

Hungary and Dalmatia in 1340

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Dalmatia was under the supremacy of Byzantium until the millennium, and then of Venice. In 1105 Koloman, king of Hungary (1195–1116) occupied a part of Dalmatia, which is why conflicts between Venice and Hungary became frequent from that time onwards.¹ In the first quarter of the fourteenth century the Dalmatian cities fell into the hand of Venice and the Croatian barons. In 1340 Charles Robert (Charles I), king of Hungary (1301–1342) was planning to carry out a campaign in 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 earlier.² In the end the campaign was not carried out, but through the charters of the year 1340 I try to analyse 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 Tartars.

The first record of the king's arrival in Dalmatia is a decision of the Venetian State on 9 February 1340 by which the *comites* of Nona (Nin), Arbe (Rab) and Zara (Zadar)³ were ordered to find out information about the king's coming and make a report to Venice.⁴ It needs to be pointed out here that this precedes the papal

¹ For the relations between Hungary, Venice and Dalmatia in 11–13. centuries cf. the relevant parts of Gy. Kristó–F. Makk, *Die erste Könige Ungarns*. Herne 1999; F. Makk, *Ungarische Aussenpolitik (896–1196)*. Herne 1999; Gy. Kristó, *Histoire de la Hongrie médiévale. I. Le temps des Arpads*. Rennes 2000; P. Engel, *The Realm of St. Stephen. History of Medieval Hungary 895–1526*. London 2001.

² Zs. Teke, "Dalmácia," [Dalmatia] in *Korai Magyar Történeti Lexikon*. [Lexicon of Early Hungarian History] (henceforth: *KMTL*) Editor in chief Gy. Kristó, eds. P. Engel and F. Makk. Budapest 1994, 159–160.

³ Today in Croatia.

⁴ S. Ljubić, *Listine o odnosajih između južnoga slavenstva i mletačke republike. Monumenta spectantia historiam slavorum meridionalium*. Vol. II. (henceforth: *Ljub. II.*) Zagreb 1870, 59; F. Piti, *Anjou-kori oklevéltár. Documenta res Hungaricas tempore regum Andegavensium illustrantia*. Vol. XXIV. (1340) Budapest–Szeged 2001, (henceforth: *Anjou-oklt. XXIV.*) no. 74.

tithe collector's record dated 20 February 1340 that the Tartars attacked Poland and that this disturbed Charles I and his kingdom.⁵ The Tartars played an important role later but it seems sure that the Hungarian king's prime aim in foreign affairs in 1340 was the Dalmatian campaign.

On 10 March the Venetian doge, Bartolomeo Gradonico (1339–1342) and the Venetian Council published two orders about the Dalmatian case,⁶ because the *comes* of Arbe had made a report to Venice about his discussions with the *comites* Duym Frangepan and Bartholomew Frangepan on the intentions of Charles I concerning Dalmatia. (This means that Venice was informed very early of the Hungarian king's plans partly from the Frangepans.)⁷ That is why the *comites* of Arbe, Nona and Zara were ordered to find out the intentions of other *comites* of *Sclauonia* (as the charters name Dalmatia). This order was repeated many times, which means that Venice possibly feared that Venetian deputies controlling those Dalmatian cities which were under Venetian domination, would be unable to handle the conflict and the Dalmatian citizens would support the Hungarian king.

Venice needed to clarify the intentions of the Croatian barons also. Among them the Frangepans: Duym and Bartholomew, *comites* of Veglia (Krk) and Modrus (Modruš)⁸ were particularly important (especially Duym),⁹ 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, Duym had a function in Hungary, also: he was *comes* of county Posega.¹⁰ So one can understand why the *comes* of Arbe (apart from the manner of the geographical proximity) initially negotiated with the Frangepans.

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

⁵ *Monumenta Vaticana historiam regni Hungariae illustrantia*. Series I, Tomus I, Budapest 1885, 433; *Anjou-oklt.* XXIV. no. 91.

⁶ G. Wenzel, *Magyar diplomáciai emlékek az Anjou-korból*. [Memories of Hungarian Diplomacy from the Anjou era] Vol. I. Budapest 1874, (henceforth: *Wenzel, Dipl. eml. I.*) 380–382; *Ljub.* II. 63–64; *Anjou-oklt.* XXIV. no. 136. and 137.

