Ritual and Symbolic Communication in Medieval Hungary under the Árpád Dynasty (1000–1301)

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Ritual and Symbolic Communication in Medieval Hungary under the Árpád Dynasty (1000–1301)

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Cover illustration: King Andrew I, lying in bed, makes Prince Béla I choose between the crown, symbol of the Kingdom of Hungary, and the sword, symbol of the Duchy of Nitra. Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle (14th century). Reproduced by kind permission of the Országos Széchényi Könyvtár.

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Abbreviations

CDH	Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis
CDES	Codex diplomaticus et epistolaris Slovaciae
CDRCD	Codex diplomaticus regni Croatie, Dalmatiae, et Slavoniae
FRB	Fontes rerum Bohemicarum
Gombos Catalogus	Catalogus Fontium Historiae Hungaricae
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
Const	Constitutiones
DD	Diplomata
DD H IV 1	Heinrici IV. diplomata
Dt. Chron.	Deutsche Chroniken
SS	Scriptores
SS rer. Merov.	Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum
SSrG	Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum
SSrG NS	Scriptores rerum Germanicarum nova series
PL	Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series secunda (Latina)
RV	Regestrum Varadinense examinum ferri candentis
SRH	Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum

Introduction

In the early summer of 1044 the German King Henry III (1039–1056) arrived in Hungary accompanied by the Hungarian King Peter Orseolo (1038–1041 and 1044–1046), who had been deposed by Samuel Aba (1041–1044). Subsequently, on 5 July, one of the key battles in Hungary's medieval history took place at Ménfő near Győr. The German army, with the assistance of Peter's supporters, vanquished Aba's Hungarian warriors. Since the outcome of the battle had been significantly affected by strong winds blowing dust into the eyes of Aba's army, the victorious side ascribed their success to divine providence.

In the immediate aftermath of the battle the German ruler decided to give thanks to the Lord by means of a penitentiary ritual. Barefoot, and clad only in a woollen penitential robe, he prostrated himself before the relic of the Holy Cross, as did all his warriors. Singing *Kyrie eleison*, all those present forgave one another's sins.[1] Following this act of submission and humiliation before the celestial powers, Henry and Peter proceeded to Hungary's coronation city of Székesfehérvár, to be solemnly received by the local population and church dignitaries. This was followed by the reinstatement on the royal throne of the legitimate and anointed ruler (*christus Domini*)[2] in the basilica of the Virgin Mary. Thus, in the presence of the German king, the Hungarians were reconciled with their old-new ruler whom they had banished from Hungary three years earlier.

However, this ceremony did not exhaust the complex of symbolic public acts. Following the example of his German protector, Peter went on to offer thanks to the Lord for being restored to the throne in a ritualized manner. On the very same day, again barefoot and wearing a penitential robe, he visited

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1 *Chronici Hungarici compositio saeculi XIV*, c. 76–77, in *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum tempore ducum regumque stirpis Arpadianae gestarum*, vol. 1, ed. by Imre Szentpétery (Budapest, 1937), p. 332 (hereafter cited as *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*); *Annales Altahenses maiores ad a. 1044*, MGH SSrG 4, p. 37. Stefan Weinfurter, "Ordnungskonfigurationen im Konflikt. Das Beispiel Kaiser Heinrichs III," in *Mediaevalia Augiensia. Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters*, ed. Jürgen Petersohn (Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 2001), pp. 79–80.

2 The authenticity of this description of the events is confirmed by a letter from Abbot Berno of Reichenau, addressed to Henry III and praising the Emperor for having set things right and restoring Peter to the throne. The king of Hungary is described as the Lord's anointed (*christus Domini*). See Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies. Studies in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 88–89; Klaus Schreiner, "'Nudis pedibus'. Barfüssigkeit als religiöses und politisches Ritual," in *Formen und Funktionen öffentlicher Kommunikation im Mittelalter*, ed. Gerd Althoff (Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 2001), pp. 103–104.

every church in Székesfehérvár, proffering precious altar mantels as gifts to each and every church. Contemporary sources report an unprecedented degree of excitement and joy erupting among the city's populace, nobles and clerics.[3] In the following year, 1045, Henry returned to Székesfehérvár to accept from Orseolo a golden lance and along with it the entire Kingdom of Hungary, only to hand it back to Peter as his fiefdom. After being received respectfully the Emperor returned to Germany laden with gifts.

Most historians have explored the events associated with the fateful battle of Ménfő and its immediate aftermath in terms of the political history of Árpád era Hungary, interpreting the impact of Peter's vassal submission on Hungary's position vis-à-vis the German Empire. For us, however, the chain of events of 1044 and 1045 presents a unique opportunity to take a closer look at the forms and functions of public symbolic communication in the early and high Middle Ages.

It is now generally accepted that ritualized forms of communication played a significant role in the exercise of political power and state administration of the medieval society of Europe. Commonplace events, as well as festive occasions in the lives of monarchs, nobles, church dignitaries and ordinary people were punctuated with numerous rituals.[4] The story of Peter Orseolo's restoration to the Hungarian throne as recorded by Hungarian and German chroniclers exemplifies nearly every kind of power ritual employed in the political struggles and public communications of this period.

In addition to diplomatic negotiations and military encounters (which followed their own ritualized rules) the ceremonial welcoming of a ruler as he entered a city, such as the *adventus regis* of Henry III and Peter Orseolo's entry into Székesfehérvár, was becoming increasingly important. Various additional

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3   *"Non prius gustavit ea die quippiam, quam templa omnia nudis pedibus et in laneis circuivit et altaria templorum singulis palliis vestivit. Non visa prius in ea urbe tanta divina exultatio plebis et principum, tam devota clericorum et monachorum et virginum Christi laudatio."* *Annales Altahenses maiores ad a. 1044*, MGH SSrG 4, p. 37. See Gerd Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale. Symbolik und Herrschaft im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003), p. 116.

4   See, for example, Arno Borst, *Lebensformen im Mittelalter* (Berlin: Ullstein, 2004), p. 495; Heinrich Fichtenau, *Lebensordnungen des 10. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1984), pp. 11–110; *Medieval Concepts of the Past. Ritual, Memory, Historiography*, ed. Gerd Althoff, Patrick Geary, and Johannes Fried (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Geoffrey Koziol, "England, France, and the problem of sacrality in twelfth-century ritual," in *Cultures of Power. Lordship, Status, and Process in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. Thomas N. Bisson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), pp. 124–148; Bernhard Jussen, *Ordering Medieval Society: Perspectives on Practical and Practical Modes of Shaping Social Relations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

types of power ritual accompanied the handing over of the royal insignia and Peter's enthronement, as well as his oath of fealty. Hungary's ritualized submission to the German king and Peter's reconciliation with Hungary represent another type of public activity endowed with rich symbolic significance. Henry III, by prostrating himself before the cross, and Orseolo, by performing penitent rituals in the churches of Székesfehérvár, elected to carry out symbolic acts of submission, inspired by the church liturgy of penitence and the symbolism of Christian humility. In the Middle Ages, the king's majesty and the sacral character of royal power were reflected in ceremonies accompanying encounters between royalty, which were inconceivable without ceremonial feasts and the lavish exchange of precious gifts.[5]

All these public acts took place according to ritual rules prescribed by tradition, and were endowed with coded symbolic meanings, which were sufficiently comprehensible to contemporaries. Every public appearance by a ruler and his entourage followed more or less precisely laid down rules, expressed in rituals and ceremonies devised for the given purpose. Medieval kings, nobles and prelates had recourse to a large repository of rituals, gestures and symbolic acts designed specifically for each occasion. Some historians (for example Timothy Reuter) go so far as to refer to a symbolic 'metalanguage', comprehensible to all regardless of their ethnic or social group.[6] These rituals enabled those who performed them to play an effective role in the continual power struggles linked to dynastic disputes, and to communicate messages intended for other players on the political chessboard of medieval Europe. The following pages will aim to provide deeper insight into the complex of ritual communication and deconstruct its logic and structure while, at the same time, interpreting its significance and the role it played in medieval European society.

Equal emphasis will be placed upon and attention paid to the way rituals were depicted in contemporary sources, and to the way they were interpreted and used by medieval authors. We will try to show that rituals served as an equally powerful tool of actual political action as well as in terms of presenting the desired version of events in chroniclers' accounts.

The performers of these symbolic acts and the chroniclers who recorded these events were equally aware of the powerful impact of framing a particular ceremony appropriately and of projecting a particular image of events in their accounts. This study will therefore focus on the role of rituals in political events in conjunction with the way these events were depicted

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5   The interpretation of each ritual, including bibliographical references, is provided in the following chapters.

6   Timothy Reuter, " *'Velle sibi fieri in forma hac'*. Symbolisches Handeln im Becketstreit," in Althoff, *Formen und Funktionen*, p. 203.

ILLUSTRATION 1   Genuflexio (*genuflection*) *of German King Henry III in penitential robe*
before the Holy Cross after the victorious battle of Ménfő in 1044. Hungarian
Illuminated Chronicle (14th century).
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in contemporary texts. Every case from the primary sources in the book has
been scrutinized in detail and compared with its historiographical treatment.
It should be mentioned that our interpretation of the ritualized behaviour
based on these sources follows the same line of thinking as that of histori-
ans who have used those sources to write political history. This is particularly
important to acknowledge because one of the main sources for the Árpád era
is the Hungarian Chronicle preserved in its 14th century version, known as the
Chronica Hungarorum or the *Illuminated Chronicle*. The composition, dating
and reliability of this source is much debated. However, it is generally recog-
nized by both Hungarian and non-Hungarian historiography that it relies on

older versions, which are considered to be a trustworthy source for the 11th and 12th centuries also.

Whenever possible we have tried to cite other contemporary sources, predominantly German and Austrian, but also Bohemian, Polish and other narrative sources, and in many cases also eyewitness accounts (Cosmas of Prague, Gallus Anonymus, Bonizo of Sutri, Thomas of Split, Rogerius, Odo of Deuil) and occasionally also diplomatic materials. In those cases where the authenticity of the source material is questionable (e.g. Polish-Hungarian Chronicle, Gesta Hungarorum, Simonis de Keza, Jan Długosz), this is always indicated and we have tried to include alternative historiographical interpretations. Hence we believe that these sources do provide a considerable amount of information concerning the social and political reality of the time.[7]

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7 It is believed that the oldest part of the chronicle, the so-called Ur-Gesta, was composed in the late 11th and early 12th century. This material was reworked and amended throughout the 12th century. From the 1160s to the end of the 13th century little new material was added. Between the end of 13th century and up to the middle of the 14th century the composition was re-written until it acquired its present form. For an overview of the rich historiography see especially the introductory studies to the edition of the most important narrative sources on the Árpád era in *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum tempore ducum regumque stirpis Arpadianae gestarum.* ed. Emericus Szentpétery (Budapestini, 1937–1938); C.A. Macartney, *The Medieval Hungarian Historians. A Critical and Analytical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953); Gyula Kristó, *A történeti irodalom Magyarországon a kezdetektől 1421-ig* (Budapest: Argumentum, 1994); Dániel Bagi, "Problematik der ältesten Schichten der ungarischen Chronikkomposition des 14. Jahrhunderts im Lichte der ungarischen Geschichtsforschung der letzten Jahrzente—einige ausgewählte Problemstellen," *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae*, 12 (2007), pp. 105–127; Richard Marsina, "Stredoveké uhorské rozprávacie pramene a slovenské dejiny," *Zborník Slovenského národného múzea. História* 24 (1984), pp. 167–193; Richard Pražák, *Legendy a kroniky koruny uherské* (Prague: Vyšehrad, 1988), pp. 11–30; Kornél Szovák, "L'historiographie hongroise à l'époque arpadienne," in *Les Hongrois et l'Europe.* Conquête et intégration, ed. Sándor Csernus and Klára Korompay (Paris/Szeged: Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, Institut Hongrois de Paris – Université de Szeged (JATE), 1999), pp. 375–384; Norbert Kersken, *Geschichtschreibung im Europa der ‚nationes'. Nationalgeschichte Gesamtdarstellungen im Mittelalter* (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 1995), p. 670–685; Krisztina Fügedi, "Modification of the narrative? The message of image and text in the fourteenth-century Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle," in *The Development of Literate Mentalities in East Central Europe.* eds. Anna Adamska – Marco Mostert (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 469–496; Elemér Mályusz, *Királyi kancellária és krónikaírás a középkori Magyarországon* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1973), where references to other works can be found. For an overview of the relationship between ritual and text compare Philippe Buc, "Political ritual: medieval and modern interpretations," in *Die Aktualität des Mittelalters*, ed. Hans-Werner Goetz (Bochum: Winkler, 2000), pp. 255–272, especially pp. 270–272. For an historiographic introduction to the period in question for those who do not read Hungarian

The study of rituals and symbolic forms of communication has played a key role in contemporary medieval studies worldwide. Medievalists in Western Europe and the United States have increasingly focused on ritual communication, expressed primarily through symbolic interaction between a ruler and his entourage or between individual rulers. The more systematic examination of rituals, ceremonies or symbolic behaviour in East and Central European historiography, however, is a more recent phenomenon. This endeavour has resulted in the publication of primary monographs and collections of articles mostly by Czech, Polish and Hungarian historians. By contrast, Slovak medievalists, apart from a number of studies by the present author, have yet to produce articles or monographs on the subject.

This book is an attempt to fill this gap in Slovak and Hungarian historiography. However, it does not claim to provide an exhausting synthesis of the study of rituals and ritualized forms of behaviour in medieval Central Europe. A number of factors have influenced the thematic range and final scope of this book. Due to the variety of issues involved, their interdisciplinary character, touching upon several fields in the humanities (history, religious studies, anthropology, ethnology), and the variable and frequently chronologically uneven quantity and quality of the source material, as well as the time-limited nature of this research, the outcome does not represent a synthesizing monograph. Rather, it constitutes primary research in the field, in an attempt to formulate some fundamental questions, outline directions for further research, and elucidate what can be gleaned from the particular Hungarian or, more generally, Central European context.

With regard to Hungary there is little significant research by Slovak or Hungarian historians that can be relied on. The overwhelming majority of Hungarian historians have focused on inaguration rituals that relate exclusively to the ascension to the Hungarian throne and the associated displays of monarchical power. They have also devoted a great deal of attention to related topics, such as the monarchic or state symbolism as embodied by the Hungarian royal insignia, particularly the Holy Crown (*szent korona*), regarded as Hungary's most valuable treasure, the cultural and political legacy of the country's first king and founding father, Saint Stephen (King Stephen I).

