⁰ who in 1355 occupied the area around Belgrade and plundered the countryside.⁵¹

According to Árpád Bossányi, Bishop Pál of Ada was the archdeacon of Ung from 1352 to at least 1356,⁵² but this is not correct: Innocent VI mentions in his bull quoted above that in 1354 the archdeaconry of Ung was vacant, and Imre, the archdeacon of Ung, appears in the sources even in 1354.⁵³

For more than thirty years after the mention of Bishop Paul in 1354, there is no record of a bishop of Belgrade. The name of Bishop Nicholas of Belgrade appears in 1386. In a charter⁵⁴ of 4 October 1386, bishop of Pécs and cardinal Valentine of Alsán granted a year and eighty days' leave to all those who (on the feast days specified in the charter) visited the church of the Pauline monastery⁵⁵ in Streza (today: Pavlin Kloštar, Croatia). The text of cardinal Valentin's charter was followed by the authorisations of Bishops John of Győr and Nicholas of Belgrade,⁵⁶ who both granted a forty-day leave to pilgrims to the Pauline church of Streza.⁵⁷

Hungarian literature suggests that the bishops of Belgrade were mostly Franciscans.⁵⁸ However, we have only two sources regarding a Franciscan bishop. According to one source, published on 31 May 1419, Pope Martin V gave the seat of the bishopric of Belgrade, which had become vacant with the death of the previous bishop, to Franciscan monk Gregory of Nekcse (Gregorius de Nexa).⁵⁹ A charter issued in 1419 mentions the patron saint of the seat church of the bishopric of Belgrade: the cathedral was dedicated to St Mary.⁶⁰ Gregory's episcopate did not last long, because, according to a source dated 30 August 1420, the Pope appointed Matthew

⁴⁹ AOkI XXXVIII, Nr. 460.

⁵⁰ The petition to the Pope bears the title "King of Serbia", *rex Racie*, see: Reg. Suppl. II, 287.

⁵¹ J. Kalić-Mijušković, *Beograd u srednjem veku*, 76.

⁵² *Regesta supplicationum* II, 173.

⁵³ AOkI XXXVIII, Nr. 241, 323.

⁵⁴ State Archives of the Hungarian National Archives, Diplomatic Archives [=DL] 34650.

⁵⁵ For more details about the Pauline monastery in Streza see: Mira Kolar Dimitrijević, „Urbar pavlinskoga samostana u Strezi 1477. godine“, *Podravina: časopis za multidisciplinarna istraživanja* 2/3 (2003), Ivan Krstitelj Tkalčić, „Urbar bivšega hrvatskog pavlinskog samostana u Strezi“, *Vjesnik Hrvatskog zemaljskog arhiva* V (1903) 201.

⁵⁶ The permission of Bishop Nicholas was granted on 4 November 1386.

⁵⁷ The name of Bishop Nicholas also appears as the issuer of a charter dated 5 April 1419, see: State Archives of the Hungarian National Archives, Diplomatic Photographic Collection [=DF] 288924.

⁵⁸ L. Koszta, „Missziós püspökségek“, 459.

⁵⁹ *Zsigmondkori oklevéltár* [=ZsO] VII, (1419–1420), szerk. Elemér Mályusz & Iván Borsa, Budapest 2001, 543–544. See also: *ibidem* 730–733, 762.

⁶⁰ *ibidem* VII, 544.

of Chiapa (Matheus de Chiapa), also a member of the Franciscan order, to fill the vacancy left by the death of the previous bishop.⁶¹

Eclipse of the idea of Latin conversion in Belgrade

Serbia collapsed after the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, and in 1403 King Sigismund granted Belgrade as a fiefdom to Serbian despot Stefan (Stephen) Lazarević, who designated it as the centre of the Serbian Despotate, which was to be formed from the remaining Serbian territories.⁶² According to the Treaty of Tata, signed between 6 May and 6 June 1426, after the death of his uncle, despot Stefan, Đurađ (George) Branković ceded Belgrade to King Sigismund, together with the other castles listed in the charter (such as Macho and Golubac).⁶³ Despot Stefan Lazarević died a year later, on 18 July 1427: after repulsing the Tatars, Belgrade was back in Hungarian hands by the autumn of 1427.⁶⁴ In November 1427, King Sigismund ordered the city of Sopron to send two craftsmen from the same family to settle in Belgrade, as Belgrade had previously boasted a large Catholic population, but the Turkish invasions had depleted its Christian population.⁶⁵

