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THE ROLE OF THE BYZANTINE CHURCH IN MEDIEVAL HUNGARY

By GYULA MORAVCSIK

ACCORDING TO the evidence found in historical records, the first influences of the Byzantine Christian mission had reached the Magyars prior to the conquest of present Hungary while they were still on the shores of the Black Sea. As I have proved in detail in an earlier treatise, we must surmise that, when they took possession of their present land, the Magyar people had brought with them a knowledge of Christianity.¹

However, the Byzantine mission was not the sole factor in preparing the Magyars for their acceptance of the new faith. This acceptance was influenced also by the earlier Christian traditions of the new land which ultimately became their country. From Roman times (ancient Christian relics of which are being excavated in increasing numbers) to the appearance of the Magyars, Christianity had existed without interruption in Hungarian territory. In fact, not even those tribes which drifted there in the course of the Migration of Peoples could avoid falling under its influence.² This influence reached Hungarian territory, extending over the great watershed of East and West, from two directions: from Rome and from Byzantium. This Christianity, though it followed the Pannonian pattern, was of Roman origin, but later it was marked by Byzantine influence. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the Hungarian land came into the orbit of Byzantine culture and politics, but by the end of the eighth century it was again within the sphere of strong Western influences. In the ninth century the mission of Cyril and Methodius set out from Byzantium toward Rome, and in so doing it opened the gates to Western Christianity.

Along with fractions of the Avar tribes, the conquering Magyars found Bulgars and Slavs on the territory of present Hungary. These groups deserve special attention from the viewpoint of the origins of Hungarian Christianity. In reference to the Avars, archaeological material clearly shows that Byzantine Christianity was not unknown to them. In Avar tombs of the seventh and eighth centuries a host of records was found showing Christian symbols, among which the Byzantine cross was not uncommon.³ About the middle of the ninth

¹ "Byzantine Christianity and the Magyars in the Migration Period," *American Slavic and East European Review*, V, Nos. 14-15 (1946), 29-45.

² See L. Nagy, "Pannonia Sacra," *Jubilee Volume in Memory of King St. Stephen* (Budapest, 1938), I, 29-148 (in Hungarian).

³ See G. László, "Die Reiternomaden der Völkerwanderungszeit und das Christentum in Ungarn," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, LIX (1940), 125-146.

century (864) the Bulgars embraced Christianity, though it had spread among them much earlier, and under Prince Boris Michael they extended their supremacy over the region east of the Danube. The Christianity fostered by Methodius among the Slavs of Pannonia observed the Western ritual, although the Greek monk of Thessalonica, as is generally known, succeeded in obtaining certain concessions from the Holy See in liturgical matters.⁴

At the end of the ninth century when they occupied their new land, the Magyars found widespread traces of Christianity there. While the western Pannonian territory belonged to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Rome, on the territories east and south of the Danube the traditions of Byzantine Christianity were kept alive. Since the Magyars had brought with them remnants of Christianity from the Black Sea region, it is small wonder that it should have been the Byzantine form of Christianity which struck root among them and that the first Hungarian ecclesiastical organization followed the Byzantine pattern.⁵

The necessity for a change of country by the Magyars was a direct consequence of the policy of the Byzantine court. Owing to their participation in the Bulgar-Byzantine war (894-6) on the side of Byzantium, Symeon, a Bulgar prince, set eastern neighbors, the Patzinaks, against the Magyars. These ransacked their encampments; thus the Magyars were compelled to seek a new country in the Carpathian basin.⁶ Hungary's territory had belonged for centuries to the Byzantine sphere of interest. The Magyars settling here, if for no other reason than for the geographical location, came into closer contact with the Byzantine Empire, into territory of which they made several inroads in the course of the tenth century. Their hosts frequently reached the very walls of Constantinople. The memory of these attacks has been kept alive by the stirring legends of Chieftain Botond in Hungarian chronicles.⁷ In the course of these incursions many Hungarians fell into Byzantine captivity, and after the peace treaty of 943 high-born Hungarians were kept as hostages in Constantinople. All this enabled the Magyars to become closely

⁴ See F. Dvornik, *Les Slaves, Byzances et Rome au IX^e siècle* (Paris, 1926), pp. 147-183; *Les Légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance* (Prague, 1933), pp. 212-283; P. Váczy, *Jubilee Volume in Memory of King St. Stephen* (Budapest, 1938), I, 213-265 (in Hungarian).

⁵ The results of my investigations were published in Hungarian some years ago in the *Jubilee Volume in Memory of King St. Stephen*, I, 387-422.

⁶ See G. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica* (Budapest, 1942), I, 58-59; F. Dolger, *Archivum Europae Centro-Orientalis*, VI (1942), 325.

⁷ See *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum* (Budapest, 1937-38), I, 87, 171, 310; II, 65-66, 144, 254.

acquainted with Byzantine Christianity. Thus it is not surprising that in the tomb of a conquering Magyar was found a silver button on which a Christian Greek inscription appears: + *K(yri)e boêthê E(δ)an(n)ê amê(n)*. Hungarian ambassadors had visited the imperial court more than once, and on these occasions members of the royal family and Hungarian chieftains were also numbered among the guests. Such visits of "barbarian" princes and chieftains at the court were usually connected with their conversion to Christianity. Byzantine records have preserved detailed accounts of such visits.