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see Pál Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen. A History of Medieval Hungary 895–1526* (London/New York: Tauris, 2005); Gyula Kristó, *Die Arpadendynastie. Die Geschichte Ungarns von 895 bis 1301* (Budapest: Corvina, 1993); Gábor Varga, *Ungarn und das Reich vom 10. bis zum 13. Jahrhundert. Das Herrscherhaus der Arpaden zwischen Anlehnung und Emanzipation* (München: Verlag Ungarisches Institut, 2003).

Pioneering work was carried out by Emma Bartoniek who explored the coronation of the Hungarian kings and the rules of succession in the Árpád dynasty.[8] Even though some of her findings have been superseded by modern historiography, her monograph on the coronation of Hungarian kings has come to be regarded as the standard reference work. József Deér has also put forward stimulating arguments in his studies of the relationship between the pagan and Christian influences on the formation of early Hungarian society and the establishment of the monarchy. He has also contributed to the exchange of views on the order of succession in the Árpád dynasty, showing that it followed the rules of neither seniority nor primogeniture. In Deér's view, in the early centuries of the Hungarian state the issue of succession was determined by the principle of fitness to rule (*idoneitas*), deriving from membership of the chosen Árpád dynasty, which was regarded as more important than one's place in the family tree. Every member of the Árpád dynasty was predestined to rule and possessed the qualities necessary for sucessfully governing the country. The primogeniture model, which gained prominence in later years, did not assert itself for good until the rule of Géza II in the mid-12th century.[9]

Deér is also the author of seminal research on the subject of the Holy Crown of Hungary. This has been a primary subject of research by (Hungarian) historians dealing with the symbolism of the Árpáds' rule. The notion of the Holy Crown itself, its rich tradition wreathed in legend and its unique status among the insignia of the state, lent the Holy Crown a status and importance hardly comparable with that of the royal insignia for Hungary's neighbours. Historical research in the 20th century devoted quite comprehensive attention to most aspects and attributes of, as well as issues relating to, the crown of St Stephen.[10] Deér focused on disproving the legend of the Roman origin of the Crown of Hungary, formulated by Pope Gregory VII as an argument for Hungary's submission to Rome in the investiture dispute of the time.[11] The

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8   Emma Bartoniek *A magyar királykoronázások története* (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1987), pp. 8–84; Emma Bartoniek, "Az Árpádok trónöröklési joga," *Századok* 60 (1926), pp. 785–841.

9   Josef Deér, *Heidnisches und Christliches in der altungarischen Monarchie* (Szeged: Szegedi Nyomda, 1934), pp. 85–105. See also Gyula Kristó, "Legitimitás és idoneitás," *Századok* 108 (1974), pp. 528–621; János M. Bak, "Legitimization of rulership in three narratives from twelfth-century Central Europe," *Majestas* 12 (2004), pp. 50–52.

10 See for example the collective volume *Insignia Regni Hungariae. Studien zur Machtsymbolik des mittelalterlichen Ungarn* (Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, 1983).

11 Josef Deér, *Die heilige Krone Ungarns* (Wien: Böhlau, 1966).

so-called angelic provenance of the Crown of St Stephen inspired some original thinking from Péter Váczy.[12]

The Slovak historian Jozef Karpat (Comenius University) made his contribution to the research on this subject in the early era of Slovak historiography, at the time of the interwar Czechoslovak Republic, publishing his *Corona regni Hungariae v dobe Árpádovskej* (*Corona regni Hungariae in the Árpád Era*). As in his later publications in German, Karpat focused on charting the genesis and meaning of the collocation *corona regni Hungariae* using the available sources, primarily 13th century charters. Based on abundant diplomatic material he proposed that *corona* signified both the coronation jewel itself as well as denoting an abstract concept (the ruler, the state, the person of the king). In Karpat's view what made Hungary unique was the fact that the country developed an abstract notion of the state earlier than her western neighbours.[13]

Historian Erik Fügedi's work represents a kind of summary, complementing and updating earlier research. His English- and German-language publications on coronation ceremonies in medieval Hungary and on the history of the Holy Crown have gained acceptance well beyond the community of Hungarian historians.[14]

As for present-day historians, Professor János M. Bak's wide-ranging work should certainly be mentioned. As befits a true disciple of Percy E. Schramm and his Göttingen School, he successfully exploited the most advanced tools of global medieval studies in his research. His publications on the state symbolism of the Middle Ages, on Hungarian coronations and the coronation *ordines*, on the use of relics in political power struggles, and on the symbolic meaning of insignia continue to be extraordinarily inspiring and provide the basis for research in this area of (not merely) Hungarian history.[15]

Other scholars who have recently been concerned with rulers' rituals, chivalric ideals and models of public ceremonial behaviour include Gábor Klaniczay and László Veszprémy. Klaniczay[16] has explored how the notion of the holy

12   Péter Váczy, "The Angelic Crown," *Hungarian Studies*, 1/1 (1985), pp. 1–18.

13   Jozef Karpat, *Corona regni Hungariae v dobe Árpádovskej.* (Bratislava: Rudolf Rauscher, 1937). Especially pages 3–6, 10–12, 27.

14   Erik Fügedi, "Coronation in medieval Hungary," in *Kings, Bishops, Nobles and Burghers in Medieval Hungary* (London: Variorum, 1986), pp. 159–189; Kálmán Benda – Erik Fügedi, *Tausend Jahre Stephanskrone* (Budapest: Corvina, 1988).

15   Recently a collection of Bak's most important essays was published to celebrate his 80th birthday. János M. Bak, *Studying Medieval Rulers and Their Subjects* (Farnham: Ashgate Variorum, 2010).

16   Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses. Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

ruler and the use of dynastic sanctity in political struggles gained currency, in particular with reference to the attempts at dynastic legitimation within the Central European context. L. Veszprémy,[17] on the other hand, has examined the origins and expansion of chivalric culture in Hungarian society. However, all of the works mentioned above have dealt with rituals and symbolic communication only indirectly, or marginally touched upon some aspects of it. No single monograph has yet focused specifically on the study of rituals, their function and importance in medieval Central Europe (or, more specifically, with reference to Árpád-era Hungary).

In the present work we will try to show that public communication in the Middle Ages included ritualized behaviour that conveyed a variety of symbolic messages. The key terms in our study are *ritual, power* and *communication*. Medieval historical research has a tradition of sidelining ritual. While it was indisputably of frequent occurrence, most historians have played it down as some kind of clerical 'superficial veneer' (*Tünche*), used by the authors (predominantly clergymen) to gloss over actual events, distorting them beyond all recognition.[18] However, recent research into ritual and public symbolic communication seems to indicate that, even if certain details in the accounts of the events described may have been distorted and manipulated by their authors, they do nevertheless reflect events as they really happened or, to be precise, the ideological and cultural framework that determined the way medieval people acted and thought. Thus it may often be more beneficial to study rituals in medieval society in terms of these symbolic complexes rather than as a way of establishing a historically authentic version of particular events.

It is also worth pointing out that the subject matter of this research falls within the category of power or monarchic rituals, i.e. that we are primarily interested in the ceremonial lives of medieval rulers, in court festivities and all the ceremonies relating to the sacral symbolism of royal power in this period.

However, rituals additionally occurred in other social contexts or formed part of the lives of specific individuals. A prime example, in nobleman-warrior circles, is military ritual (symbols of weapons, honour and status). Life in the medieval city involved a variety of urban rituals and festivities, which shaped

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17   László Veszprémy, *Lovagvilág Magyarországon. Lovagok, keresztesek, hadmérnökök a középkori Magyarországon: válogatott tanulmányok* (Budapest: Argumentum, 2008).

18   Gerd Althoff, "Humiliatio—Exaltatio. Theorie und Praxis eines herrscherlichen Handlungsmusters," in *Text und Kontext. Fallstudien und theoretische Begründungen einer kulturwissenschaftlich angeleiteten Mediävistik*. ed. Jan Müller (München: Oldenbourg, 2007), p. 51.

the urban consciousness and strengthened community cohesion. Ordinary people led lives that were as ritualized as those of the highest ranks of society (e.g. peasant rituals relating to the cultivation and fertility of the soil, as well as rituals of turning-points in family life).

Ecclesiastical circles, too, had their own rituals. The church liturgy, ecclesiastical law and the exercise of spiritual and temporal power all involved specific rituals: the celebration of the mass, the excommunication ritual, the consecration of the sacraments, the ceremonial initiation of novices. The process of public or private penance also followed specific rules and prescribed patterns, with penance and reconciliation rituals marked by rich biblical symbolism with complex allegorical reference.

A very common, though not exclusively medieval, ritual was the popular trial by ordeal or *judicium Dei*, practised in various forms. Interestingly enough, these forms continued to thrive in Hungary well after they lost the official support of Rome. This shows that the general public apparently found these rituals more confidence-inspiring than legal process. Surviving pagan rites, white magic rituals and folk medicine healing ceremonies are a further area deserving separate attention. Various rites of humiliation, inspired by folk tradition and the ethnic characteristics of particular communities, were also widely used in medieval Europe, for example, certain initiation ceremonies and rites of humiliation (*harmiscara*, the carrying of dogs—*Hundetragen*, and throwing animals at people). Specific ritual tests and symbolic violence were also used to increase the effectiveness, and ensure the survival, of the rituals into the future. Ceremonies and the use of symbolic objects also constituted part of legal proceedings (such as transfers of property, seizin, as well as the administration of ritual punishment).[19]

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19   For example, aspects of military rituals and weapon symbolism are treated in *Rituals of Power. From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*. ed. Frans Theuws (Leiden/Boston/ Köln: Brill, 2000). For family and agrarian rituals, see Dušan Třeštík, "Čtyři tisíce let starý ritual," in *Mýty kmene Čechů (7.–10. století)* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, 2008), pp. 7–27; Bonnie Effros, *Creating Community with Food and Drink in Merovingian Gaul* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). Ordeals in Hungary can be studied thanks to the well-preserved Regestrum of Várad. Rudolf Rauscher, *O registru varadínském. K dějinám božích soudů v Uhrách* (Bratislava: Učená Společnost Šafaříkova, 1929). Rites of humiliation are explored in a number of publications, e.g. Stefan Weinfurter, "Ein räudiger Hund auf den Schultern: Das Ritual des Hundetragens im Mittelalter," in *Die Welt der Rituale. Von der Antike bis heute*. ed. Claus Ambos et al. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006), pp. 213–219. A unique and fascinating example of a "ritual slap in the face" is to be found in Frankish law codes. At the end of a certain judicial ceremony every one of the twelve child witnesses received a slap in the face and had his ear pulled,

In order to examine medieval ritual we must first define and clarify the terms 'ritual and symbolic (or ritual) communication'. The introductory chapter will therefore focus on the theory and methodology of the study of rituals. We will outline the evolution of the study of ritual in the humanities and its place in present-day medieval studies and go on to examine the definition of the terms ritual and symbolic communication in general, as well as in the sense in which they will be employed in this monograph.

Part II will explore power rituals in the narrow sense of the word, i.e. all the symbolic events relating to the person of the medieval sovereign, the presentation of his majesty and legitimation of sacral royal power by means of ritual actions. We shall also focus on royal symbolism and all its related ritual paraphernalia, with particular emphasis on the Hungarian rulers, as well as on various court festivities and ceremonies imbued with symbolism. Coronations and general inauguration ceremonies are a separate topic which, unlike other ritual forms, has been documented by older (Hungarian) historiography so exhaustively that further research is unlikely to yield new and better results, and for that reason this study will not examine them in detail. Instead, it will focus on less familiar forms of power ritual, such as royal laudations (*laudes regiae*), festival crownings (*Festkrönung*) and the ceremonial handing over of arms.

Settling disputes is an area that lends itself particularly well to the exploration of ritualized forms of behaviour in the Middle Ages. Interminable dynastic disputes, international military conflicts, and conflicts between rulers and nobles provided ample opportunities for using symbolic forms of reconciliation and conflict resolution in situations where military force or law failed. In this section of the book we will take a closer look at ritual submission, as well as symbolic gestures and other forms of expression (weeping, gestures, emotions) employed during such events.

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the better to remember the procedure he had just witnessed. For this and other similar examples see Jarmila Bednaříková, "Sakralita práva a Pactus legis Salicae," in *Historické štúdie. Medzi antikou a stredovekom. Acta historica Posoniensia XIII.* ed. Miroslav Daniš—Pavol Valachovič (Bratislava: FiFUK, 2010), pp. 15–22; For the specific humiliation ritual of *harmiscara*: Jean-Marie Moeglin, "Harmiscara—Harmschar—Hachee. Le dossier des rituels d'humiliation et de soumission au Moyen Âge," *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi. Bulletin Du Cange*, 54 (1996), pp. 11–65. A stimulating study of using rituals in judicial procedures can be found in Marguerite Ragnow, "Ritual Before the Altar: Legal Satisfaction and Spiritual Reconciliation in Eleventh-Century Anjou," in *Medieval and Early Modern Ritual. Formalized Behavior in Europe, China and Japan.* ed. Joëlle Rollo-Koster (Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2002), pp. 57–79.

Two specific forms of ritual relating to the Hungarian and other Central European rulers have been recorded in numerous sources and in greater detail, allowing a more in-depth study of rituals. A separate chapter will therefore be devoted to the ceremonial arrival of royalty in a city (or a monastery) and the ceremonial welcome they received from the local population (*adventus regis*). Within this category, we shall further explore the occurrence and use of so-called good and bad rituals. A further chapter will be devoted to the various rituals that accompanied encounters between medieval rulers. These so-called greeting rituals served as a means of symbolic communication between monarchs suitable for the exchange of important information. The concluding chapter provides a summary and an outline of ritual communication as a coherent system.

It should, however, be emphasized that it is not always possible to draw a clear line between particular forms of ritual communication. For this reason a certain ritual might be deployed in a number of situations or, by contrast, a variety of rituals could occur within the same framework. For example, *adventus regis* was an extremely monarchic ritual, but it was often performed in the context of a city and therefore can be studied as part of the ceremonial life of urban communities. The ritual kiss (*osculum pacis*) was used both as an element of symbolic reconciliation and public submission as well as in the context of ceremonial encounters between distinguished rulers. The boundaries between particular rituals and various ritual actions were quite fluid. That is why the same symbolic actions will often be studied under various ritual categories, depending on their meaning and function in each particular case.