⁷ On the situation of the Frangepans between Hungary and Venice, and the expectations of both sides towards them cf. G. Wenzel, *A Frangepánok Magyarország történetében*. [The Frangepans in Hungarian history] *Századok* (1890), (henceforth: *Wenzel 1890*) 210, 214.

⁸ Today in Croatia.

⁹ The role of Duym and Bartholomew is accurately discussed by Wenzel 1890, 211–214.

¹⁰ P. Engel, *Magyarország világi archontológiája*. [Secular archontology of Hungary] 1301–1457. Vol. I. Budapest 1996, 164.

the citizens, which is why the Venetian army in the Dalmatian cities needed to be strengthened.

Venice could also have feared that these cities under its domination (e. g. Nona, Trau [Trogir], Spalato [Split], Sebenico [Sibenik], Zara)¹¹ would open their gates one after the other to Charles I because these rich trading centres would have preferred Hungarian rule which could have supported the trade of these cities rather than merely drawing profit from them. (The situation was the 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 diplomatic means in addition to military preparations.

Moreover the Croatian barons (of whom apart from the Frangepans the Subić, lords of Klissa [Klis] and Scardona [Skradin],¹² Nelipich, and the Kurjakovich 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 place 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 28 March 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 intentions 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 the Hungarian king.¹³ Venice took the possibility of the Hungarian attack seriously. This attack could have led to Hungarian repossession of the cities, because the rule of Venice was not really strong in Dalmatia.

It is not only Venetian data which can be related to the plan for the Dalmatian campaign but also a charter of Charles I dated 28 March 1340 by which the king delayed the discussion of the trial between the bishop of Zagreb, Ladislav and his dependants to the day when the king would arrive in Zagreb.¹⁴

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

¹¹ Today in Croatia.

¹² Today in Croatia.

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

¹⁴ T. Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae ac Slavoniae*. Vol. X, *Zagrabiae* 1912, 533; *Anjou-oklt. XXIV.* no. 181.

On 29 March the Venetian Council ordered the constables to go to Dalmatia.¹⁵ Venice started the military fortification of Dalmatia, too: by a command dated 10 April two pedestrian *banderia* were sent to defend Nona.¹⁶

A source from 19 April says that the constables arrived in Dalmatia and started negotiations in Zara and Nona. According to their reports, Charles I would arrive to Dalmatia with his wife and younger son. This suggests that the king was confident and had planned a triumphal entrance. That is why the Venetian Council ordered the *consul* at Zengg (Senj)¹⁷ and local traders to send emissaries to Hungary for news.

So Venice was not satisfied with the news from the Frangepans only, and wanted the traders to spy on the king's plans, and the Council even wrote a letter to the Venetians 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".¹⁸ 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 the Croatian barons over them.

Venice did not have exact information at this time (and as we will see: for a long time) about how far the king wanted to go, what his aim was, how strong his army was, by whom he was supported, and, if and when he would start and why. 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 case of the king's arrival.¹⁹ It is known from a decision of the Council dated 20 May that on 13 May the constables negotiated with the Kuriakovich, namely *comites* Budislav, Paul and Gregory, sons of the late Curia-chus, who proposed a coalition against Charles I between the Kuriakovich, the Frangepans and Nelipich, 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.²⁰

According to an order of the Venetian Council of 1 July, the Council was informed that the constables had gone to the Frangepans to ask what they knew about Charles I's movements. The envoy of Nelipich did not go to the constables, the Frangepans were considered by Venice as an uncertain element from the beginning, *comes* Gregory Kuriakovich expected extreme claims for the coalition,

¹⁵ Ljub. II. 65; *Anjou-oklt.* XXIV. no. 192.

¹⁶ Ljub. II. 66; *Anjou-oklt.* XXIV. no. 223.

¹⁷ Today in Croatia.

¹⁸ *Wenzel, Dipl. eml.* I. 67–68; Ljub. II. 66–68; *Anjou-oklt.* XXIV. no. 235. and 236.

¹⁹ *Wenzel, Dipl. eml.* I. 386–387; Ljub. II. 69–70; *Anjou-oklt.* XXIV. no. 307.

²⁰ *Wenzel, Dipl. eml.* I. 397–392; Ljub. II. 71–74; *Anjou-oklt.* XXIV. no. 323.