Such an account was recorded in the eleventh century by John Scylitzes, but the original Greek text of his work has not yet been published. In place of this, however, there is the chronicle of George Cedrenus, who copied literally those sections from Scylitzes which are of interest to us.⁸ In the twelfth century John Zenaras also drew from Scylitzes. In his chronicle we find the narrative in synoptic form.⁹ Our records reveal that a Hungarian chieftain, called Bulcsu, who is also known through Hungarian sources, visited the Byzantine imperial court and embraced Christianity. He had been lifted out of the baptismal font by the Emperor Constantine himself; in other words, the Emperor was godfather. Bulcsu was honored with the rank of "patrician" and was presented with lavish gifts before returning to his own country. Not much later another chieftain of note, Gyula, arrived in the imperial city. He also was baptized and had honors and gifts bestowed upon him by the Emperor. At his departure, Gyula took back with him a monk by the name of Hierotheus, whom Theophylact consecrated as Bishop of Turkia (Hungary) and who subsequently developed great missionary activity. Gyula was genuinely loyal to his Christian faith and stopped launching attacks against the Byzantine Empire; he even had Byzantine prisoners set free. On the other hand, Bulcsu, whose conversion was a mere sham, repeatedly broke into the Byzantine territory.

The authority of this report has been called into question by some, on the grounds that the work of Scylitzes was written about one century later than the actual occurrence of the events mentioned. This hypothesis, however, lacks foundation. We know from reliable contemporary sources that Scylitzes drew his text from the age of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus.¹⁰ The authenticity of the report of

⁸ *Cedrenus*, ed. Bonn, p. 328. For the critical edition of the text see G. Moravcsik, *Jubilee Volume in Memory of King St. Stephen*, I, 392.

⁹ *Zonaras*, ed. Bonn, III, 484.

¹⁰ See M. Szujumov, *Vizantijskoe Obozrenie* (1916), II, 106-166; Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, I, 190, 192.

Scylitzes is borne out by examination of the single parts and comparison with other sources. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, who appears in the narrative, in one of his own works mentions Bulcsu's visit to Constantinople, adding that the person accompanying him was the grandson of Prince Árpád, whom the imperial author calls *philos*.¹¹ Undoubtedly, it was the Emperor himself who paid this tribute with a friendly attribute to the Hungarian prince.¹² From this again we might conclude that he too accepted Christianity in Constantinople. Theophylact, who consecrated Hierotheus as Bishop of Hungary, is well known. He was the son of Emperor Romanus I Lecapenus and bore the title of Patriarch of Constantinople from 933 to 956.¹³ Finally, the fact that Bulcsu fell into the hands of King Otto I of Germany on August 10, 955, in the battle near Augsburg, and was hanged shortly after, is also clear from Hungarian records.¹⁴ On the basis of these facts we gain a clew to the dates of the two visits. Since the work of Emperor Constantine was written between 948–49 and 951–52,¹⁵ and since Bulcsu's visit evidently took place at the time of Constantine's reign (945–59), and because Scylitzes reported the event after the coronation of the young Romanus II, which occurred in the spring of 948, the two visits may be placed about 948. All the details of the baptism of the two Hungarian chieftains were typically Byzantine. At the baptismal ceremony, the Emperor figured as godfather, as we see from one of the miniatures of the Scylitzes manuscript in Madrid.¹⁶ The genteel Hungarian chiefs received the rank of "patrician" and generous gifts. Gyula, loyal to the agreement concluded on the occasion of the baptism, represented Byzantine interests in his own country. In addition to these, a number of parallels could be drawn from Byzantine records, as these features recur in the same way in all descriptions of conversions of "barbaric" chiefs and princes.

The conversion of the two Hungarian chieftains had great significance, both from the viewpoint of Byzantium and of Hungary. The court of Byzantium had not only one objective, namely, to keep the Magyars in check, for their incursions were a constant source of terror, but also, according to Byzantine tradition, to play them against other peoples and, in addition, to align the still pagan Magyars with

¹¹ *De administrando imperio*, ed. Bonn, p. 175.

¹² See F. Dolger, *Historisches Jahrbuch* (1940), p. 400.

¹³ *Les Regestes des actes du patriarchat de Constantinople* (Grumen, 1936), I, Fasc. II, Part V, 222. A. Vogt, *Echos d'Orient*, XXXVI (1933), 278.

¹⁴ *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum*, I, 109, 169, 308.

¹⁵ Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, I, 212.

¹⁶ See Moravcsik, *Jubilee Volume in Memory of King St. Stephen*, I, 397.

the Byzantine political and religious organizations. It is no coincidence that along with the great-grandson of Prince Árpád, two notable Hungarian chieftains appeared in Constantinople. The importance of these events was emphasized, moreover, by the fact that Gyula took Hierotheus back with him to his country, and the Patriarch of Constantinople consecrated him Bishop of Turkia (Hungary). In this act we may see a mission similar to that of Cyril and Methodius a century earlier. In the title of the bishop, the name of a region figures rather than that of a city as is the case elsewhere. This was a strategic measure; it stressed the missionary character of the bishopric by pointing out that the authority of Hierotheus, the first Hungarian bishop, extended over the whole territory of the Magyars. According to our sources, the activity of Hierotheus was extremely effective. The question now is whether this is corroborated by other data and what was the future destiny of this Hungarian missionary bishopric.