On 31 July 1427, in a document issued in Rome by notary John Sydenegger, Matthew, the Bishop of Belgrade appears as a suffragan of George, the Archbishop of Esztergom: according to the document, he ordained Balthazar, the son of Conrad Linczi, a subdiaconate in Esztergom.⁶⁶ This also shows that by the beginning of the 15th century, the diocese of Belgrade – unlike other missionary bishoprics with Hungarian connections in the south (bishoprics of Sarmia or Bosnia)⁶⁷ – was no longer under the metropolitanate of the Archbishopric of Kalocsa, but under the metropolitanate of Esztergom. As in the notarial diploma mentioning Bishop Matthew, the diocese of Belgrade was under the jurisdiction of the Esztergom metropolitanate, as emphasised in the document issued by Anthony, the bishop of Belgrade, on 23 February 1431.⁶⁸

⁶¹ ZsO VII, 2117.

⁶² For more details about Belgrade as the centre of Stefan Lazarević's Despotate see: J. Kalić-Mijušković, *Beograd u srednjem veku*, 82–101.

⁶³ ZsO XIII, Nr. 533, see also: J. Kalić-Mijušković, *Beograd u srednjem veku*, 101–104.

⁶⁴ Lajos Thallóczy & Antal Áldásy, *Magyarország melléktartományainak oklevéltára II. Kötet, A Magyarország és Szerbia közti összeköttetések oklevéltára 1198–1526*, Budapest 1907, 73.

⁶⁵ DF 202376, see also: *MszO*, 73.

⁶⁶ DL 43713.

⁶⁷ See above.

⁶⁸ "*Nos Anthonius (...) episcopus Nandoralbensis suffraganeusque reverendissimi in Christo domini domini Georgii archiepiscopi Strigoniensis (...)*" DF 249856. Neither Bishop Matthew nor Bishop Anthony is mentioned in the archontology of the bishops of Belgrade, see: P. Engel, *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1301–1457*, I, 72.

Anthony, the bishop of Belgrade, issued a charter on 20 August 1431, which also bears his seal:⁶⁹ this is the only surviving seal from the Bishop of Belgrade.⁷⁰

The return of Belgrade and the outlying castles, according to the Treaty of Tata, under Hungarian control was the last opportunity for the Bishopric of Belgrade to convert the Latin Church south of the Danube–Sava line, but it failed to do so. Norbert C. Tóth has worked out the archontology of the bishops of Belgrade,⁷¹ which shows that from this time onwards they had other stallums besides the dignity of the bishop of Belgrade (e.g. auxiliary bishopric of Vác or Veszprém, etc.).⁷² The Bishopric of Belgrade continued to exist only in title, and no papal or royal exhortation to support the Catholic missionary diocese of Belgrade has survived from later times.

From the beginning of the 15th century, in the territory of the Banate of Macho – which by that time included all the territories under Hungarian dependence (outside the Serbian Despotate) south of the Danube–Sava line – the Latin ecclesiastical conversion became less important than ensuring protection against the Ottomans.

⁶⁹ DL 10869. It is interesting to note that Bishop Thomas of Belgrade (1450–1452), who succeeded Anthony as bishop, was the parish priest of the Church of St Mary Magdalene in Buda (and the auxiliary bishop of Vác in 1450) at the same time when he held the Bishopric of Belgrade. N. C. Tóth, *Magyarország késő középkori főpapi archontológiája*, 83, ZsO VII, 828.