Nelipich gave no answer about the proposal, and Mladen Subić was not asked to join this league – the coalition of the barons seemed to be failed by this time. It would have been hard to bring about a coalition among the barons against Charles I, for Venice. 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.²¹

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,²² Stephen Dušan (1331–1355). Venice and Serbia, as opponents of Hungary found each other.²³

The Serbian king assured Venice of his friendship, and referring to his enemies in the territories bordering his country, asked for the possibility to escape to Venice in case of emergency. Moreover he suggested a military and commercial alliance²⁴ which was accepted by the Venetian Council on 8 June, when they received the king as “citizen of Venice” agreeing that if in danger he could go to Venice with his children and treasury.²⁵ This decision was confirmed by the doge on 12 June.²⁶ What the king 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.

According to a letter of the Council dated 10 June, 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 same letter says that the constables were informed on 5 June by *comes* Gregory Kuriakovich that the king would set off. 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.²⁷

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 interpret apparently 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 to carry out the campaign in the new situation created by the Tartar problem.

The letter of the Council of 12 June clearly says that Charles I will definitely not go to Dalmatia that year because of his physical weakness and the attack of the Tartars (*propter sui corporis infirmitatem et propter invasionem quam fecerunt Tar-*

²¹ Wenzel, *Dipl. eml.* I. 392–393; Ljub. II. 74–75; *Anjou-oklt.* XXIV. no. 355.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ 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] in *KMTL* 638–641.

²⁴ Wenzel, *Dipl. eml.* I. 394–395; Ljub. II. 75–76; *Anjou-oklt.* XXIV. no. 364.

²⁵ Wenzel, *Dipl. eml.* I. 396–397; Ljub. II. 76–77; *Anjou-oklt.* XXIV. no. 366.

²⁶ Wenzel, *Dipl. eml.* I. 399–400; Ljub. II. 78–79; *Anjou-oklt.* XXIV. no. 379.

²⁷ Wenzel, *Dipl. eml.* I. 397–398; Ljub. II. 77–78; *Anjou-oklt.* XXIV. no. 369.

tari versus partes suas).²⁸ However, it is curious that Venice heard of the Tartars relatively late, though it tried to get information on the king's intentions in many ways, what is more the Tartars surely influenced the king's plans after the beginning of May.

Though the attack of the Tartars against Hungary was surely not as powerful as those against Poland, Charles I was careful, which is why he decided that in the interest of the security of Hungary he would not start the Dalmatian campaign. The exact date of the Tartar attack is not known but the data and relations mentioned above suggest that it could have happened in April, at the latest the beginning of May.

Anyway, Venice did not call the constables back despite the news from Hungary, moreover on 17 June it permitted Nelipich to bring weapons from Venice to Dalmatia.²⁹

The next relevant data is from 17 July, when 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.³⁰

It cannot be known what this "reliable information" was, anyhow the doge himself wrote a letter about the affair which shows that Venice 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 special regard to reaching agreement among the barons against Charles I.³¹ However, there was no further news on the king's coming in 1340, and the Venetian precaution was addressed the future – Charles I by this time had finally cancelled the idea of a Dalmatian campaign.³²

Glancing over the relevant Venetian sources, I will summarize and explain 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*),³³ 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 another target: one of the charters says that some litigants were to set off in the campaign

²⁸ *Wenzel, Dipl. eml. I. 400; Ljub. II. 79; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 380.*

²⁹ *Wenzel, Dipl. eml. I. 401; Ljub. II. 80; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 394.*

³⁰ *Wenzel, Dipl. eml. I. 401; Ljub. II. 82; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 449.*

³¹ *Wenzel, Dipl. eml. I. 402., 403; Ljub. II. 83–84; Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 476. and 483.*

³² The plan of the campaign is briefly mentioned by F. Dobos, *Az Ádria uralmának kérdése a XIV.-ik században*. [On the domination of the Adriatic in the fourteenth century] Kolozsvár 1905, 34; S. Domanovszky–J. Vértes, *Nagy Lajos első hadjárata Velence ellen*. [The first campaign of Louis the Great against Venice.] *Századok* (1900), 786.