In addition to the theoretical and methodological approach to ritual, the comparative character of the research presented here needs to be emphasized. The core of the study focuses on Hungary or rather, on the interaction of the Árpád rulers with their environment. However, because of the dearth of sources of Hungarian provenance, their fragmentary nature, and the degree to which they were influenced by foreign models, the topic must be examined within a broader context. Our research will therefore include the geographical and political space of Central Europe (Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Lands, i.e. Bohemia and Moravia), first and foremost in close relation to the Holy Roman Empire but also in relation to the life and institutions of Western Europe in general.[20] Findings from this region will be compared with those

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20   The choice between the terms 'Central Europe' and 'East Central Europe' continues to
      be the subject of debate. We have opted for the term Central Europe which is employed
      for this region by the majority of respected scholars in the field. See for example:
      Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy. Scandinavia, Central Europe and Rus'

from other parts of Europe (Byzantium, Kievan Rus, Dalmatia). This will provide us with a further opportunity to explore the influence of ideological patterns and models of behaviour between the centre and the periphery (whereby the western part of the Latin West is seen as the centre, where most ritual patterns originate).

This is because in the overwhelming majority of cases ritual communication of the Hungarian kings can be observed only in interaction with foreign rulers and communities. This is particularly striking in the case of Hungarian-Dalmatian and Hungarian-German relations. Otherwise it would be impossible to form a nuanced view of the role and function of ritual in public communication of the societies of medieval Central Europe. Historical developments in this area of public communication shared a number of common features and the same applied to ritual communication. That is why we will explore a number of examples of symbolic communication between Hungarian and foreign rulers.

In terms of chronology the present research is situated in the early and high Middle Ages, in the 1000–1301 framework, i.e. from the beginnings of Christianized monarchy in Hungary until the extinction of the Árpád dynasty. Nevertheless, in the course of this study it will be necessary at times to slightly exceed these self-imposed chronological limitations. Its purpose in the present book is to show that rituals originating from (early antiquity and) the early Middle Ages survived largely unchanged well into the modern period.

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c. 900–1200. ed. Nora Berend (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Zbigniew Dalewski, "Political Culture of Central Europe in the High Middle Ages: Aggression and Agreement," in *Political Culture in Central Europe (10th–20th Century). Part I. Middle Ages and Early Modern Era.* ed. Halina Manikowska – Jaroslav Pánek (Prague: HI AV ČR, 2005); Florin Curta, "East Central Europe: the gate to Byzantium," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 108/2 (2015), pp. 1–42; *Rituály, ceremonie a festivity ve střední Evropě 14. a 15. století.* ed. Martin Nodl – František Šmahel (Praha: Filosofia, 2009); Bak, "Legitimization of rulership"; Nora Berend – Przemysław Urbańczyk – Przemysław Wiszewski, *Central Europe in the High Middle Ages: Bohemia, Hungary and Poland, c. 900–c. 1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Jenő Szűcs, "Three historical regions of Europe," *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 29 (1983), pp. 131–184; Lonnie R. Johnson, *Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbours, Friends*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present* (London: Routledge, 2001); Oscar Halecki, *Borderlands of Western Civilization: A History of East Central Europe* (Safety Harbor: Simon Publications, 1952); Denis Hay, *Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (London: Routledge, 1989); František Dvorník, *Zrod střední a východní Evropy* (Praha: Prostor 2008). An interesting change can be seen in the title of the second edition of Paul Robert Magocsi's *Historical Atlas of Central Europe* (Seattle/London: University of Washington Press, 2002), which first appeared as *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe* in 1993.

As for the sources, the core of the research is based on the close reading of the way rituals are depicted by narrative sources, i.e. chronicles, annals and hagiographies, mainly of Hungarian, Czech, Polish, and German, as well as Western European and Byzantine provenance. However, some vital information has also been gleaned from sources of a diplomatic nature (charters and letters), legal documents and codices, and also some extant iconographic material. The sources are inevitably rather disparate and their quantity and quality varies over the course of the centuries. That is why it was possible to analyse some periods in greater detail while for certain other periods we had to rely on scant and often vague information. In these cases our interpretation and conclusions are based on a detailed comparison with findings of non-Hungarian provenance.

The present monograph aims to elucidate the occurrence and function of rituals as a means of symbolic communication in the early and high Middle Ages. We will, therefore, focus on identifying every reference to ritual in contemporary sources, the extent to which they are rooted in the public display of political struggles, as well as on describing the role they played in the functioning and preservation of the proper condition of medieval society. Equally crucial, however, will be to clarify why and how these rituals were recorded and by whom, since in every single case we have to assume a degree of authorial manipulation and an attempt to interpret the ritual to fit some desired scenario. Thus the historian is forced to draw subtle distinctions between an author's personal view and the overall picture of the period under consideration. Only by consistently combining these two approaches can we hope to achieve meaningful results.

Rituals and Symbolic Communication: Theory, Terminology and Methodology

1 Ritual—Definition of the Term

"[There is] the widest possible disagreement as to how the word ritual should be understood."[1] This statement by one of the greatest of 20th century anthropologists, Edmund Leach, is probably the only thing on which all students of ritual will be agreed. Rituals are the subject of research of a number of disciplines in the humanities. Apart from historians, other scholars have also been instrumental in articulating the theory of ritual. Anthropologists, religious scholars, sociologists, ethnologists, and philosophers have devoted many years to coming up with the most accurate and apt definition of this phenomenon. The appropriation of ritual by various scholarly disciplines and its simultaneous application to a large number of heterogenous phenomena has made an unambiguous definition and structural grounding of the term very problematic. As a result of the variety of theoretical starting points, ambiguous criteria, and the application of different methodological approaches "defining the term 'rituals' is a notoriously problematic task. The number of definitions proposed is endless, and no one seems to like the definitions proposed by anyone else."[2]

The very definition of the term ritual, its factual and semantic delimitation, and specification of the key categorizing features has literally wreaked chaos and made research based on universally agreed rules impossible. Because of this some researchers have given up trying to define ritual, some (such as Jack Goody) even going so far as to propose ignoring the very term ritual altogether. One reason for this unfortunate state of affairs is that the term has been studied by too many disparate scholarly disciplines. Criteria used by anthropologists to define and delineate the term ritual may not be most appropriate for religious scholars, for example. Similarly, the study of the meaning and function of rituals in medieval studies is based on theoretical foundations and premises different from those employed by philosophers

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1 Cited by Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. v.

2 Jan Snoek, "Defining 'Rituals,'" in *Theorizing Rituals: Issues, Topics, Approaches, Concepts*. ed. Jens Kreinath (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2006), p. 3.

or sociologists.[3] Nevertheless, this has not prevented scholars from finding it fairly easy to define certain symbolic activities encountered in their research as rituals. What we have here is a wide disagreement in terms of interpreting, though not identifying, this phenomenon.[4]

Another major issue dividing research opinion is ritual efficacy, i.e. whether rituals can affect anything at all and, if so, how. William S. Sax believes academics have taken the wrong approach to the study of rituals, accusing them of the sin of reification because in interpreting ritual, they depict it as something real, thus confusing an analytical category with something that is a *natural kind*.[5] The Heidelberg-based anthropologist believes that it is possible to disprove the claim that rituals are ineffective: shamanic rituals do heal, legal ones do ratify, political ones do unify, religious ones do sanctify, and healing ones do transform sick people into healthy ones, and so forth. In Sax's view people refuse to acknowledge the real efficacy of ritual for fear of being regarded as old-fashioned and unscholarly.[6] However, rituals are not effective *sui generis*. Some may 'work' while others need not.[7]

Further fundamental disagreement concerns the significance of ritual for human society. In this respect, too, the disparity of opinion among leading scholars knows no bounds, varying from an exaggerated emphasis on the necessity of ritual as *the* basic social act, (Roy Rappaport)[8] to the other extreme of regarding ritual as "pure activity, without meaning and goal" (Fritz Staal).[9] The simultaneous interdisciplinary study of ritual has resulted in a wide-ranging interdisciplinary dialogue that has recently been labelled *ritual studies*. For this group of scholars ritual represents a "'window' on the cultural dynamics by which people make and remake their worlds".[10]

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3   Snoek, "Defining 'Rituals'", p. 3. For a complex definition see most recently: Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, *Rituale. Historische Einführungen* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 2013).

4   Talal Asad, "Toward a Genealogy of the Concept of Ritual," in *Genealogies of Religion. Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 55.

5   William S. Sax, "Ritual and the Problem of Efficacy," in *The Problem of Ritual Efficacy*. eds. William S. Sax – Johannes Quack – Jan Weinhold (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 3–4.

6   Sax, "Ritual and the Problem of Efficacy", pp. 7, 13.

7   Johannes Quack, "Bell, Bourdieu and Wittgenstein on Ritual Sense," in *The Problem Of Ritual Efficacy*, pp. 183–184.

8   Roy Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 138.

9   Fritz Staal, "The Meaninglessness of Ritual," *Numen*, 26/1 (1979), p. 9.

10   Bell, *Ritual Theory*, p. 3.

Unsuccessful attempts to define the term ritual have a long history and have yielded some original conclusions. For example, David I. Kertzer writes:

> In defining ritual, I am not, of course, trying to discover what ritual 'really' is, for it is not an entity to be discovered. Rather, ritual is an analytical category that helps us deal with the chaos of human experience and put it into a coherent framework. There is no right or wrong definition of ritual, but only one that is more or less useful in helping us understand the world in which we live.[11]

In recent years, the German scholar of religion Axel Michaels has published several studies in which he tried to identify characteristics useful for the definition of ritual. Like his predecessors, he admits that few terms are as ambiguous as 'ritual'.[12] Nevertheless, he believes it is worth trying to differentiate ritual from other semantically and conceptually similar terms such as ceremony, festivity, game, sport, theatre, etiquette, habit, custom, and routine. Based on his research Michaels has offered five basic characteristics to help identify ritual: (1) framing, i.e. defining the beginning and end of a ritual to set it apart from everyday life; (2) formal decision, i.e. a ritualized purpose fixed in written form; (3) form, showing that the actions are repeated, public and irrevocable; (4) function, which may be social, sanctifying or stabilizing; and (5) change of status, i.e. the ritual results in a change of status or competence. At the same time, ritual is not seen as distinct from its cultural and social context but rather forms part of a specific era and culture, giving rise to its dynamism.[13]

Gradually, however, it has become increasingly acknowledged in professional circles that a uniform definition of ritual is impossible. It seems more helpful to use *an open definition* of ritual as a heuristic tool capable of producing more beneficial results.[14] This approach derives from Ludwig Wittgenstein's

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11   David I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 8.

12   "Kaum ein Begriff ist so voll von Vieldeutigkeiten wie der Begriff 'Ritual' ", Axel Michaels, "Inflation der Rituale? Grenzen eines vieldeutigen Begriffs," *Humanismus aktuell*, 13 (2003), p. 25.

13   The terms in the German original are *Rahmung, Förmlicher Beschluss, Form, Funktion und Statuswechsel*. Cf. Michaels, "Inflation der Rituale?", p. 34; See Axel Michaels, "Das heulen der Schakale. Ein Tier- und 'Menschen' – Opferritual in Nepal," in *Die Kultur des Rituals. Inszenierungen. Praktiken. Symbole*. ed. Christoph Wulf – Jörg Zirfas (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2004), pp. 218–220.

14   Ute Hüsken, "Ritual Dynamics and Ritual Failure," in *When Rituals Go Wrong: Mistakes, Failure, and the Dynamics of Ritual*. ed. Ute Hüsken (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007), pp. 337–338.

philosophical theory of family resemblances (*Familienähnlichkeiten*).[15] It is based on the notion that we do not necessarily need to know all characteristics of a certain group (for example, players in a game or members of a family), only a sufficient number of similar features that allow us to speak of a family resemblance.[16] This approach can also be applied to the phenomenon that is traditionally referred to as ritual.

Key to using this approach successfully is to look at ritual categories from a new perspective. The problem of the previous, disparate and mutually conflicting definitions of ritual was their authors' attempt to articulate them as *monothetic* and *non-fuzzy*, i.e. in terms of traditional Aristotelian categories. This is the approach taken, for example, by Victor Turner, who regarded rituals as a kind of prescribed formal behaviour that includes references to faith in mystic beings and forces. Similarly, Stanley Tambiah believes that ritual is a culturally construed system of symbolic communication, characterized by formality, stereotype and repetition.[17]

In fact, rituals are much more appropriately defined in terms of the notion of *fuzzy sets* and *polythetic classes*. Fuzzy sets are understood as a category of objects with a certain number of (not precisely defined) common characteristics. Polythetic categories are those that comprise certain features that are identical and others that are different, with no single feature occurring in every ritual without exception.

> This indicates the solution to the problem, namely to accept explicitly that (almost all) the characteristics of the class of phenomena usually called 'rituals' in fact are either polythetic or fuzzy or even both. Once this is accepted, the task is no longer to search for the few essential characteristics of 'rituals' which unambiguously distinguish between them and everything else, but rather to sum up as large as possible a collection of characteristics which are typical for most rituals, or at least for those being considered in a particular project.[18]

Thus phenomena that feature the following characteristics can be designated as rituals: they are culturally construed, sanctioned by tradition, have their

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15   Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen. Philosophical Investigations* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 36–37.

16   Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, p. 36. See also Sax, "Ritual and the Problem of Efficacy", p. 7.

17   Snoek, "Defining 'Rituals'", p. 6.

18   Snoek, "Defining 'Rituals'", p. 7.

protagonists and audience, they represent actions (physical and verbal), they are distinct from standard behaviour, performed at a certain time and in a certain place, are collective and public, meaningful for their protagonists, replicable, of a religious and sacred character, deliberate, with a symbolic meaning, communicative, prescribed, conventional, stylized, structured, ordered and convey emotions.[19]

Using this approach a historian does not necessarily have to provide a universal and all-embracing definition of rituals, applicable to every conceivable case at all times and in all places. What matters is being able to frame the concept of ritual in such a way that it is useful for analysis, i.e. so that it has heuristic value and enables a study of rituals in a specific historic era and time (such as the Greco-Roman period, medieval Europe, early modern Europe, and so forth).[20]

2 The Study of Rituals in the Humanities

Rituals have been studied by scholars for over a century. Research initially focused primarily on religious ceremony and liturgy, with an emphasis on the religious character of rituals and on the role they played in the functioning of theocratic societies. Only gradually, specifically since the 1960s, has the study of rituals expanded to include the secular sphere of human society. As already mentioned, rituals have been studied by religious scholars, ethnologists, anthropologists, historians as well as philosophers. Their approaches to research have evolved in line with the changing concept of ritual in academic works. Originally understood as a prescription for performing certain religious acts, *a script*, ritual has come to be understood as action in its own right (*practice*).[21]

The initial findings go back primarily to the research carried out by Émile Durkheim. His seminal work on the elementary forms of religious life (*Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, 1912) was revolutionary in many respects. He took the first steps towards a new definition of ritual by emphasizing the fundamental difference between the worlds of the sacred and the profane.[22] For Durkheim religion consists of faith and ceremony. Faith comprises the

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19   Snoek, "Defining 'Rituals'", p. 11.