⁷⁰ Mandorla-shaped (d=65x36 mm). The upper 2/3 of the seal field is decorated with a Gothic pointed arched pediment and towers on both sides, with the Madonna and Child on the right. The lower 1/3 of the seal field, below the Madonna's feet, is divided into three fields: the right field has a shield with a six-pointed star. In the centre is a kneeling high priest with his back turned, holding a shepherd's crook in his hand. The left field is damaged. Circumscription: Gothic minuscule inscription framed with a stick (note: the text runs only along the right and left sides of the seal, as the seal image occupies the seal field): S(IGILLUM) ANTONI(I) [EPISCOPI] NANDOR ALBE(NSIS). DL 10869/2, Imre Bodor, *A középkori Magyarország főpapi pecsétjei a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Művészettörténeti Kutató Csoportjának pecsétmátsolat-gyűjteménye alapján*, Budapest 1984, 57.

⁷¹ N. C. Tóth, *Magyarország késő középkori főpapi archontológiája*, 83.

⁷² *Ibidem*, 83.

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Ternováczi Bálint

A NÁNDORFEHÉRVÁRI LATIN PÜSPÖKSÉG TÖRTÉNETE A KÖZÉPKORBAN

Rezümé

A nándorfehérvári latin püspökség megalapítását IV. Miklós pápa szorgalmazta 1290. augusztus 1-én kelt bullájában, miután meghagyta Orvietói Benvenuto pápai legátusnak, hogy a város ortodox püspökét tegye le, és a helyére nevezzen ki egy latin püspököt.

Egy magyar függésben álló, a Balkán belső, szárazföldi területei felett joghatóságot gyakorló egyházmegye megalapítása egybevágott a magyar világi és egyházi külpolitikai érdekekkel is. Az első ismert nándorfehérvári latin püspök Benedek volt, aki 1293-ban tűnik fel a forrásokban. Arról nem rendelkezünk információval, hogy a belgrádi pravoszláv püspökség megszűnt volna.

Alapításakor valószínűleg a Dunától délre és a Kolubarától délkeletre fekvő területek tartozhattak az egyházmegye lelki joghatósága alá, missziós püspökség lévén pontos határai nem voltak kijelölve.

A püspökség – a kutatás korábbi álláspontjával szemben – nem szűnt meg működni 1295-ben, és bár 1316–1322 között a püspöki szék feltehetően üresedésben volt, folyamatosan működött. Az egyházmegyét 1322 után a magyar uralkodók és a pápák egyaránt igyekeztek kiváltságokkal erősíteni, az oszmánok balkáni előrenyomulása és a szerb állam 14. század végén kezdődő hanyatlása következtében csökkent a nándorfehérvári püspökség missziós területe és mozgásterét, a titulus címzetes püspökségként élt tovább.

Балинт Терновац

СРЕДЊОВЕКОВНА ИСТОРИЈА ЛАТИНСКЕ БЕОГРАДСКЕ БИСКУПИЈЕ

Резиме

Оснивање Београдске бискупије (на мађарском: Nándorfehérvár) наложио је папа Никола IV у були издатој 1. августа 1290, којом је наложио свом легату, Бенвенути од Орвиета, бискупу Губија, да смени православног бискупа Београда и именује латинског.

Оснивање Латинске бискупије, која се налазила под ауторитетом Угарске и имала црквену јурисдикцију над континенталним балканским територијама, подржано је од стране угарског краља и Католичке цркве Угарске. Име првог латинског бискупа Београда било је Бенедикт и појавило се у документу угарског краља, издатог 1293. године.

Под јурисдикцијом Београдске дијецезе, за време њеног оснивања, налазиле су се територије јужно од Дунава и југоисточно од Колубаре, док стварне границе – као што је најчешће случај код мисионарне бискупије – нису биле одређене. Бискупија, наспрот досадашњим резултатима истраживања, није прекинула свој рад 1295. године, него је континуирано радила. У тексту су оповргнуте тврдње из досадашње литературе да су београдски бискупи углавном били фрањевци – заправо, за само двојицу београдских епископа знамо да су потекли из фрањевачког реда.

Иако су постојале опције да се Београдска мисионарна бискупија учврсти од стране угарских владара и папе после 1322, након напредовања турских снага на Балкану и пада српске државе почев од краја 14. века, понестало је територија за освајање за Београдску латинску мисионарну бискупију, која заправо није ни функционисала у стварности, док је титула Београдске бискупије и даље постојала, али само као насловна.