As to the bishopric, in the inscription on a seal published recently in the Shaw Collection of New York, appears the name of Theophylact, Bishop of Turks.¹⁷ It is not impossible, although this is not certain, that this bishop was a successor of Hierotheus.¹⁸ However, much more is known about the further destiny of the mission of Hierotheus from another record. Among old Russian documents written in ancient Slavic which deal with the polemics against the "Latins" there is a work entitled *Povjest o Latinjeh* . . .¹⁹ which may also be found in an abbreviated form in the so-called "Nikon Chronicle,"²⁰ as well as in the so-called *Kormčaja Kniga*.²¹ The concluding part of this document deals with the conversion of the Bulgars, Russians, and Magyars. The name forms prove that the work had been translated from the Greek, and it is probable that the original Greek manuscript was written in the twelfth century. The passage of interest to us²² concerns the Peonians, "who are Ugrians, but call themselves Magerians." It seems that two chieftains of this people went to Constantinople and there embraced Christianity;

17 Ed. V. Laurent, *Bulletin de la Société historique bulgare*, XVI-XVIII (1940), 287-288.

18 See V. Laurent, "L'Évêque des Turcs et le proèdre de Turquie," *Académie Roumaine, bulletin de la section historique*, XXIII (1942), 2.

19 Ed. A. Popov, *Istoriko-literaturnij obzor drevne-russkich polemičeskich sočinenij protiv Latinjan* (Moscow, 1875), pp. 176-188. See A. Pavlov, *Kritičeskije opyty po istorii drevnejšej greko-russkoj polemiki protiv Latinjan* (St. Petersburg, 1878), pp. 78-80. V. G. Vasiljevskij, *Trudy* (St. Petersburg, 1909), II, 95-96.

20 *Polnoje sobranije russkich ljetopisej* (St. Petersburg, 1862), IX, 70.

21 See J. Hergenröther, *Photius, Patriarch von Constantinopel. Sein Leben, seine Schrifte und das griechische Schisma* (Regensburg, 1869) III, 862-869.

22 Popov, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-188.

but before Greek bishops could be sent to their country, the chieftain called Stephen died. Since at this time the Byzantine realm was shaken by many attacks and blows, they could not confirm the faith of the Peons, who had not even a written language. In consequence, the Latins converted them to their own faith. The nucleus of this report is the baptism at Constantinople of the two chieftains. As the characterization of one of these chieftains is fully in keeping with the characterization which Scylitzes gave of Gyula, we cannot doubt that the Stephen of the Slav text is identical with Gyula. Thus it follows that Stephen was Gyula's Christian name, which he obtained at his conversion in Constantinople. These concurrences render it probable that both the Slav text and the original Greek report date from that Byzantine work of the tenth century from which Scylitzes also drew. However, the author of the Slav elaboration, which was written after the schism and evidently with a polemic tendency, saw the events from the perspective of a later epoch, and he knew that the missionary work of the Eastern Church had not produced such far-reaching results as that of the Western Latin Church. From this, however, it does not follow by any means that the role of the Eastern Church was concluded with the mission of Bishop Hierotheus.

That the Gylas of Scylitzes and also the Stephen of the Slav source are identical with Gyula the Elder, whose tribe settled on either bank of the Maros River, stands without doubt. Thus the activity of the first Hungarian missionary bishopric started, and here the first organized form of Hungarian Christianity was established. Therefore, it is no coincidence that about half a century after Gyula's journey to Constantinople we should again come upon traces of Byzantine Christianity, on the same territory where Bishop Hierotheus had been active. From the Gerardus legend we learn that Ajtony, whose domain extended from the Körös River to Transylvania and the Danube line, was baptized according to the Greek rites (*secundum ritum Graecorum*) at Viddin. Moreover, we read that he had obtained his power from the Greeks and founded at Marosvár a Greek monastery in honor of St. John the Baptist (*"Accepit autem protestatem a Grecis et construxit in prefata urbe Morisena monasterium in honore beati Johannes Baptiste, constituens in eodem abbatem cum monachis Grecis, iuxta ordinem et ritum ipsorum"*). Later, when Csanád, St. Stephen's commander, defeated Ajtony, those who fell on the way were buried in the above-mentioned monastery because at that time there was no other monastery in this province (*"quin in eodem provincia aliud monasterium illis temporibus non erat"*). Csanád founded a new monastery in honor of St. George whither he trans-

ferred the monks and abbots from the Monastery of St. John the Baptist ("*introducens illuc memoratos Grecos monachos de monasterio beati Johannes Baptiste una cum abbate*"). This new monastery was the one at Oroszlános.²³

The authenticity of the report of this source is fully corroborated by archaeological finds. In 1868 the foundations of the Greek church at Marosvár, on the place of Csanád, were uncovered together with the baptismal font in front of the church. But there are more traces of Byzantine Christianity on the territory which once belonged to Ajtony. South of Csanád, at Nagy-Szent Miklós as early as 1799, the so-called "Attila's hoard" was found, in which, among other things, there are two gold cups bearing Greek inscriptions. The text contains a water-consecrating formula commonly used by the Greeks.²⁴ The hoard itself is considered by the latest investigators to be of Bulgar origin, and its date is put about at the second half of the ninth century.²⁵ In addition, most recent researches point out that at the beginning of the eleventh century the southern part of Hungary, namely, the Temes region, also belonged to the organization of the Eastern Church.²⁶ That Ajtony was baptized at Viddin is feasible enough, as it had been conquered in 1002 by the Byzantine forces headed by Emperor Basil II himself. It is likely that this was the time of Ajtony's conversion and that it had a political significance as well as a religious one. Before the Magyar conquest, the eastern part of Hungary had been under Bulgar supremacy, and thus it seems natural enough that Ajtony should have done homage to the emperor of Byzantium who was fighting against the Bulgars and was allied to the Hungarian king, St. Stephen. Later, according to recent investigations, about 1028 Ajtony rose against the king and was defeated by the king's general Csanád.