20   "The question, however, is not what is the true definition, but how can the concept be framed so that it is useful for analysis—so that it has heuristic value." Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 6.

21   Asad, "Toward a Genealogy", pp. 56–57.

22   Muir, *Ritual*, p. 3.

representation of the sacred, while ceremony is defined as determined forms of action that can be characterized only in terms of representations of the sacred, which is their object. Ritual is thus a means by which individual perception and behaviour is socially acquired and adapted. Furthermore, rituals play an important and dynamic role in social integration and consolidation. The same is true of Durkheim's modern understanding of ritual as it relates to human individuality. Durkheim regarded rituals as a way of bringing about a state of cohesiveness: collective action produces in its actors a sense of being part of something transindividual or even transcendental.[23]

A breakthrough work whose impact on the perception of rituals in academic research has been fundamental is Arnold Van Gennep's 1909 book *The Rites of Passage*. In this work Van Gennep defined rituals, as understood in the old religious studies approach, as magico-religious acts.[24] The key factor, in his view, was the boundary between the profane and sacred, which cannot be crossed without going through a phase or period of passage. He championed the idea that rituals are polysemous, i.e. that there are several ways of explaining each ritual and, conversely, that a single interpretation can apply to various forms of ritual. Van Gennep defined what he called rites of passage as consisting of three phases: detachment (preliminal); transition or threshold (liminal); and incorporation (postliminal). By crossing a threshold, which constitutes an imaginary as well as material transition (threshold or boundary), one entered a new stage, state or world.[25]

Mircea Eliade, another outstanding scholar of religion, studied rituals in relation to symbols, myth, and legend. He focused, among other things, on rituals in so-called archaic and traditional societies, elucidating in great detail the techniques of initiation rituals and their function in secret societies, which played a key role in ancient cultures. He also emphasized the phenomenon of mystic births and the re-enactment of sacred events from the beginnings of time (*in illo tempore*), as well as the role of ritual as hierophany, i.e. manifestation of the sacred.[26]

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23   Bell, *Ritual Theory*, pp. 15, 20; Pavlína Rychterová, "Rituály, rity a ceremonie. Teorie rituálu a jejich reflexe v medievistickém bádání," in *Stát, státnost a rituály přemyslovského věku*. ed. Martin Wihoda (Brno: Matice Moravská, 2006), p. 15; cf. Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

24   Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Oxford – New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 1–13, 15–25—originally published as *Les rites de passage* (Paris: Emile Nourry, 1909).

25   Gennep, *The Rites*, pp. 11–27.

26   Mircea Eliade, *Initiations, rites, sociétés secrètes. Naissance mystiques. Essai sur quelques types d'initiation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), pp. 14–15, 133–180; Mircea Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions* (Paris: Payot, 1975), pp. 20–45 and 326–344.

Historical research has particularly benefited from the anthropological studies of Max Gluckmann, who did not regard ritual merely as a religious aspect of a cultural phenomenon but as a component of *social action* in its own right. Since the field of application has been thus enlarged, historians have been able to apply the term ritual to any historical phenomenon. This has freed ritual from earlier historians' confinement of it to the sphere of magic, esoteric phenomena, and ordination ceremonies.[27] It is, however, cultural anthropology that has proved most significant in enriching pioneering work of historians studying political ritual.[28]

The turn of the 1960s and 1970s saw the publication of several fundamental studies of ritual by anthropologists, ethnologists, and sociologists. Scholars such as Victor Turner, Mary Douglas, Clifford Geertz and Roy Rappaport have transformed the way we see ritual, proposing a number of new concepts, often based on their own fieldwork among indigenous societies in Africa, Australia and Indonesia. As part of a then fashionable trend these studies blended their findings with the authors' knowledge of the archaic period of Europe's history, namely the Middle Ages. This often resulted in effortful comparisons, a stylized search for parallels and a conflation of ideas and meanings between cultures composed of entirely different constituent parts.

Clifford Geertz's research on the charisma of rulers in various societies and at various periods represents a rare example of this type of comparison working well.[29] He stressed the importance of distinguishing between the active participants and passive observers of rituals. Disinterested observers rely solely on conceptual categories and can thus only ever approximate the events unfolding before their eyes. In ritual, while direct actors act, observers only think, their position corresponding to that of an ethnologist engaged in the study of a ritual in the field.[30] Geertz also developed a stimulating theory of a *theatre state*, based on his analysis of rituals on the Indonesian island of Bali, which proposes that public rituals create a narrative that people use to communicate about themselves.[31] An additional perspective was contributed by

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27 Laura M. Carlson, "Dangerous Acquisitions? An Examination of History's Appropriation and Utilization of Ritual Theory," *Journal of the Oxford University History Society*, 6 (2009), pp. 5–6.

28 *Rites of Power. Symbolism, Ritual, and Politics Since the Middle Ages*. ed. Sean Wilentz (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1985), pp. 2–3.

29 Clifford Geertz, "Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power," in Wilentz, *Rites of Power*, pp. 13–38.

30 Rychterová, "Rituály", pp. 17–18.

31 Carlson, "Dangerous Acquisitions?", p. 6; Muir, *Ritual*, pp. 4, 10.

Claude Lévi-Strauss, who defined the process of *parcelling-out* as a key ritual procedure, a process that made it possible to classify objects and gestures, generating an infinite number of distinctions, and to attribute value to even the smallest distinctions.[32]

Also worth mentioning are the findings of Victor Turner, whose research is based on Van Gennep's rites of passage and liminality theory. He identified a large number of rituals within various types of conflict and defined classifying structures, so-called triads (doctor—wife—husband) and dyads (husband—wife, life—death). He paid particular attention to the function of ritual feasts. Of greatest relevance, however, are Turner's theories relating to the terms *liminality* and *communitas*, which enlarge Van Gennep's scheme to encompass basically every type of ritual. Every ritual can be divided into three phases: before, during, and after. Turner sought to apply the term *communitas* to marginal areas of medieval European society, such as heretical movements or the Franciscans, as opposed to structured society.[33]

In recent years, anthropologists as well as scholars of religion have also increasingly focused on the role played by ritual in human communication. As a result of the desacralization of ritual in modern scholarship their research has extended to areas where scholars had previously not detected the presence of rituals. This has ensured for rituals an extremely important role among various forms of communication (Roy Rappaport):

> To say that ritual is a mode of communication is hardly to suggest that it is interchangeable with other modes of communication. It is a special medium peculiarly, perhaps even uniquely, suited for the transmission of certain messages and certain sorts of information.[34]

This brings us to the functional and communicative role of rituals, which has recently also been embraced as a part of medieval studies.

3   Rituals and Symbolic Communication in Medieval Studies

3.1   *Rituals in Medieval Studies—Overview of Previous Research*
Historians have studied rituals as a part of the history of medieval Europe for some time, although initially their research was limited to specific issues relat-

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32   Muir, *Ritual*, p. 4.

33   Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca/New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 95–97.

34   Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion*, p. 52.

ing to the Christian character of medieval society. The main focus of the seminal works written in the early 20th century was on church ceremonies within the liturgical context. Ceremony was regarded as a distinctly sacred act connecting believers with celestial beings and, at the same time, an expression of their common religious ideas.

Another area of research concerned the figure of the medieval sovereign, symbols of the state, and the associated power rituals. A pioneering work in this area was the publication in 1924 of *Les rois thaumaturges* by Marc Bloch,[35] a founder of the Annales school of history. This study of the origins and evolution of French and English sovereigns' supernatural ability to heal certain illnesses merely by touch is at the same time a brilliant treatise on the sacred power of medieval monarchs. Bloch's analyses focus in particular on anointment ceremonies, which transformed the king into a figure of a special nature, endowing him with quasi-priestly status. The sacrality of royal power was shared by the entire civilisation of medieval Europe, and this was also reflected in the king's status in society.

For our research two of Bloch's postulates are of utmost importance. Firstly, he sounded an alarm about the unfortunate tendency—which has survived until our time—of striving to apply the findings of sociological and ethnological studies of the indigenous societies of Africa and Oceania mechanically to the life and institutions of medieval Europe.[36] Although a number of parallels between the workings of royal power and these 'archaic' societies can of course be identified, their importance should not be overestimated. After all, we are dealing with very different spheres of civilization, different social structures, and different kinds of religion at different stages of development. Simplistic comparisons of this kind (here Bloch references James Frazer's still-popular work, *The Golden Bough*) seem forced and do not really contribute any valuable new insights. The second of Marc Bloch's key postulates was his argument that every ritual involves a capacity for self-development and for increasing complexity.[37] Thus he rejected claims concerning the formality and rigidity of ritual and the aridity resulting from it. Of the plethora of publications written by representatives of the Annales school[38] of historical anthropology Jacques

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35   Marc Bloch, *Les Rois thaumaturges. Étude sur le caractère surnaturel attribué à la puissance royale, particulièrement en France et en Angleterre* (Strasbourg: Faculté des lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg, 1924).

36   Bloch, *Les Rois thaumaturges*, pp. 54–56.

37   Bloch, *Les Rois thaumaturges*, p. 89.

38   An outline of the most important authors and their works can be found in Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century. From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1997), pp. 51–64; Richard van Dülmen.

Le Goff's study of the symbolic rituals of vassalage[39] deserves a mention as a perfect example of what has been called total history (*histoire totale*). This is undoubtedly one of the best studies of ritual ever written. The writings of Le Goff's disciple and successor, Jean-Claude Schmitt, are distinguished by a blending of history, anthropology and ethnology.[40]

Most historians examining rituals were concerned with *coronation studies* which involved, among other things, research in the area of various symbolic and ritual acts that served the purpose of legitimising and, at the same time, displaying monarchic rule in the Middle Ages.[41] Within this area of research three basic 'schools' can be distinguished; all three have affected the study of medieval rituals in a fundamental way.

The first of these, formed in Göttingen by the followers of Percy E. Schramm, explored medieval coronations within the context of monarchic symbolism.[42] Schramm and his successors focused on the coronation *ordines* (*ordines coronationis*) of the period; the impact of Byzantine ceremonial on the West; and the iconography of the sovereigns and symbolically relevant objects (so-called *Herrschaftszeichen, Staatsymbolik*).[43] Schramm's analyses of the coronation *ordines* both built on and challenged those of his predecessors, particularly Eduard Eichmann, Fritz Kern and Carl Erdmann.

The second key area of research focusing on medieval political and legal theory emerged at Cambridge University. The starting point for the research conducted by its main proponent Walter Ullmann were *ordines* and royal liturgy, and research into royal and papal sovereignty, particularly the relationship between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*. His studies in the area of political

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         Historische Anthropologie. Entwicklung, Probleme, Aufgaben (Köln: Böhlau, 2000), pp. 14–15; Carlson, "Dangerous Acquisitions?" pp. 3–5.

39   Jacques Le Goff, "Le rituel symbolique de la vassalité," in Jacques Le Goff, *Pour un autre Moyen Âge. Temps, travail et culture en Occident: 18 essais* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), pp. 349–420.

40   See especially the chapter *Legend and Ritual* in Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Le saint lévrier. Guinefort, guérisseur d'enfants depuis le XIIIᵉ siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1979), pp. 61–131.

41   János M. Bak, "Coronation Studies—Past, Present, and Future," in *Coronations. Medieval and Early Modern Monarchic Ritual*. ed. János M. Bak (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 1.

42   The next three paragraphs, if not cited otherwise, follow Bak, "Coronation Studies", pp. 4–6.

43   Percy E. Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik. Beiträge zu ihren Geschichte vom 3. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert. I.–III.* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann Verlag, 1954–1957); Percy E. Schramm, *A History of English Coronation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937).

theory betray the author's legal training and are marked by a disproportionate dependence on written sources.[44]

The main exponent of the third school was the German-born Ernst H. Kantorowicz, based in his later years at the universities of Princeton and California (Berkeley). Kantorowicz and his circle focused in particular on 'political theology' and the medieval perception of the state in general. This resulted in what was probably the most comprehensive and complex approach. Clearly influenced by his background in classical studies, Kantorowicz searched for the traces and the reappearance in the Middle Ages and Renaissance of the understanding of government in antiquity. In his biography of Frederick II, he explored ritual enhanced by an iconographic dimension, while later he discussed in great detail a hitherto almost unknown area, liturgical royal acclamations (*laudes regiae*).[45] However, his life's work is the synthesis of all earlier research summarized in his book *The King's Two Bodies* (1957).[46] He situated the perception of medieval royal power along with coronation ceremonies, *ordines*, and royal funerals, in the context of political theology. His main postulate was the distinction between the two bodies of the medieval sovereign. One was the natural and mortal body, the other the political and hence personified, mystical and immortal one. His conclusions, depicting the transition from *Christ-centered* power through *law-centered* power to *man-centered* power in the Middle Ages remain to this day a fascinating and stimulating way of understanding the medieval state and its symbolic presentation.

3.2   *Rituals in Medieval Studies—The Current State of Research*

A characteristic feature of modern medieval studies is an interest in non-verbal forms of communication such as rituals and gestures, symbols and symbolic acts.[47] However, this orientation is fairly recent: beginning in the 1990s and, especially in the early 21st century, there has been a boom in scholarship

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44   Walter Ullmann, *Principles of Government and Politics in the Middle Ages* (London: Methuen, 1961).

45   Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae. A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Mediaeval Ruler Worship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958).

46   Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*.