³³ *Anjou-oklt. XXIV. no. 289., 291., 292., 299., 311.*

of the kingdom with Palatine William [Drugeth] (...in quadam expeditione regni ... in Ruteniam unacum Wyllermo palatino profecturos fore...).³⁴

In my opinion this is a very important point because it directs the discussion towards the conflicts between Poland and the Tartars (the Golden Horde).³⁵ The palatine's military task would have been to lead a Hungarian army to Ruthenia, which was under the Tartars and not so far from the Hungarian border, and make a side movement against the Tartars who had attacked Poland and made an inroad into Hungary.³⁶

This 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. I am sure 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*³⁷ of the palatine, i. e. the soldiers of the castles and possessions controlled by him as a palatine. William Drugeth would be the leader of this operation, not the king – sources do not mention the king's intentions to lead any army to Ruthenia.

So at the beginning of May Charles I put the Dalmatian campaign aside to concentrate on the defense of Hungary because of the Tartar 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 Tartars since May. This can mean that 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 Tartars could have been expected (not to mention the great fear for the Tartars among the Hungarians since 1241/42). In this situation the problem of Tartars pushed the carrying out of Dalmatian campaign into the background.

³⁴ *Anjoukori okmánytár*. [Charterbook of the Angevin era] Vol. IV, ed. I. Nagy, Budapest 1884, 26; *Anjou-okl.* XXIV. no. 286. The campaign was thought as a *fact* by M. Wertner, *Magyar hadjáratok a XIV. században*. [Hungarian campaigns in the fourteenth century] *Századok* (1905), 436; and A. Pór, *Magyar-ruthén érintkezések a XIV-ik században*. [Hungarian–Ruthenian connections in the fourteenth century] *Századok* (1904), 947–948.

³⁵ On the Golden Horde, see B. Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde. Die Mongolen in Russland 1223–1502*. Leipzig 1943; I. Vásáry, *Az Arany Horda*. [The Golden Horde] Budapest 1986.

³⁶ One can suggest that the real aim of the Hungarian army (beside helping Poland and repulsing the Tartar attack) would have been to acquire the principality of Halich which was in the interest of Hungary for long time, and whose throne became empty in Spring 1340. I think this 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] in *KMTL*, 252.

³⁷ For the *honor-system* in fourteenth-century Hungary and the military organization, see P. Engel, "A honor," [The Honor] *Történelmi Szemle* (1981), 1–19; Idem, "Adatok az Anjou-kori magyar hadseregről," [Data on the Hungarian army in the Anjou era] in *Analecta mediaevalia*. Vol. I. ed. T. Neumann, Budapest 2001, 73–82.

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 Tartars. Charles I did not want his kingdom to be defenseless because of the Tartars. He thought that he could not divide his 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 Tartars.

Procrastination and discussions certainly characterised the planned campaign against the Tartars. Charles I had to make a decision: which was more secure for Hungary. He chose defense, though fortunately no more Tartar actions affected Hungary in 1340. I am sure that no Hungarian army set off in 1340 either against Dalmatia or against Ruthenia – there is no exact data from charters or narrative sources which supports movements of Hungarian forces abroad in 1340.³⁸ The armies stayed in Hungary and did not attack foreign territories.³⁹ However, Dalmatia remained a target of Hungarian foreign policy, and finally Louis I the Great (1342–1382), son of Charles I reconquered it later on.⁴⁰

³⁸ The standard Polish scientific 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). No Hungarian military help or presence in 1340 is mentioned by Polish historians or narrative sources. Cf. for example T. Manteuffel (red.), *Historia Polski*. Vol. I. Warszawa 1958, 450; J. Wyrozumski, *Kazimierz Wielki*. Kraków 1982, 79; R. Grodecki–S. Zachorowski–J. Dąbrowski, *Dzieje Polski średniowiecznej*. Vol. I, Kraków 1995, 42. (I owe a debt to Dániel Bagi for interpreting the scholarly literature written in Polish.)

³⁹ Pope Benedict XII (1335–1342) gave spiritual support to Casimir III by letting him and the Polish prelates recruit crusaders against the Tartars not only in Poland, but also in Bohemia and Hungary. The pope negotiated with Tartar envoys, too, in order to solve the Polish–Tartar problem. A. Theiner, *Vetera monumenta historica Hungariam sacram illustrantia*. Vol. I, Romae 1859, 637–640; *Anjou-okl.* XXIV. no. 471, 472, 490–492.

⁴⁰ On the military connections in the Anjou era between Hungary and the territories mentioned in this article, see Gy. Kristó, *Az Anjou-kor háborúi*. [Wars of the Anjou era.] Budapest 1988.