What the results of Byzantine missionary activities in connection with the persons of Gyula and Ajtony were in the eastern part of Hungary can no longer be ascertained, for want of data. Yet, if we consider that the conquering Magyars brought with them to the new country a knowledge of Byzantine Christianity and that east of the Danube Christianity had had earlier many adherents among the Avars and Bulgars, then we must presume that previous to the

²³ *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum*, II, 490-493.

²⁴ See I. Gošev, *Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici* (1940), VI, 139-146; Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, I, 163-165.

²⁵ See N. Mavrodinov, "Le Trésor protobulgare de Nagyszentmiklós," *Archaeologia Hungarica*, XXIX (1943), 207-208.

²⁶ M. Gyóni, *Magyar Nyelv* (1946), XLII, 43-49.

beginnings of the missionary work of the Western Church in the seventies of the tenth century, the Byzantine Church had already won over many Magyars to the Christian faith. So much, in any case, is certain, that the effects of the Byzantine mission were not limited to the Magyars of the Eastern region alone. The threads of the conversion of Gyula at Constantinople and the missionary work of Bishop Hierotheus led directly to the court of St. Stephen, the first Hungarian king. Gyula's daughter, Sarolt, was the wife of Prince Géza and mother to St. Stephen. In all probability, Sarolt had been baptized by Bishop Hierotheus. One Western record suggests that Hungarian Christianity began with her "*qua duce erat christianitas coepta*."²⁷ Thus it cannot be a coincidence that the first Hungarian king received the same name in baptism which formerly his grandfather on his mother's side, Gyula István, had received when he was baptized at the court of the emperor in Constantinople. It is characteristic that in St. Stephen's family several Christian names of Greek origin occur.

Earlier scholars often came to erroneous conclusions when, in studying King St. Stephen's ecclesiastical policy, they began with the premise that the Magyar nation adopted the Western form of Christianity and thus became linked with Church of Rome, thereby, excluding the possibility of Byzantine ecclesiastical influences completely. It should not be forgotten that at the beginning of the eleventh century, although an inevitable rivalry between the Eastern and Western churches had existed owing to considerations of power and policy, and antagonism became more and more marked, the actual schism had not yet taken place. In fact, just at that time in connection with the idea of the innovation of the Western Roman Empire, Byzantine influence was strongly felt in Italy, the hub of Western Christianity. Not to mention that Nilus founded in 1004, during the age of St. Stephen, the Basilite Greek monastery at Grotta Ferrata near Rome. Thus while the Hungarian king decided in favor of the Western sphere of civilization and a German-Roman sphere of interest, at the same time he also secured free activity in the Church of Byzantium.

The Hungarian kingdom, which extended on the contingent line between Byzantine and Roman spheres of interest, could not isolate itself from Byzantine influence. St. Stephen was in allegiance with Emperor Basil II. In 1004, when the Magyars occupied Skoplje, they

²⁷ *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, IV, 607.

carried away with them the relics of St. George.²⁸ The facts proving strong ecclesiastical connections with Byzantium are made clearer if we remember that St. Stephen had a magnificent church built in Constantinople for which he gave lavishly all that was required.²⁹ It is possible that the Pantocrator monastery founded a century later in Constantinople by the wife of Emperor John II, who was the daughter of King St. Ladislaus of Hungary, was built into the same block as the ancient Hungarian church. Also in Hungary itself traces of the influence of Byzantine ecclesiastic art appear. According to one record St. Stephen had received as a gift from the Greek Emperor a cross in which there was a piece of the Holy Rood. This cross was worn by St. Stephen's son, Prince Imre, who later became known as St. Emericus.³⁰ In addition, there is in the archiepiscopal treasury at Gran (Esztergom) a Byzantine cross casket, which has been preserved from the eleventh century. It bears a Greek inscription. It is, by the way, characteristic that on Hungarian territory about thirty Byzantine reliquaries have been recovered. The marble sarcophagus which is held by tradition to be the repository of the holy king's corpse is also in the Byzantine style. Likewise, his coronation pall was made after Byzantine designs. The cathedrals from St. Stephen's period also point to strong Byzantine influences, especially the fragmentary remains of the one at Veszprém. Recently, traces of eleventh-century Byzantine style were recognized on the fragment of the altar of Zalavár and on the church of Tarnaszentmária. Records mention that there were Greek stone masons working on the church at Buda, which St. Stephen had built.³¹ Thus it is not surprising that at Ó-Buda, not long ago, traces of a church of the eleventh century in the Byzantine style were discovered among the ruins of a building. On the frescoes of the church in Feldebrő we can also see Byzantine influences; they probably date from the tenth and eleventh centuries, the oldest record in painting which has come down to us. Records mention that there had been some Greeks living in Hungary during the reign of St. Stephen.³² Bishop St. Gerardus, who played a leading role at the court of St. Stephen, was of Venetian origin, but he knew Greek. It has been proved by the latest discoveries that he used a Greek source for one of his works.

²⁸ A. F. Gombos, *Catalogus fontium historiae Hungaricae* (1937-1938), Vol. II, No. 2354.

²⁹ *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum*, II, 386, 419.

³⁰ Gombos, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, No. 3673.

³¹ *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum*, I, 317.

³² *Ibid.*, I, 192, 303; II, 63, 279.