47   Hans W. Goetz, *Moderne Mediävistik. Stand und Perspektiven der Mittelalterforschung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1999), p. 362. For symbols in medieval art see Umberto Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2002).

exploring rituals and ritualized forms of expression in medieval society.[48] As early as the 1980s Janet L. Nelson, a pioneer in this field of study, presented highly accomplished and meticulous analyses of rituals in early medieval (especially Carolingian) society. Her research centred on Carolingian royal rituals (coronation, courtly and funeral) as well as on detailed study of inauguration rituals and the related *ordines coronationis*.[49]

An important strand of research focuses on rituals of power, which include not only coronation ceremonies but also rituals intended to confirm the sovereign's status, legitimise his position, and re-enact his power. These issues have been the subject of a number of interdisciplinary volumes of essays that cover a wide time-span and aim primarily to clarify the relationship between ritual and power in a particular society. That is why these works explore a variety of ritualized guises in which displays of a sovereign's majesty have occurred (such as coronation, anointment, *adventus regis*, papal ceremonial).[50] Other interdisciplinary works attempt to identify common features within dissimilar cultural and temporal complexes.[51]

Several seminal publications continue an earlier line of exploring royal symbolism and symbolic attributes of power in the Middle Ages, building on the aforementioned pioneering works in the area (Schramm, Kantorowicz, Ullmann). These publications focus on state symbols,[52] ritual and symbols of

48   For an outline of the discussion between two most important strands in medieval studies, the French and German, see *Les tendances actuelles de l'histoire du Moyen Âge en France et en Allemagne*. ed. Jean – Claude Schmitt and Otto Oexle (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2002), pp. 231–281.

49   Janet L. Nelson, *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London/Ronceverte: Hambledon Press, 1986); Janet L. Nelson, "The Lord's anointed and the people's choice: Carolingian royal ritual," in *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*. eds. David Cannadine – Simon Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 137–180; Janet L. Nelson, "Carolingian Royal Funerals," in *Rituals of Power. From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*. ed. Frans Theuws (Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2000), pp. 131–183.

50   *Coronations. Medieval and Early Modern Monarchic Ritual*. ed. János M. Bak (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

51   *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*. eds. David Cannadine – Simon Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Wilentz, *Rites of Power*; *Investitur- und Krönungsrituale. Herrschaftseinsetzungen im kulturellen Vergleich*. ed. Stefan Weinfurter (Köln/Weimar/Wien: Böhlau, 2005).

52   János M. Bak, "Medieval Symbology of the State: Percy E. Schramm's Contribution," *Viator*, 4 (1973), pp. 33–63.

monarchic power,[53] as well as on royal entries into cities.[54] Communication in (late) medieval cities presents a particularly rewarding area of research in terms of observing ritualized forms of behaviour. By comparison with rural society, the urban environment has always been more sensitive to rituals and public displays of identity.[55] Issues relating to royal residences and seats, courtly culture and the associated courtly festivities undoubtedly form a separate chapter of research today. Although the late Middle Ages dominate in this respect, the study of early medieval court rituals has recently yielded some valuable insights.[56] Some scholars have also explored the meaning of rituals in oral, written, and non-verbal communication, as well as the presentation of rituals through images and gestures, for example.[57]

The terminology itself has undergone an interesting shift. Initially historians insisted (or at least tried to insist) on distinguishing between terms describing similar or almost identical phenomena—ritual, rite, ceremony. For example, applying an anthropological categorization, Karl Leyser distinguished between ritual, which typically resulted in a change for the better and contained an element of magic on the one hand, and ceremony on the other, which supposedly

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53   Sergio Bertelli, *The King's Body. Sacred Rituals of Power in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001); *Die Macht des Königs. Herrschaft in Europa vom Frühmittelaletr bis in die Neuzeit*. ed. Bernhard Jussen (München: C.H. Beck, 2005); Yves Sassier, *Royauté et idéologie au Moyen Âge. Bas Empire, monde franc, France (IVᵉ–XIIᵉ siècle)* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2001); *Représentation, pouvoir et royauté à la fin du Moyen Âge*. ed. Joel Blanchard (Paris: Picard, 1995); *Monotheistic Kingship. The Medieval Variants*. ed. Aziz Al-Azmeh – János M. Bak (Budapest: CEU Press, 2004).

54   Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Gordon Kipling, *Enter the King. Theatre, Liturgy and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Joël Blanchard, "Le spectacle du rite: les entrées royales," *Revue Historique*, 105/3 (2003), pp. 475–519; Bernard Guenée – Françoise Lehoux, *Les entrées royales françaises de 1328 à 1515* (Paris: CNRS, 1968), especially pp. 7–30.

55   *Symbolic Communication in Late Medieval Towns*. ed. Jacoba van Leeuwen (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2006); Peter Arnade, *Realms of Ritual. Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1996); Elodie Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La ville des cérémonies. Essai sur la communication politique dans les anciens Pays-Bas bourguignons* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004).

56   Joachim Bumke, *Courtly Culture. Literature and Society in the High Middle Ages* (New York: Overlook Press, 2000); Werner Paravicini, *Die ritterlich-höfische Kultur des Mittelalters* (München: Oldenbourg, 1994); *Feste und Feiern im Mittelalter*. ed. Detlef Altenburg (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1991).

57   Jean-Claude Schmitt's treatment of medieval gestures remains very stimulating. Jean-Claude Schmitt, *La raison des gestes dans l'Occident médiéval* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990).

depicted the existing state of affairs, a social situation, or a set of ideas, i.e. it was conservative in nature. In this reading, girding by sword was a ritual while festive *crown-wearing* was merely a ceremony.[58] Similarly, for Geoffrey Koziol, ambiguity, opposition, and emotional force lay at the heart and soul of ritual. If the act under examination lacked these components, it was merely a ceremony.[59] Another approach associates rituals with sacred attributes, which distinguish it from ceremony, which is profane.[60]

Nowadays, however, the predominant view is that drawing strict distinctions between ritual, rite, and ceremony is not an essential precondition for the study of these symbolic forms of human behaviour. The principal champion of this approach, Gerd Althoff, does not believe that it is necessary, or indeed feasible, to draw a clear line between the term ritual and alternative terms such as rite, custom, ceremony or tradition. In his view, when studying ritualized actions in the Middle Ages, it is far more useful to be aware of the shifting and fuzzy boundaries between these phenomena.[61] What this means in practice is that a single ritual act (for example, *adventus regis*) can be treated in the same paragraph as a ritual, a rite or a ceremony.[62]

In contemporary medieval studies a functionalist understanding of ritual has tended to prevail, which places it in the context of medieval symbolic communication. The result of this tacit consensus is a fairly rich body of innovative work exploring issues such as ritual communication, royal representation, courtly ceremonies and symbols of power.[63] However, this functionalist approach is being increasingly criticized by scholars who question its legitimacy and its ability to provide an overall understanding of the importance and role of rituals in the Middle Ages. We can thus basically speak of two dominant

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58   Karl Leyser, "Ritual, Ceremony and Gesture: Ottonian Germany," in Karl Leyser, *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe. The Carolingian and Ottonian Centuries* (London/Rio Grande: Hambledon Press, 1994), pp. 190–191.

59   Geoffrey Koziol, *Begging Pardon and Favor. Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 316.

60   Cf. Pavlína Rychterová, "Kam s ním? Rituál a ceremonie v medievistice," in *Rituály, ceremonie a festivity ve střední Evropě 14. a 15. století. Colloquia mediaevalia Pragensia 12.* ed. Martin Nodl – František Šmahel (Praha: Filosofia, 2009), p. 428.

61   Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, pp. 11–12.

62   Zbigniew Dalewski, *Ritual and Politics. Writing the History of a Dynastic Conflict in Medieval Poland* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), pp. 38–39.

63   Rychterová, "Rituály", pp. 19–20. A select bibliography is provided at the beginning of the next chapter.

approaches to ritual within present-day medieval studies. These will be presented in more detail in the following paragraphs.[64]

The leading representatives of the first, functionalist, approach are Gerd Althoff and Geoffrey Koziol, currently the two most influential medievalists. Over the past two decades Althoff's Münster school has studied every form of symbolic communication and ritual action in the Middle Ages.[65] Althoff, whose work explores ritual as an instrument of public (particularly non-verbal) communication as well as an instrument of exercising power, has devised the concept of the *rules of the game in politics* (*Spielregeln der Politik*). Although these rules were not laid down in any normative texts, their existence can be deduced from surviving, especially narrative, sources.[66]

Rituals were intended to serve the purpose of validating the social order as well as recalling past and confirming future events, by connecting various social, professional or kinship groups. Moreover, they were capable of legitimizing certain political events and emergent situations. In the Middle Ages various stages of a conflict (initiation, development, and conclusion and, in particular, resolution) were ritualized. Rituals were used to articulate submission, reconciliation, and acceptance or to present various demands. They were characterized by their public form and by voluntary participation of those who performed them, which gave rise to their future binding character. Rituals—especially in the period before the 12th century (and in Central Europe, including Hungary, right up to the 14th century)—were used in lieu of written documents and oaths.

The very fact of voluntary participation lent rituals their binding character and made them universally acceptable. Althoff's work stresses the variability and flexibility of rituals, which certainly did not follow formal and rigid rules (he rejects the term 'empty ritual') but rather represented viable and

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64   For a recent summary of the main arguments, see Geoffrey Koziol, "The Dangers of Polemic. Is ritual still an interesting topic of historical study?," *Early Medieval Europe*, 11/4 (2002), pp. 367–388; Philippe Buc, "The Monster and the Critics: a Ritual Reply," *Early Medieval Europe*, 15/4 (2007), pp. 441–452.

65   Gerd Althoff – Ludwig Siep, "Symbolische Kommunikation und gesellschaftliche Wertesysteme vom Mittelalter bis zur Französischen Revolution. Der neue Münsterer SFB 496," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 34 (2000), pp. 393–412.

66   The main function of these rules was to maintain the established order of society: "Solange jedoch jeder diese Regeln akzeptierte und mitspielte, garantieren sie die Funktionsfähigkeit der Lebensordnungen." Gerd Althoff, "Demonstration und Inszenierung. Spielregeln der Kommunikation in mittelalterlicher Öffentlichkeit," in Gerd Althoff, *Spielregeln der Politik im Mittelalter. Kommunikation in Frieden und Fehde* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997), pp. 229–257 (257).

constantly changing forms of interaction among various sectors of medieval society. Rituals had to be agreed in advance and their process approved by both parties. That is why it was crucial for the meaning of these ceremonies to be unequivocal and easily understandable.[67]

The issue of ambiguity or the lack of ambiguity of rituals for medieval man is where Althoff disagrees with another proponent of this school of thought, Koziol. For the latter, as mentioned earlier, the ambiguity and polysemy of rituals is their fundamental feature. That is why they were meant to remain unclear both to contemporaries and modern historians. He believes that ritual is essentially polysemous—each ritual is capable of expressing a number of possible meanings, some of which may sometimes even contradict each other.[68] Althoff, on the other hand, resolves this contradiction by claiming that each gesture, symbol and action derives its meaning from the context in which it is used. For example, bestowing a kiss undoubtedly had several possible symbolic meanings. Nevertheless, every observer knew what specific meaning the bestowal of a kiss communicated in the context of the ending a conflict, what it meant for a vanquished man to kiss the victor's feet, or what symbolic information an emperor conveyed by kissing a Pope's feet during their meeting.[69]

The fiercest critic of this approach to ritual in medieval studies is Philippe Buc. Opposing the very use of the term ritual in the context of medieval historiography,[70] he claims that the term has been applied to practices that have been identified as rituals only by 20th century scholars and that it is a patently tentative and heuristic concept due to the fact that present-day ceremony (ritual) is not identical with the medieval term *cerimonia*. Buc attempts to analyse the accounts of ritual in the sources as well as the way they were interpreted by 20th century scholars, believing that the models the latter have been using originate between 1500 and 1970 and thus reflect their own views rather than those of the medieval rituals' protagonists. That is why he

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67 Gerd Althoff, "The Variability of Rituals in the Middle Ages," in *Medieval Concepts of the Past. Ritual, Memory, Historiography*. eds. Gerd Althoff – Patrick Geary – Johannes Fried (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 71–87; Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale.*

68 Koziol, *Begging Pardon*, pp. 307–308, 316. Rituals are also considered to be polysemous by E. Muir. Cf. Muir, *Ritual*, p. 6. Koziol questions the concept of medieval *Spielregeln*, which he considers too flexible and to have many exceptions. In his view it is more appropriate to speak of certain patterns, principles, or codes than about firmly set rules. Koziol, "The Dangers of Polemic", p. 381.

69 Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, p. 24.

70 Philippe Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual. Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), especially pages 1–12.

considers it questionable whether these models are applicable to the study of medieval rituals.[71]

Buc believes that the sources are of limited value because they were created artificially, the overwhelming majority being penned by clerics offering an immediate interpretation of events. These limitations result in 'dangers' (*dangers of rituals*), arising especially from the ambiguity of rituals as well as their interpretation by the sources. Therefore, we can distinguish between so-called good rituals (the ones that really took place and worked) and bad ones (those that were prone to manipulation or that failed). What we are dealing with is, therefore, *ritual-in-text* rather than in real action, *ritual-in-performance* which in fact legitimizes certain actions in line with what the authors of the sources (and those who commissioned them) wished or imagined. Philippe Buc distinguishes four narrative techniques used by authors in medieval sources: (1) rejecting the transcendental meaning (mystery) of rituals performed by their rivals; (2) doing the exact opposite in the case of their heroes or benefactors, whose rituals were imbued with mystery; (3) engaging in a dispute about interpretation—classifying the ritual either as sacral or secular; and (4) covering up this interpretation dispute by legitimizing their heroes.[72]

As a result of the great number of publications by medievalists studying rituals in so many areas of medieval studies, some critics have begun to refer to a kind of panritualism. Peter Dinzelbacher has been particularly critical of Althoff's functionalist approach, denouncing the modern use of the term ritual across all areas of medieval studies, especially where the sources do not contain any depictions of ritual whatsoever. While admitting that a universally applicable definition of the terms ritual, rite and ceremony does not exist, he is also critical of the attempts to completely eradicate the term ritual from research. He rejects Buc's arguments on the grounds that at present we are not involved in a discourse with a *homo medievalis* but rather with contemporary historians. The fact that research of the kind carried out today and its terminology did not exist at that time does not mean that the term ritual itself did not exist. Dinzelbacher's specific objections relate to the area of showing emotions (whether staged or spontaneous) as well as to the issue of effectiveness of healing rituals (*Heilrituale*). He supports his claims with examples from courtly literature, narrative sources and anthropological theory.[73]

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71   Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual*, pp. 159–261.