Admonitions, a work attributed to St. Stephen, shows affinities with the Byzantine *Mirror of Princes*. In some of their elements, these works have a specifically Byzantine veneer. Let us take, for example, the famous sentence from the *Admonitions*: "*Quis reget Latinos Grecis moribus, aut quis Latinus reget Grecos Latinis moribus?*"³³ which, at all events, proves that the Greeks played a great role in the mind of the Hungarian king.

Fragmentary traces of Byzantine ecclesiastical influence are completed by the Charter of St. Stephen in Greek which testifies to the existence of a nunnery in Veszprémvölgy. Although this work has come down to us only in the form of a transcription written in 1109 during the reign of King Kálmán, recent research has proved that we have here an original authentic copy of St. Stephen's charter. From King Kálmán's text in Latin, the *Renovatio*, it is clear that the original document was in the form of a scroll and was sealed with St. Stephen's seal. This description concurs with the general appearance of Byzantine imperial charters. The Greek text of the charter reports that the Hungarian King had founded a nunnery at Veszprém in honor of the Mother of God for the repose of the souls of his wife, his children, and himself, and for the whole of Pannonia. Then follows the enumeration of gifts and privileges bestowed upon the nunnery. The charter concludes with a curse on those who desecrate the property of the nunnery.³⁴

From the Latin text of King Kálmán's *Renovatio* of 1109, it appears that in accordance with the language of the founder of the nunnery, the original charter was written in Greek, "*iuxta linguam auctoris monasterii*." Thus, St. Stephen was not the founder of the nunnery, but another person evidently closely connected with him. The Hungarian king merely sanctioned the foundation and endowed the nunnery with the necessary funds in the same manner as John Comnenus II, Emperor of Byzantium, had done in the case of the Pantocrator monastery founded by his wife, the Empress Irene, a Hungarian princess, when, following her death, he issued a charter in 1136. Some believe that it was Queen Gisella, St. Stephen's wife; others think that it was his sister, the exiled wife of the Bulgar Czar Gavril-Radomir. However, the expression *iuxta linguam auctoris* can hardly be applied to either of these. The hypothesis that St. Stephen's mother, daughter of the Gyula, who was baptized at

³³ *Ibid.*, II, 626.

³⁴ Critical ed. by G. Czebe, *The Greek Text of the Diploma of Veszprémvölgy* (Budapest, 1916); in Hungarian.

Constantinople, was the founder is much more probable, although it does not sufficiently explain the expression quoted above or the fact that St. Stephen never mentions his mother in the Charter. Thus every sign points to the conclusion that we must seek the founder among St. Stephen's next of kin. In the various versions of the St. Margaret legend we read that the parentage of the wife of St. Emeric, Stephen's son, is contested. According to some stories, her father was the Greek emperor; according to others, her father was the Roman emperor. With reference to St. Emeric's Byzantine relations, some sources maintain that about 1109 there were rumors to the effect that at the hour of Emeric's death a Greek archbishop saw angels carrying his soul to heaven.³⁵ In contemporary records, there is, however, no trace of the wife of St. Emeric having been a Greek princess, so this question must be left open for the time being. Should the report of the Margaret legend prove true, the mystery enveloping the person of the Veszprémvölgy nunnery's Greek speaking founder would surely be dispersed.

Older scholars surmised, in connection with St. Stephen's charter in Greek and the nunnery of Veszprémvölgy, that there were Italian and German -Byzantine influence respectively. However, since it turned out that the terminology of the charter is typically Byzantine and that its language corresponds entirely to the Byzantine vernacular, documentary language, this hypothesis comes to nought. The charter can be explained only on the grounds of the atmosphere of Byzantine culture maintained in Stephen's court, for it was evidently a Greek priest living at the court who drafted the document, most likely about 1010. All this proves, on the other hand, that although St. Stephen aligned his country with the community of the Western Church, nevertheless the Byzantine form of Christianity also found its way into his court.

Not long after the reign of St. Stephen, new traces of the Byzantine Church in Hungary came to light. King Andreas I (1047-60) founded two monasteries, according to contemporary records: one at Tihany, the other near Visegrád.³⁶ Owing to numerous reasons, we are justified in assuming that both were Basilite monasteries. The latest investigations make it seem highly probable that the site of Tihany had been formerly the dwelling place of certain Greek hermits and that the monastery had been founded for their benefit.³⁷ Pope Honorius III, in a letter of 1221, reports that in the monastery

³⁵ *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum*, II, 456.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 503.

³⁷ Unpublished research of J. Csemegi.

of Visegrád Greek monks had been living of old,³⁸ so it is obvious that the monastery founded by Andreas I followed the pattern set by the Basilite monks. As Anastasia, the wife of Andreas I, who had spent some time before his accession on Russian soil, was the daughter of Prince Yaroslav of Kiev, we cannot dismiss the theory that along with the Greeks there were also Slav monks living in the monastery of Visegrád, and that when the monks of the Šazave monastery in Bohemia fled to Hungary in 1055, they found refuge in the monastery of Visegrád.³⁹ The name of Andreas I also points to Byzantine-Russian connections, for it is a known fact that St. Andreas played the same role in the Eastern Church as St. Peter the Apostle in the Western Church, and according to the legend he was the founder of the Russian Church. The name of the town of Szentendre, in the neighborhood of the Visegrád monastery, which was consecrated to St. Andreas, is also a reference to this saint. In addition, another reference to the Byzantine relations of Andreas I is the so-called "Constantine Monomachus crown," preserved in the Hungarian National Museum, which, to all appearances, the Hungarian king obtained as a present between 1042 and 1055 from Byzantium.⁴⁰

By reason of the investigations so far effected we have sure cognizance of three such Greek monasteries which existed in the eleventh century on Hungarian territory. From later data, however, we know even more of them. From a document of 1324, which has appeared recently, we learn that on the site of the modern village of Dunapentele there had been the monastery of Pentele where Greek nuns had lived ("*ubi Beginae sive moniales Grecales condam commorabantur*") ; thus this too was a Greek monastery. It is evident that the name of the village is connected with the martyr called '*agios Panteleêmôn*' (d. 305) of the Greek Church. This monastery was mentioned as early as 1238 in a document, but there was no reference made to its Greek character.⁴¹ The foundation of this monastery could not have taken place in the thirteenth century; it was much earlier, probably in the eleventh century. The monastery at Pásztó also must have been of Greek origin, as will be seen later. We have reliable evidence of the existence of a Greek monastery at Szávaszentdemeter, which is first mentioned in the letter of Pope Honorius III in 1218. A letter

³⁸ A. Theiner, *Vetera monumen historica Hungariam sacram illustrantia* (Rome, 1859), I, 29.

³⁹ See St. Kniezsa, *Archivum Europae Centro-Orientalis*, VIII (1942), 159-161.

⁴⁰ See M. Bárány-Oberschall, "The Crown of the Emperor Constantine Monomachos," *Archaeologia Hungarica*, XXIV (1937), 89-90; Moravcsik, *Jubilee Volume in Memory of King St. Stephen*, I, 94-95.

⁴¹ See Moravcsik, *Jubilee Volume in Memory of King St. Stephen*, I, 419.

from Pope Clemens VI in 1334 clearly states that in this monastery Greeks, Hungarians, and Slavs had lived separated from one another ever since its foundation.⁴² The magnitude of the congregation of the Eastern Church is illustrated further by the fact that in 1164 the population and clergy of the province of Sirmium received Emperor Manuel of Byzantium in state while singing ecclesiastical songs.⁴³ We also know that Bács was the ecclesiastical center of Sirmium in the twelfth century and that there a prelate of the Greek rite, evidently a metropolitan, held his seat.⁴⁴ If we now consider that a statistical list puts the number of monasteries in Hungary before the Mongolian invasion at about six hundred (so far, only four hundred of these have been located), and that records concerning earlier times are extremely scarce, and moreover that, as will be seen later, the Greek monasteries subsequently passed into the hands of Western monastic orders, then we come to the conclusion that the number of Greek monasteries on Hungarian territory must have been very considerable in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This conclusion is borne out further by the very scanty data which has come down to us concerning the spiritual life and literary activities of Greek monasteries and monks.

That medieval Hungarian monasteries contained Greek books is clearly proved by documents. Even if we do not accept as final the supposition that St. Gerardus had access to Greek sources in the library of the monastery at Marosvár, we know from an old record that there had been a *Psalterium Graecum* in the library of the Abbey of Pannonhalma in the eleventh century. At the beginning of the twelfth century, a certain Cerbanus, whose person is not familiar, but who was evidently a Basilite monk, translated into Latin some parts of the works of two Greek Fathers of the Church, Maximus and John Damascene, from a Greek manuscript in the possession of the monastery at Pásztó.⁴⁵ From this it follows that originally the monastery of Pásztó had also been Greek. The translation was made for the Abbey of Pannonhalma, and the translator dedicated his work to David, Abbot of Pannonhalma (1131–50), in gratitude for the hospitality he there enjoyed. It is interesting to note that the first

⁴² Theiner, *op. cit.*, I, 9–11, 667–668.

⁴³ Kinnamos, ed. Bonn, p. 221. I. Rácz, *Byzantina poiēmata peri tôn ouggrikôn ekstrateiôn tou autokratoros Manouël* [Ouggroellênikai Meletai] (Budapest, 1941), pp. 19–20, 45.

⁴⁴ Kinnamos, ed. Bonn, p. 222.

⁴⁵ Ed. R. I. Szigeti, *Translatio Latina Ioannis Damasceni (De orthodoxa fide 1.III.c. 1–8.) saeculo XII in Hungaria confecta* [Ouggroellênikai Meletai 13] (Budapest, 1940). A. B. Terebessy, *Translatio Latina Sancti Maximi Confessoris (De caritate ad Elpidium 1. I–IV) saeculo XII. in Hungaria confecta* [Ouggroellênikai Meletai 25] (Budapest, 1944).

Latin translation of the work of John Damascene which was made in Hungary influenced later Latin translations. Western theologians, and among them Petrus Lombardus, became acquainted with this great Greek Father through this translation.⁴⁶ From the survival of the manuscript of the translation in Austrian monasteries and from the influence the translation had on Western theologians we may justly conclude that Greek monasteries in Hungary played an important mediating role in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁴⁷ Some of the products of Greek ecclesiastical literature reached the West through translations made in Basilite monasteries in Hungary, and more than one Byzantine legend and saga migrated to the West through them. This is borne out by the fact that many Hungarian medieval sagas and legends are of Byzantine origin. Thus, for example, the story about Chieftain Lél of Hungarian chronicles contains some principles from the Byzantine Salamon legend, and one episode of the Hungarian St. Ladislaus legend is highly reminiscent of the legends of militant saints so popular in Byzantium;⁴⁸ especially the legend of St. Demetrius who was the patron saint of Thessalonica, although the real birthplace of his cult was in the province of Sirmium, where the place names of the Hungarian Szávaszentdemeter and of the Slavic Mitrovica preserve his memory. Surely it is no coincidence that on the enamel plaques on the crown presented to Géza I, King of Hungary, in 1075, by Michael Ducas II, Emperor of Byzantium, the image of St. Demetrius is visible.⁴⁹ The old cathedral of Szeged was also dedicated to St. Demetrius. In Hungary his feast day used to be celebrated on October 26, as was customary in the Eastern Church, and not on October 8 as in the Western Church. Besides St. Demetrius, there were also other Byzantine saints revered in medieval Hungarian ecclesiastical life. Mention has been made of the Magyars having brought with them from Skoplje, in the time of St. Stephen, the relics of St. George, who appears to have been particularly revered by them. According to tradition, when Bishop Csanád defeated Ajtony, he did so under the protection of St. George. When in 1072 the hosts of King Salomon and Prince Géza marched as far as Nis, they brought back with them the hand of St. Procopius the Martyr, which later, in