72   Philippe Buc, "Ritual and Interpretation: the Early Medieval Case," *Early Medieval Europe*, 9/2 (2000), pp. 186–201; Buc, "Political Ritual", pp. 271–272.

73   Peter Dinzelbacher, *Warum weint der König? Eine Kritik des mediävistischen Panritualismus* (Badenweiler: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Bachmann, 2009), pp. 8–9, 14, 15, 79–81, 89.

An attempt to reconcile these contradictory approaches has recently been made by Zbigniew Dalewski, who pointed out that they are not, in fact, fundamentally incompatible. Based on a study of the evolution of a dynastic conflict in medieval Poland he sought to illustrate the use of ritual in political reality and its depiction in contemporary sources as a symbiotic process. Within this process the reality of the text overlaps with the reality of the action, generating a complex of political activity. Ritual thus shapes reality in practical political terms as well as at the level of the narrative material depicting the events.[74]

In this sense we can echo Althoff, who talks of an intermingling of cultural and descriptive patterns (*Kulturmuster* and *Erzählmuster*). Although the writing of medieval authors was partisan, we should recognise that their stories have a considerable degree of authenticity and can be quite illuminating, since they described generally known cultural frameworks of (ritual) actions, embedded in tradition. In this respect it may not be crucial to provide irrefutable proof that certain events did in fact happen exactly in the way they are described in the sources (which would in any event be impossible in many cases).

Nevertheless, the stories told by medieval authors can be used in our questions about the forms and functions of public communication because the authors telling these stories had to consider the common rules and customs governing behaviour if they wanted their contemporaries to believe them. The description had to correspond to the usual practices of communication. These stories can be used for the investigation of these practices—but not for the history of events.[75]

3.3   *Rituals and Symbolic Communication in the Middle Ages*

As already mentioned, it is not necessarily vital (or, indeed, possible) to come up with a universal definition of ritual that could apply to every type of action of a ritual nature. For this reason in this book we do not seek to articulate our own definition, since this would in the end amount to carrying coals to Newcastle. We shall therefore employ an open definition of ritual and limit ourselves to defining the given phenomenon within the context of this study. For our purposes it will thus be useful to define the object of our research within the given setting, i.e. medieval society in Europe from approximately 1000 to 1300. Two framework definitions of the term ritual by acclaimed medieval scholars seem to be most appropriate for this period:

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74   Dalewski, *Ritual and Politics*, pp. 1–12, 189–194.

75   Althoff, "The Variability of Rituals", p. 87; Althoff, "Humiliatio", pp. 39–51.

> Ceremony (ritual) is an ordered sequence involving gestures, sounds (words or music) and objects, performed by a certain social group with some symbolic intent. (Jean-Claude Schmitt)[76]

> We talk about rituals when actions, or rather chains of actions, of a complex nature are repeated by actors in certain circumstances in the same or similar ways, and, if this happens deliberately, with the conscious goal of familiarity. In the minds of both actors and spectators, an ideal type of ritual exists that takes on a material form that is easily recognized in its various concrete manifestations. (Gerd Althoff)[77]

What matters in our case is exploring the way ritual occurred, functioned, and was constituted in medieval European society in the early and high Middle Ages. More specifically, we are interested in ritual as a medium of communication in three spheres. First, we will explore ritual as a form of public communication. Second, we will look at the use of ritual in legitimizing specific actions, monarchic rule and power, validating status and relationships, as well as a way of constantly renewing the requisite symbolic complexes (representation). The third crucial role played by rituals as we understand them is their capacity to bring about a certain desired state or structure that adheres to traditionally established norms (this sphere includes the use of ritual in conflict resolution).

We regard as a key feature the significance of ritual as a (primarily symbolic and non-verbal) phenomenon of communication in medieval society. The term communication is not an area traditionally explored in medieval studies as opposed to, for example, in religious history, cultural history or history of medieval symbolism. The earliest studies addressing communication in (traditional) societies were written in the 1960s but they have since become significantly more frequent and widespread so that, by the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, bibliographies of works on communication number some 6,800 individual items including 1,100 articles on rituals and symbols. Nevertheless, research into communication was not integrated into medieval studies until the late 1970s.[78] Currently this area of research is quite extensive with as many as 50 different types of communication identified by scholarly publications.

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76 Jean-Claude Schmitt, "Rites" in *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'Occident médiéval.* ed. Jacques Le Goff – Jean-Claude Schmitt (Paris: Fayard 1999), p. 968.

77 Althoff, "The Variability of Rituals", p. 71.

78 Marco Mostert, "New Approaches to Medieval Communication?" in *New Approaches to Medieval Communication* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 15–16. See also Marco Mostert *A Bibliography of Works on Medieval Communication* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012).

In the context of our study it will be particularly important to focus on all the components of the communication process, i.e. the communicated message (code), participants in the communication process (the sender and receiver), the circumstances (place and time), as well as the means of communication (rituals, gestures, words, objects).[79]

In recent years historians have focused particularly on various forms of communication and its role in society, such as forms of verbal dialogue, information exchange through correspondence, the relationship between verbal communication and written culture, non-verbal public communication, encounters between individuals and environments, forms of political performance, and the public sharing of information.[80]

The most advanced concept of symbolic ritual communication is probably the one developed by Gerd Althoff. In addition to the two traditional forms of communication, oral and written, he regards ritual communication as a third form, of equal importance to the first two, which exploited a ritual repertory of non-verbal attributes as its tools. He sees a further key distinction between public and non-public (private) communication.[81] In the Middle Ages every ritual took place in the public arena (or rather, before witnesses), since in this period not even prayers to saints or penitential rituals can be regarded as private and secret actions. That is why their public character is of extraordinary importance for ritual communication, as it ensured that it was relevant and binding.[82]

Since rituals were a type of highly symbolic and allegorical action they need to be explored simultaneously at two levels. The first is the use of rituals in the actual political discourse of medieval society. The second, as already mentioned, is the depiction and interpretation (and often conscious manipulation) of ritualized performance in contemporary sources. A combination of these two approaches will enable us to reconstruct the world of rituals and symbolic communication in medieval Europe.

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79   Cf. Mostert, *New Approaches*, pp. 18–19.

80   Goetz, *Moderne Mediävistik*, pp. 361–362.

81   Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, pp. 18–19.

82   Which does not mean that the prior arrangements could not be made behind closed doors or within a small circle of those mainly involved.

Rituals of Power and Symbols of Monarchy

The term rituals of power covers a rich and extremely varied complex of symbolic acts, public displays of power and often extravagant festivities accompanying these ceremonies. Symbols of monarchy found perhaps their most conspicuous expression in the inauguaration rituals that provide the ceremonial framework for a sovereign's elevation to the sacral status of kingship. In medieval Europe this typically comprised enthronement, anointment and crowning ceremonies, recorded in ecclesiastical orders (*ordines*), which have been studied for many years.[1] Ironically enough, there are almost no surviving records that depict all the phases of inauguration rituals (coronations in particular) in the medieval Hungary of the Árpád era (1000–1301). Throughout the entire early and high Middle Ages, we have to rely on sketchy references and vague clues for information on investitures in the Árpád dynasty. Hungarian coronations can be studied only from the late Middle Ages, beginning with the 14th century and, in greater detail, from the 15th century onwards. It is in narrative sources from this period that the earliest more detailed descriptions of coronations survive, as well as in the first pontifical that includes the 1438 *ordo coronationis*. However, many historians believe that it can be safely assumed that the *Pontificale Romanum*, compiled by bishop William Durandus and widely used in Europe, had come into use in Hungary by the time of Louis the Great (1342–1382).[2] The concept of the Holy Crown and the resulting unique

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1   *Die Ordines für Weihe und Krönung des Kaisers und der Kaiserin*. ed. Reinhard Elze (Hannover, 1960); *Ordines Coronationis Franciae*. ed. Richard A. Jackson (Philadelphia, 1995); Paul L. Ward, "The Coronation Ceremony in Mediaeval England." *Speculum*, 14/2 (1939), pp. 160–178; Bak, Coronations; Eduard Eichmann, *Die Kaiserkrönung im Abendland: Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters* (Würzburg: Echter, 1942). For Central Europe see *Stát, státnost a rituály přemyslovského věku*. ed. Martin Wihoda (Brno: Matice Moravská, 2006); Martin Wihoda, *První česká království* (Praha: NLN, 2015); *Lesk královského majestátu ve středověku*. eds. Lenka Bobková – Mlada Holá (Praha/Litomyšl: Paseka, 2005); *Imagines Potestatis. Rytuały, symbole i konteksty fabularne władzy zwierchniej. Polska X–XV w.* ed. Jacek Banaszkiewicz (Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN, 1994); Josef Cibulka, *Český řád korunovační a jeho původ* (Praha, 1934); *Korunovační řád českých králů*. ed. Jiří Kuthan – Miroslav Šmied (Praha: Univerzita Karlova, 2009).

2   Fundamental works on the coronation of Hungarian kings were written several decades ago. For example Bartoniek, *A magyar királykoronázások*, pp. 8–84; Emma Bartoniek, "A magyar királlyáavatáshoz," *Századok*, 57–58 (1923–1924), pp. 297–303; Fügedi, "Coronation",

symbolic value of the Hungarian royal insignia played a particularly important role in the monarchic symbolism of Hungarian kings. Traditionally, a candidate had to meet three basic conditions to be regarded as the legitimate King of Hungary: he had to be crowned with the Holy Crown, the coronation had to be performed by the archbishop of Esztergom, and it had to take place in the Virgin Mary Basilica in Székesfehérvár. The first to articulate these conditions was Helene Kottanner, servant and confidante of Queen Elizabeth of Hungary, in her memoirs (1439–1440).[3] Due to the limited chronological scope of this monograph we are not able to go into these issues more deeply; they have in any case been dealt with elsewhere in great detail. We shall focus on those types and forms of rituals of power that can be documented from the extant sources and subsequently interpreted against the backdrop of ritual communication of Hungarian monarchs in the early and high Middle Ages. In the following chapter we shall examine all rituals of power that present-day historiography (both Hungarian and Slovak) has almost completely overlooked, as well as various forms of public symbolic communication relating to the figure of the Hungarian monarch.

1   Three Types of Coronation

In January 1158 Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa granted royal privileges to Vladislav II, Duke of Bohemia. The key privilege was the permission to wear a royal crown on the same high holidays as the emperor himself, namely

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p. 164; János M. Bak, "Mittelalterliche Königskrönung in Ungarn (Quellenübersicht)," in *Königtum und Stände in Ungarn im 14.–16. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1973), pp. 165–190.

3   *Insignia Regni Hungariae*; Deér, *Die heilige Krone*; Magda Bárány, *Die Sankt Stephans Krone und die Insignien des Königreichs Ungarn* (Wien: Herold, 1961); Benda – Fügedi, *Tausend Jahre Stephanskrone*; Imre Bertényi, *A magyar korona története* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978); Eva Kovács – Zsuzsa Lovag, *The Hungarian Crown and Other Regalia* (Budapest: Corvina, 1988); Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen*, pp. 730–754. Karpat, *Corona regni*; Endre Tóth – Károly Szelényi, *Die heilige Krone von Ungarn* (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1996); László Péter, "The Holy Crown of Hungary, Visible and Invisible," *Slavonic and East European Review*, 81/3 (2003), pp. 421–510. The words of the count palatine Michael Ország from 1471 are symptomatic: "…whoever you see crowned by the Holy Crown, even if it were an ox, worship him, consider him to be the Holy King and respect him (… *quemcumque sacra Corona coronatum videris, etiam si bos fuerit, adorato, et pro sacrosancto rege ducito, et observato*)." *Antonii Bonfini Asculani Rerum Hungaricarum decades Libri XLV*. ed. D.-C. Andreas Bel (Lipsiae, 1771). Decadis IV, liber III, p. 577; *The Memoirs of Helene Kottanner*. ed. Maya Bijvoet Williamson. (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1988), p. 43.

at Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. In addition, as a sign of respect for the patron saints of Bohemia, the privilege was also extended to the feast days of SS. Wenceslas and Adalbert.[4] In this instance we are dealing with one of the three forms of medieval coronation or, to be more precise, one of the occasions when the King appeared in the full splendour of majesty, wearing the royal crown on his head. There are crucial distinctions between the various forms of displaying the royal majesty and sacral power.

The first and most important form used by medieval monarchs is the coronation in its most commonly known form—i.e. the solemn, legally binding, and unrepeatable elevation to royal status. This occurred most commonly as one of several ceremonies comprising the whole inauguration ritual complex. For greater clarity we shall refer to this simply as coronation or by the German term *Erstkrönung*. What primarily distinguished this act from other, somewhat similar ones, was the fact that it represented a monarch's original elevation to power, accompanied by a number of liturgical and secular ceremonies.[5] Its most important constituent in the medieval world was the king's anointment by the *coronator*, a role traditionally performed by an archbishop or a bishop.[6] It was the act of anointment and the fact that an initial coronation could take place only once that distinguished it most clearly from its ritual parallels. An ecclesiastical anointment by the chrism and the placing of the crown on the king's head were the most prominent attributes of sacral royal power.[7] The Middle Ages were a period when all important information and signals had to

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4 *"Decernimus itaque et inrefragabili lege statuimus, ut liceat prefato duci Boemie Wadizlao illis temporibus, quibus nos coronam et diadema glorie portamus, in nativitate domini videlicet et in pascha et in penthecosten, circulum portare, et amplius in festivitate videlicet sancti Venzelai et sancti Adelberti, eo quod illas sollempnitates propter patronos suos maiori reverentia et celebritate tota Boe[m]ia veneretur." Friderici I. Constitutiones*, Nr. 170, MGH Const. 1, pp. 236–237. The elevation of Vladislav II to royal status is a matter of debate both as regards its date and its significance. Cf. Martin Wihoda, "První česká království," in *Stát, státnost a rituály přemyslovského věku*. ed. Martin Wihoda (Brno: Matice Moravská, 2006), pp. 85–89; Martin Wihoda, *Morava v době knížecí* (Praha: NLN, 2010), p. 219; Josef Žemlička, *Čechy v době knížecí* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny, 1997), pp. 237–239.