⁴⁶ See Szigeti, *op. cit.*, pp. 22–35.

⁴⁷ See E. v. Ivánka, "Griechische Einflüsse im westlichen Geistesleben des XII. Jahrhunderts," *Archivum Philologicum*, LXIV (1940), 211–217.

⁴⁸ See G. Sántha, *Le Leggende bizantine dei santi combattenti* [Ouggroellênikai Meletai 22] (Budapest, 1943).

⁴⁹ See G. Moravcsik, "The Holy Crown of Hungary," *Hungarian Quarterly*, IV (1938), 656–667.

1164, the Emperor Manuel had taken back to Nis.⁵⁰ Further investigations, especially the examination of medieval Hungarian place names, will increase the number of Byzantine saints in Hungary.

The extent of the influence of the Byzantine Church, how far-reaching it had been, and what particular color and character it gave to Hungarian Christianity is fully disclosed only by the most recent research.⁵¹ It came to light that in the course of the eleventh century the Hungarian Church had been characterized by several features which are eminently Byzantine. In a Hungarian missal at Zagreb, which reflects the Hungarian liturgy from the eleventh century faithfully, there is a formula for the consecration of water which, as the words "*ut mos est Graecorum*" point out, is merely a translation from the Greek. It is also significant that the marriage of priests was authorized for a time in Hungary, just as it was in Byzantium. When the adherents of the Gregorian movement protested against this, the Hungarian bishops headed by King Ladislaus referred to the decree of the Council of Trullo (*Concilium Quinquagesimum*) in 691-92 which the Church of Rome had never recognized. It was not until 1112 that King Kálmán asserted the conception of Rome. The most surprising results, however, were yielded by the examination of fasting customs. In 1092 the Council of Szabolcs defended the Hungarian way of fasting, which, in conformity with the Byzantine practice, lasted seven weeks; while the Latin Church imposed a fast of six weeks, that is, forty days. Since the old Byzantine custom was superseded by an eight-week fast in the seventh century, we must conclude that the Hungarian practice retained the obsolete Byzantine custom from the period before the seventh century. So far, the question of how this came about cannot be satisfactorily answered. The supposition that the Magyars had known the old Byzantine way of fasting when still on the shores of the Black Sea and had preserved it unchanged for so long hardly seems probable for chronological reasons; the Onogur missionary bishopric was only instituted in the middle of the eighth century, thus a strong Byzantine influence can be considered only from that time forward.⁵² Yet, whatever the means of adopting the old Byzantine fasting practice, along with other things, this too proves that though Hungarian Christianity definitely followed the Roman rite,

⁵⁰ *Kinnamos*, ed. Bonn, p. 227.

⁵¹ See P. Váczy, "Les Racines byzantines du christianisme hongrois," *Nouvelle Revue de Hongrie*, XXXIV (1941), 99-108.

⁵² See G. Moravcsik, *American Slavic and East European Review*, V, Nos. 14-15 (1946), 41-42.

it had, nevertheless, preserved until the beginning of the twelfth century several Byzantine characteristics. In addition, Byzantine influence has also from this epoch palpable records, as for example, the tabernacle from the twelfth century with Greek inscriptions which was excavated at Beszterce.

In the age of King Béla III (1163–96), new traces of connections with the Byzantine Church appear. As a young man, Béla lived for several years in the court of Emperor Emanuel where he was converted to the Orthodox faith and took part in the Council of Constantinople in 1166 as the prospective son-in-law of the Emperor of Byzantium. On his return to Hungary, the Archbishop of Gran (Esztergom) refused to crown him, evidently owing to his acceptance of the Orthodox faith. In the troubled times following Manuel's death, Béla attempted to realize a Hungarian-Byzantine union, but he did not succeed.⁵³ This endeavor undoubtedly accounts for the appearance of the Byzantine double cross on the Hungarian coat of arms.⁵⁴ It was probably he who united the two crowns—the crown of St. Stephen with the Byzantine one.⁵⁵ We also know that in 1183 he brought the relics of St. Ivan of Rila from Sardica (Sofia) to Esztergom.⁵⁶ An interesting account of this age is found in the correspondence between Béla's son-in-law, Emperor Isaac Angelus II, and Job, the Archbishop of Esztergom (about 1190), concerning dogmatic questions. Among some letters recently found, one written in the name of Emperor Demetrius Tornices reveals that the Archbishop of Esztergom himself had visited the Court of Byzantium and was personally acquainted with the Emperor, who cherished the dream of uniting the two churches under his own leadership.⁵⁷ The fact that the triumphal door of the basilica of Esztergom which he had made was wrought after the model of a Byzantine pattern is connected with the archbishop's visit to Constantinople.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, life in the Greek monasteries underwent a great change. The most recent research has pointed out the connection between this change and the change

⁵³ See G. Moravcsik, "Pour une Alliance byzantino-hongroise (seconde moitié du XII^e siècle)," *Byzantion*, VIII (1933), 555–568.

⁵⁴ See L. B. Kumorowitz, "Das Doppelkreuz des ungarischen Wappens," *Turul*, LV (1941), 45–62.

⁵⁵ See Moravcsik, "The Holy Crown of Hungary," *Hungarian Quarterly*, IV (1938), 666–667.

⁵⁶ See J. Bödey, "Die ungarischen Beziehungen der Legende des hlg. Ivan von Rila," *Archivum Philologicum*, LXIV (1940), 217–221.

⁵⁷ See V. Laurent, "Une Lettre dogmatique de l'empereur Isaac l'Ange au primat de Hongrie," *Echos d'Orient*, XXXIX (1940), 59–77.

which was taking place in the Greek state and church at this time.⁵⁸ As we already know, in 1204 in connection with the fourth crusade, Constantinople passed into the possession of the West and there the Latin Empire was established and, at the same time, the Latin patriarchate. The consequence of this was what is called "Latinization." The Greek bishops were put under the control of Latin archbishops, and Latin monasteries were established. These tendencies made themselves felt also in Hungary. It may be seen from a letter of Pope Innocent III, written in 1204, that he entertained the idea of uniting the Greek monasteries in Hungary, which had fallen into decay owing to the negligence of Hungarian bishops, into one separate bishopric.⁵⁹ Innocent III writes in another letter in the same year that there are many Greek monasteries in the country of the Hungarian king.⁶⁰ However, the Pope's plan did not materialize; in fact, owing to the foundation of the Latin Empire in Constantinople the process of Latinization had also set in throughout Hungary. The Greek monasteries, isolated in a Latin environment, torn away from their Byzantine spiritual roots, went one after the other into the possession of Western monastic orders. Thus the Cistercians took the place of the Greeks at Pásztó in 1190, at Visegrád in 1221, and at Veszprémvölgy in the course of the thirteenth century. The Greek monks held out the longest in the monastery of Szávaszentdemeter, which in 1218 Pope Honorius took under his own rule.⁶¹ When the Byzantine Empire was restored, the situation changed. It may be seen from a letter of Pope Clement VII, written in 1344, that for a time the monastery of Szávaszentdemeter was under the immediate supremacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople, which means that it was a so-called *stauropégiake monê*. In the year indicated, however, as it had been vacant since the death of the last abbot (about ten years), it fell into the possession of Benedictines.⁶²

It seems that during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the flock of the Greek Church lived in large communities mainly in the Tisza region and in Transylvania. A letter written by Pope Gregory IX in 1234 reveals that on the territory of the new Latin bishopric, founded for the conversion of the Cumans, there were sham-bishops of the Greek rites (*pseudoepiscopi Graecorum ritum tenentes*) who

⁵⁸ See E. v. Ivánka, "Griechische Kirche und griechisches Mönchtum im mittelalterlichen Ungarn," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, VIII, Nos. 1-2 (1942), 190-194.

⁵⁹ *Significavit nobis* 26. April, 1204 . . . , see *ibid.*, p. 191.

⁶⁰ *Venientes ad apostolicam* 14. September, 1204 . . . , see *ibid.*, p. 190.

⁶¹ Theiner, *op. cit.*, I, 9-11.

⁶² *Ibid.*, I, 667-668.

exerted their influence, not only on the Wallachs, but also on the Magyars.⁶³ The expansion of the Wallachs and the Subcarpathian Ruthenians enhanced the Byzantine ecclesiastic influence in these territories considerably. An interesting light is cast on this question in a Greek document of 1391 from which it appears that at Körtvélyes of Mármoros, at one time, a monastery of St. Michael had existed whose patrons had obtained from the Patriarch of Constantinople a grant that the monastery be raised to *stauropégia* which meant that it was under the direct authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople.⁶⁴ The establishment of the Greek bishopric at Munkács also occurred in the middle of the fifteenth century. This in all probability is connected with visit of Isidore, the former Metropolitan of Moscow (of Greek origin), to Buda in 1443.⁶⁵ That the Greek Church had a considerable congregation is proved by a declaration of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II. In a writing in 1450, he gives the following advice to Ladislaus V, later king of Hungary: “. . . *dicerem autem etiam illa (sc. Graeca) tibi addiscenda, si facultas adesset; nam et ad regnum Hungariae melius dirigendum, cui Greci complures subsunt, non parum conducere . . .*”).⁶⁶ From this it is clear that a large number of Greeks lived in Hungary who belonged to the Greek Church and used the language of the Greek ritual.

As we know, there are Catholics even now on Hungarian territory who follow the Greek rite—the so-called “Greek Catholics” whom Pope Pius X united in 1912 in the Bishopric of Hajdudorog. How these are related to the medieval followers of the Byzantine Church and whether the continuity in this respect might be proved, is a task for the future to decide.

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⁶³ *In Cumanorum episcopatu* 14. November, 1234 . . . , see Ivánka, “Griechische Kirche und griechisches Mönchtum im mittelalterlichen Ungarn,” pp. 191–192.

⁶⁴ Miklosich-Müller, *Acta et diplomata*, II, 156–157.

⁶⁵ G. Papp, *The Origin of the Episcopate of Munkács* (Miskolc, 1940); in Hungarian.

⁶⁶ *Fontes Rerum Austriacarum, Diplomataria et Acta*, LXVII (1912), 138.