5 Kurt U. Jäschke, "Frühmittelalterliche Festkrönungen? Überlegungen zu Terminologie und Methode," *Historische Zeitschrift*, 211/3 (1970), pp. 559–561; Cornelius A. Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning. The Development of the Latin Ritual for the Anointing of Kings and the Coronation of an Emperor before the Eleventh Century* (Groningen/Djakarta: J.B. Wolters, 1957), especially pages 107–126; Bak, *Coronations*; Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, pp. 239–374.

6 See the headword "Salbung" in *Lexikon des Mittelalters 1–9* (München-Zürich: Verlag J.B. Metzler, 1977–1998), especially volume 7, pp. 1289–1292; Bertelli, *The King's Body*, pp. 22–28.

7 Franz R. Erkens, *Herrschersakralität im Mittelalter. Von den Anfängen bis zum Investiturstreit* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2006), pp. 166–167; also Bloch, *Les Rois thaumaturges*, pp. 59–73. Cf: Jean-Paul Roux, *Le roi. Mythes et symboles* (Paris: Fayard, 1995).

be put on public display, and those that had already been performed had to be reaffirmed. Since monarchs could be anointed only once in their lifetime, they used the solemn wearing of the crown to demonstrate their majesty and, in particular, to emphasize the divine origin of royal power.[8]

Several depictions of coronations and of rulers' 'royal' appearances (or appearances involving insignia and festive clothing) survive irrespective of time and place. Depending on the specific occasion and circumstances, several variations of these festival crownings can be found. The terminological distinction is fairly complex and there is no consensus among historians on this issue. Thus historians focusing on the early and high Middle Ages have gradually come to use a number of related terms: *Erstkrönung, Festkrönung, Mitkrönung, Beikrönung, Unter-Krone-gehen*, and *Kronentragen*, amongst others. Ernst H. Kantorowicz suggested that it would be useful to distinguish between two main types of festive coronations (*coronamenta*) and public performances by crowned monarchs. In his view, the basic distinction that should be drawn is that between an actual repeated action of placing the royal crown upon a monarch's head (*festival crowning, coronations*) and routine appearances involving the wearing of the crown (*festival Crown-wearing*) without explicit reference to coronation. Admittedly, the sources do not always allow us to identify such clearly demarcated boundaries. Nevertheless, this distinction appears to be most apposite and will be the one applied in our research.[9]

The most frequently occurring form of ritual was the one to which historians refer as 'Crown-wearing' or *Unter-Krone-gehen* (loosely translated as 'public appearance while wearing a crown').[10] What appears, at first sight, to be a trivial detail of ceremony or protocol is, in fact, a key component of the paraphernalia of symbolic communication in medieval society. The close interconnection between monarchical and ecclesiastical power, the interweaving of monarchical and liturgical ceremonies and, last but not least, the sovereigns' predilection for continually stressing the sacral character of their power demanded an appropriate presentation. This manifested itself, among other things, in the rulers' feeling

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8   See Dušan Zupka, "Power of rituals and rituals of power: Religious and secular rituals in the political culture of medieval Kingdom of Hungary," in *Historiography in Motion. Slovak Contributions to the 21st International Congress of Historical Sciences*. eds. Roman Holec – Rastislav Kožiak (Bratislava/Banská Bystrica: State Scientific Library, 2010), pp. 29–42; Erkens, *Herrschersakralität im Mittelalter*, p. 168.

9   Jäschke, "Frühmittelalterliche Festkrönungen?", pp. 556–588, especially pp. 567–571; Carlrichard Brühl, "Kronen- und Krönungsbrauch im frühen und hohen Mittelalter," *Historische Zeitschrift*, 234/1 (1982), pp. 1–31. Also Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, pp. 92–101; Carlrichard Brühl, "Fränkischer Krönungsbrauch und das Problem der 'Festkrönungen'," *Historische Zeitschrift*, 194/2 (1962), p. 269.

10   Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, p. 92.

compelled to appear in festive apparel and full majesty on every festive occasion, be it a church holiday, a meeting with another monarch, or when visiting an important place of pilgrimage. This phenomenon, which first appears in the Carolingian period, gradually spread throughout entire Christian Europe.

The gradual growth of sacralization and liturgization of monarchic power in the 10th and 11th centuries went hand in hand with the sacralization of royal insignia. Rulers of the Ottonian and Salian dynasties in particular were constantly engaged in dressing their public actions in ritual apparel with a strong emphasis on sacrality.[11] Sometimes it was not sufficient to appear in public in full pomp and circumstance. Instead, the act of inauguration—or rather, its repeatable element, the placing of the crown upon the monarch's head—had to be performed repeatedly. This is known as festival crowning (*Festkrönung*).[12]

With increasing frequency the role of *coronator* came to be reserved for high-ranking church dignitaries. Although, of course, unlike the actual coronation, it was not a state-constitutional act, a festival crowning was nevertheless an important ritual, which helped to re-enact the sacral moment of royal investiture, restoring social unity and cohesiveness around the figure of the sovereign. It was often performed in the wake of various conflicts, dynastic strife or whenever a monarch remarried, necessitating the coronation of a new queen. It was a way of demonstrating and communicating a message of social harmony and stability of power.[13]

Just as the dates for wearing the crown were firmly fixed, as shown in examples from Germany and Bohemia, the venue of the ceremonies also played a key role. They were typically held in important residences where the monarchs came to celebrate the most important holidays, such as bishops' seats, prominent monasteries, castles or other locations used for meetings between the monarch and his nobles. The English monarchs took this to the greatest extreme. In 1087 William the Conqueror decreed that the King of England, wearing the royal crown on his head, would appear annually in three firmly fixed locations: Gloucester at Christmas, Winchester at Easter and Westminster at Pentecost.[14] In the case of Hungary no such direct evidence[15] survives for the use of these means of communication, comparable to the occasion of privileges granted to Vladislav II, the King of Bohemia mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, extant narrative sources make it possible to confirm the existence of these modes of

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11   Leyser, "Ritual, Ceremony and Gesture", pp. 189–213.

12   Brühl, "Kronen- und Krönungsbrauch", pp. 6–13; Jäschke, "Frühmittelalterliche Festkrönungen?", p. 559.

13   Erkens, *Herrschersakralität im Mittelalter*, p. 167.

14   Jäschke, "Frühmittelalterliche Festkrönungen?", p. 558.

15   Compare Chapter 5, footnotes 119 and 120.

communication and clarify how they contributed to the functioning of political communication in Hungary under the Árpád dynasty.

The first example concerns the first Hungarian king, Stephen I (Saint Stephen, 1000–1038). In April 1001 he met the Polish Prince Bolesław I (the Brave) at Esztergom for talks and to affirm their reconciliation. After their meeting the rulers exchanged a kiss of peace and proceeded to the basilica, walking hand in hand, to celebrate mass. In the chronicler's words the Hungarian king turned up at this event in his full majesty:

> King Stephen, adorned with a sacred robe and royal crown, shone as a sun among the stars as he followed behind the procession, towering above all the throng shoulder-high.[16]

This clearly documents the ritual form of *Crown-wearing*. By this action Stephen unequivocally demonstrated his power as well as his hierarchical supremacy over his northern neighbour.

Another case relates to events that took place shortly after the battle of Ménfő, mentioned in the introduction. After defeating Samuel Aba, the German monarch Henry III reinstated his protégé and banished king, Peter Orseolo in Székesfehérvár on the Hungarian throne:

> He placed the royal crown on Peter's head again and by royal ordination decked him out in St Stephen's regalia. By his own hand he led him into the Basilica of the Mother of God, the eternal Virgin Mary, and placed him upon the royal throne ...[17]

In this case the significance of the ritual is particularly important. The banished King Peter needed to demonstrate his reinstatement to the royal rank and the legitimacy of his power in a ceremonial way. Since his rule had been

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16   *"Stephano ornatu sacro vestito et dyademate regio coronato ut 'sole inter stellas perful-genti', post sacram processionem gradienti, super omnem populum ab humero et sursum eminenti."* Chronicon Hungarico-polonicum, c. 7, SRH 2, p. 311. The story is depicted by a considerably later source. About the Polish-Hungarian chronicle and its use for historical interpretation see Chapter 5, footnote 33.

17   *"Petrum regem regali corona plenarie restitutum et sacris insignibus sancti regis Stephani more regio decoratum in regali throno manu sua deducens, in basilica gloriose genitricis Dei semper Virginis Marie regaliter sedere fecit ..."* Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV, c. 77–78, SRH 1, pp. 333–334. Likewise the Annals of Altaich: *"Inde simul pergunt, Wizenburg veni-unt magno comitatu, regio excepti apparatu, ibique caesar Petrum regiis fascibus ves-tivit et manu sua ducens in sede sua restituit ..."* Annales Altahenses maiores ad a. 1044, MGH SSrG 4, p. 37.

interrupted by the reign of Samuel Aba, Peter had to symbolically re-enact his inauguration to the throne of Hungary. And since his success was primarily due to the military support of the German king, it was Henry III who played the central role, one that could not have been performed by Hungarian bishops, who had been involved in Peter's banishment three years previously. Later, in 1046, the bishops contributed to his ultimate downfall by lending their support to King Andrew I (1046–1060).[18] It is clear from the surviving accounts that Henry III handed the royal insignia (including the crown) along with the Kingdom of Hungary to Peter as his vassal. This is also confirmed by the vassal ritual that took place the following year.[19]

ILLUSTRATION 2   *The coronation of King Andrew I as the King of Hungary in 1046. Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle (14th century).*
REPRODUCED BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE ORSZÁGOS SZÉCHÉNYI KÖNYVTÁR.

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18   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, SRH 1, pp. 328, 339; *Annales Altahenses maiores ad a. 1042*, MGH SSrG 4, p. 31; Bálint Hóman, *Geschichte des ungarischen Mittelalters. I. Band* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1940), pp. 248–254.

19   See Chapter 3, footnote 57.

A very similar situation occurred 19 years later. Following the death of King Béla I (1060–1063), who banished the legitimate successor to the throne and his co-ruler Solomon (who had been crowned as early as 1058, while his father King Andrew I was still alive, and who ruled independently from 1063 to 1074), the German king Henry IV (1056–1106) set out for Hungary in the autumn of 1063 and, just like his father in the case of Orseolo, personally and actively participated in Solomon's reinstatement to the paternal throne. Henry IV performed the enthronement of the (crowned) Solomon in Székesfehérvár.[20] The acts of placing the crown on the king's head and anointment are not mentioned in connection with the investiture of Peter Orseolo and Solomon, since both had been lawfully crowned earlier. What occurred in 1044 and 1063 was, therefore, a combination of a festival crowning and the *Crown-wearing* ritual.

A similar case concerns Béla IV (1235–1270), who performed the ritual wearing of the crown in 1256 upon his arrival in Split in response to his solemn *receptio* by the inhabitants of the Dalmatian city: "He entered the city with great pomp, adorned like a king, with royal insignia, and was received by the clergy and the populace with great jubilation."[21] For Béla, who at that point was still in the process of rebuilding the state and re-establishing his royal power in the wake of the devastating Mongol invasion, this public manifestation was almost equal in importance to his actual coronation. Not only was it vital to re-establish royal power in the country following the Mongol invasion, the ideological rehabilitation of the king was equally necessary. The next documented case of a ceremonial wearing of the crown dates from the early 14th century when Ladislas (V), King of Hungary, welcomed his father, the Bohemian King Wenceslas II, in Buda in this manner.[22]

The first description of a *Festkrönung* involving the placing of the royal diadem on the head of a previously-crowned monarch describes events in the year 1044. During Lent, the ruling Hungarian monarch Samuel Aba summoned some 50 nobles who were rumoured to be plotting against him. As the unarmed men assembled, Aba had them brutally murdered. As a result of this barbaric

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20   *"Regem autem Salomonem in paterno solio glorie coronatum cum assensu et clamatione totius Hungarie sedere fecit." Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 97, SRH 1, pp. 361–362.

21   *"Sicut rex regalia gerens insignia, magna cleri et populi exultatione susceptus est." Thomae archidiaconi Spalatensis Historia Salonitanorum atque Spalatinorum Pontificum.* Archdeacon Thomas of Split: History of the Bishops of Salona and Split. ed. Damir Karbic – Mirjana Matijevic Sokol – James R. Sweeney. Central European Medieval Texts, Volume 4. (Budapest/New York, 2006), c. 48, pp. 364–366 (hereafter cited as *Historia Salonitana*).

22   *Chronicon Aulae Regiae.* Fontes rerum Bohemicarum 4 (hereafter cited as FRB). ed. Josef Emler. (Praha, 1874), p. 85. Compare pages 175–177.

act he fell foul of the Bishop of Csanád (soon to become the first Hungarian martyr, St Gerard).[23] A few weeks later Samuel Aba chose Csanád as the venue for Easter celebrations:

> (The King) came to the bishopric of Marosvár [i.e. Csanád—D.Z.],[24] that is to the reverend bishop, to celebrate the Easter rites. On the day of the resurrection of our Lord he (Gerard), as the head of the diocese, was asked by the bishops and nobles through respected men, to place the crown on the king's head. When he refused, the king, crowned and adorned by the other bishops, entered the minster accompanied by a great procession of clerics and common people.[25]

Bishop Gerard refused to perform the ceremonial coronation because of the crime committed by the king. This suggests that he regarded this ceremony as more than a kind of public spectacle. Aba, stained by the grave sin of multiple murder, which was committed during the sacred Lent period at that, was simply not worthy of it. The purpose of a festival crowning (as well as anointment) was to re-enact the monarch's elevation to the status of God's representative

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23   *Legenda sancti Gerhardi episcopi*, c. 5, SRH 2, p. 476; *Annales Altahenses maiores ad a. 1044*, MGH SSrG 4, pp. 34–35.

24   The bishopric of Csanád was created around 1030 in a place formerly called Marosvár. The name Csanád comes from a certain Csanád who won it for King St Stephen. Cf. Pál Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen. A History of Medieval Hungary 895–1526* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), pp. 41–42; Vincent Múcska, "Uhorsko na ceste ku kresťanskej monarchii," in *Proměna středovýchodní Evropy raného a vrcholného středověku. Mocenské souvislosti a paralely*. eds. Martin Wihoda – Lukáš Reitinger et al. (Brno: Matice Moravská, 2010), p. 114.

25   *"Deinde ad Moriensam videlicet sedem ad locum beati pontificis pascalia sacramenta celebraturus advenit. Die vero dominice resurrectionis, ut pater eiusdem loci regio capiti diadema impositurus adveniat, ab episcopis et principibus per honestissimos viros invitatur. Quo renuente reliqui pontifices coronam inponunt, magno cleri populique comitatu rex decoratus ecclesiam ingreditur." Legenda sancti Gerhardi episcopi*, c. 5, SRH 2, p. 476. Although some historians believe the legend was written down as late as the 13th century or even later, other scholars claim that its pristine version dates from the beginning or the middle of the 12th century at the latest and is based on 11th century notes. Compare Richard Marsina, "Stredoveké uhorské rozprávacie pramene a slovenské dejiny," *Zborník Slovenského národného múzea*, 78 (História 24) (1984), p. 171; *Legenda sancti Gerhardi episcopi*. ed. Imre Madzsar, SRH 2, pp. 461–506; János Horváth, "A Gellért legenda forrásértéke," *Nyelv- és Irodalomtudományi Közlemények*, 13 (1959), pp. 21–82.

on earth.[26] Gerard thus refused to participate in a ritual that would have legitimized the king's unlawful and unchristian actions.

This, however, did not stop other bishops loyal to the King from performing Samuel Aba's festival crowning even before he entered the minster. But the bishop of Csanád was not content with refusing to perform the ceremony and after the King entered to the church, publicly admonished the latter and foretold his rapid downfall.[27] This is an example of a source using an account of a ritual to paint a version of events to produce a particular effect. The author of the St Gerard legend uses the ritual to delineate and characterize its actors in an unequivocal way. The positive character (bishop Gerard) refuses to take part in an illegitimate ritual and voices his disapproval. By contrast, the negative characters (Samuel Aba and his loyal prelates) do not hesitate to abuse the ritual even though their transgressions had rendered them unworthy of performing it. Later, we will encounter several more examples of this narrative technique. Gerard's prophecy did come true, as Samuel Aba lost his dominion over the country three months later, on 5 July 1044, when he was defeated in battle at Ménfő.

King Solomon also underwent a genuine *Festkrönung* in Pécs on Easter Sunday of 1064. On this occasion the role of symbolic *coronator* was assumed by his hitherto sworn rival for the Hungarian throne, Géza, Duke of Nitra:

> This was where King Solomon was crowned on Easter Sunday and in the presence of the kingdom's nobles, by Prince Géza's own hand, in an honourable manner (*Ubi rex Salomon ipso die pasche assistentibus regni proceribus per manus Geyse ducis honorabiliter est coronatus*).[28]

Last but not least, diplomatic sources also provide evidence of the existence of festival crownings in Hungary under the Árpád dynasty. The Basilica of the Virgin Mary in Székesfehérvár had been established early on as the place of the coronation of Hungarian kings. More contentious was the issue of who would be the *coronator*, a role to which both the Archbishop of Esztergom, the Primate of Hungary, and the Archbishop of Kalocsa had laid claim. The dispute, which was eventually resolved in Esztergom's favour, can be followed in several papal documents. According to a 1212 charter of Pope Innocent III the two archbishops reached a compromise with the king's consent, whereby the first coronation (*prima coronatio*) was to be performed exclusively by the

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26   For further details see Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, p. 48.

27   *Legenda sancti Gerhardi episcopi*, c. 5–6, SRH 2, pp. 476–477.

28   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 97, SRH 1, pp. 362–363.

Archbishop of Esztergom. Both bishops had equal right to perform the second and all subsequent coronations (*secunda coronatio et deinceps*).[29]

The examples cited substantiate our claim that the ceremonial wearing of the royal crown and ceremonial festival crownings were part and parcel of the ritual paraphernalia of the Árpád dynasty monarchs. They were similar to their West and Central European counterparts in occurrence, technique, and function. The cases we have been able to explore in greater detail clearly reflect the endeavour to perform these rituals in important bishoprics (Esztergom, Pécs, Csanád, Split) and centres of power (Székesfehérvár, Buda), and to stage them during the most important ecclesiastical holidays, such as Easter. They form part of public communication accompanying domestic political events (Solomon—Géza, Béla IV—the Split populace, Gerard—Samuel Aba) as well as in contact with foreign rulers (Peter Orseolo—Henry III, Solomon—Henry IV).

In summary, we can state that the way these rituals of power were used and the function they served in the medieval society of the Árpád era was multiple and varied. First and foremost they served to set the person of the monarch apart not only from the hoi polloi but also from other members of the ruling class, as eloquently put by the author of the Hungarian-Polish chronicle, who stated that Stephen "shone as a sun amongst the stars".[30] Closely connected to this was the demonstration of sacral royal power derived from anointment by a bishop and the placing of the crown on the monarch's head. The ceremonial wearing of the crown and repeated performance of coronations, however, could also be used to restore power, order and the proper functioning of society, as in the case of Peter Orseolo, Solomon, and Béla IV. In case of the confrontation between King Solomon and Prince Géza it also served as a means of reconciliation and conflict resolution.

2 Laudes regiae

One of the most fascinating ceremonies linked to medieval sovereigns' public appearances were ceremonial liturgical acclamations, known as *laudes regiae*. Their origin can be traced to the imperial acclamations in ancient Rome as well as the liturgical chants and hymns of early Christianity, addressed to

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29 *"…prima coronatio regum Hungariae specialiter spectat ad solam Strigoniensem ecclesiam…secunda coronatio et deinceps aequaliter pertineat ad utrumque."* Innocentius III. *Regesta sive Epistolae*. PL, tomus 216, col. 516. See also Deér, *Die heilige Krone*, pp. 194–195, and footnote 34.

30 *Chronicon Hungarico-polonicum*, c. 7, SRH 2, p. 311.

God and the saints. An autonomous form of chanting acclamations directed at Frankish kings date back to the mid-8th century at the latest, either to the rule of Pepin the Short (d. 768) or his son Charlemagne (d. 814).[31] *Laudes regiae* were gradually integrated into important religious ceremonies, personally attended by monarchs, occurring as a part of the ceremonial welcoming of kings in churches or monasteries (*adventus regis*). With the passage of time royal praises came to form a regular constituent part of coronation ceremonies. They were used during coronations (the first documented case is Charlemagne's coronation as emperor) as well as during ceremonial festival crownings (*Festkrönung*). Indeed, in some cases, as so-called *laudes divinae*, they could take on a legitimizing role.[32]

The best known component of the *laudes*, featuring in the majority of extant texts, was the sentence familiar from numerous coin inscriptions: *Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat*, which refers to the christomimetic nature of medieval royal power in the early and high Middle Ages.[33] The greatest number of acclamations survive in the liturgical texts of the better-known churches and abbeys. In terms of geographical distribution, they demonstrably formed a part of ritual communication in the Holy Roman Empire, France, England, the southern Italy of the Normans, and also Hungary, as a consequence of the Hungarian conquest of Dalmatia.[34] The Hungarian kings, who from the early 12th century onwards also ruled Croatia and Dalmatia, thus also inherited from their predecessors the *laudes regiae* ritual.

Throughout the 11th century Byzantium and Venice were engaged in a military struggle for the domination of the Dalmatian cities. This process, along with papal interventions, is well documented in the evolution of liturgical acclamations. A new development occurred in the early 12th century when Hungarian kings seized control of Dalmatia.[35] The oldest recorded *laudes regiae* text is thus associated with King Coloman I. In 1102 Coloman was

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31   Reinhard Elze, "Die Herrscherlaudes im Mittelalter," in *Päpste-Kaiser-Könige und die mittelalterliche Herrschaftssymbolik* (London: Variorum, 1982), p. 202; Nelson, "The Lord's Anointed," pp. 153–154.

32   "Laudes regiae," in *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 5, pp. 1753–1754.

33   Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, pp. 47–48. For more detail, see Ullmann, *Principles*, pp. 117–149; Ludger Körntgen, *Königsherrschaft und Gottes Gnade: zu Kontext und Funktion sakraler Vorstellungen in Historiographie und Bildzeugnissen der ottonisch-frühsalischen Zeit* (Tübingen: Akademie Verlag, 2001), pp. 297–321.

34   Elze, "Die Herrscherlaudes", p. 206.

35   Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, pp. 147–149.

crowned King of Croatia in Biograd na Moru.[36] The oldest royal acclamation, originating from Zadar, probably dates back to 1105:

Exaudi Christe! (ter)
Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat! (ter)
Paschali summo pontifici et universali pape salus et vita perpetua (ter)
Colomanno Ungarie, Dalmatie et Croatie almifico regi vita et victoria (ter)
Stephano clarissimo regi nostro vita et victoria.
Gregorio venerabili Jadere presuli salus et vita.
Cledin inclyto nostro comiti vita et victoria.
Cunctis inclytis vita![37]

The acclamation is addressed to King Coloman, his son Stephen (the future king, from 1116 to 1131), Pope Paschal II (1099–1118), the local bishop Gregory, and to Cledin, the city's governor (*comes*). Pope Paschal is listed first as in all Western formularies, dislodging Byzantine emperors from their first position in the *laudes*. The location where these *laudes regiae* have been preserved is by no means accidental. Zadar was the traditional city of the coronation of the Dalmatian kings. It was here that Coloman married the daughter of Roger I of Sicily in 1097. In all likelihood these *laudes* were recorded to mark the submission of the city of Zadar to Coloman's rule in 1105.[38] The next extant formulary containing Hungarian-Dalmatian *laudes* was not composed until the 14th century and is addressed to the Hungarian King Louis I (the Great). Dating from between 1378–1382, it is composed in very poor Latin.[39]

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36   *"Anno Incarnationis Domini Nostri Iesu Christi MCII. Ego Colomannus, Dei gratia, Rex Vngariae, Croatiae, atque Dalmatiae, saluo habito consilio, postquam coronatus fui Belgradi super mare, in vrbe regia,"* Codex Diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis (hereafter cited as CDH) 2. ed. Georgius Fejér (Budae, 1829), p. 31.

37   *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae, et Slavoniae* (hereafter cited as CDRCD) 2. ed. T. Smičiklas (Zagreb, 1904), pp. 392–393.

38   Almost certainly these were not the *laudes* used at the coronation of Coloman I in 1102. The text of the *laudes* mentions King Stephen II (*Stephano regi nostro*). Stephen was crowned co-King of Hungary at the age of four only in 1105. The *laudes* that survive are therefore connected with Coloman I's capture of Dalmatian cities, which took place in 1105. Cf. Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, p. 149; Márta Font, *Coloman the Learned, King of Hungary* (Szeged: Szegedi Középkorász Műhely, 2001), pp. 66, 79; Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, p. 36.

39   *"Exaudi Christe! (ter) Domino pape Gregorio sumo pontifice et universali pape salus, honor et vita perpetua! Cunctis incliti vita! Domino Ludouico regis Ungarie salus, honor et vita victoria. Cunctis incliti vita! Domino Michaeli episcopo Absarense et tocius insule salus, honor*

References to and reports of the existence of *laudes regiae* under Árpád rule can also be found in narrative and diplomatic sources. A charter composed around 1200 states that royal acclamations were performed by the burghers and clergy of the Dalmatian city of Trogir during King Andrew II's visit (*in honore et gaudio recepti laudes hymnidicas honorabiliter recepimus*).[40] The next reference also concerns Andrew II, who in 1205 forcefully demanded that the citizens of Nin perform *laudes regiae* in his honour, invoking the ancient custom of maritime (Dalmatian) cities that required a town's inhabitants and clergy to pay tribute to the king and his successors by singing his praises and acclamations of the king's name on certain high days and holy days.[41]

Andrew's insistence on royal praises being sung during his stay in Dalmatia fell on fertile ground. During his 1217 pilgrimage to the Holy Land he designated the city of Split as the place for mustering his army. In late August, as Andrew entered the city, the citizenry and local clergy welcomed him by performing the festive royal welcome (*adventus regis*), which included the singing of royal praises:

> All the burghers, foreigners and an enormous number of his soldiers formed a procession and went to meet the Lord King, to welcome him singing his praises in loud voices ... singing together in a manner worthy of his royal majesty.[42]

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et vita perpetua. Domino Saraceno comite Absarense et tocius insule salus, honor et vita victoria. Cunctis incliti vita!" Cited by Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, p. 152.

40 CDRCD 2, p. 361. Andrew II was King of Hungary from 1205 to 1235. Between 1198 and 1204 he held the office of Duke of Croatia-Dalmatia.

41 "*Laudes regio nostro nomini, sicuti est consuetudo fidelium nostrorum de Marittimis, pro honorificientia regia consuetis diebus solemnibus per suum clerum et populum deprecabuntur.*" CDRCD 3, p. 51.

42 "*Exierunt autem processionaliter obviam domino regi universi cives, omnesque forenses totaque turba sui exercitus, laudes ei altis vocibus concrepantes. ... prout regie magnificentie dignum erat pariter, concinebant.*" *Historia Salonitana*, c. 25, p. 160. The latest Latin-English edition of Thomas' chronicle gives the verb as *concinno* (to organise, to edit artistically), but the correct verb is used in the Gombos edition, which is *concino* (to sing together, to chant praises). This is supported by the very logic of the text, as it describes royal *laudes*. See *Thomas Spalatensis archidiaconus: Historia Salonitanorum sive Historia pontificum Salonitanorum atque Spalatensium*. Catalogus Fontium Historiae Hungaricae 3, ed. Albinus F. Gombos (Budapestini, 1938), p. 2229 (hereafter cited as Gombos Catalogus).

The fact that Hungarian and Dalmatian kings made a point of insisting that maritime Adriatic cities show them requisite respect in the form of *laudes regiae* is evidence of the significance of this ritual (demanded just as scrupulously by the Venetians while they ruled Dalmatia). On the one hand, this demonstrated submission and public acceptance of the supremacy of the Hungarian kings, and at the same time it represented an oath binding on the clergy and the city's population. This strong emphasis on strict observance was the result of the omnipresent Byzantine political and ideological influence. It was precisely for this reason that *laudes regiae* survived in this part of Europe in their purest, original form, retaining their original political meaning at a time when they began to lose clarity and significance in Western Europe.[43]

As for the format of the Hungarian-Dalmatian royal praises we can say that between the early 12th until the late 14th century no substantial change or evolution took place. They are strikingly similar to the Byzantine synodal acclamations, involving substantial clamour but with no attempt made to divide them into organized litanies. The invocations of the saints is also absent. What the Dalmatian-Hungarian *laudes* share with their western counterparts is the introductory invocation *Exaudi Christe!* Their unique feature is the chanting of *Cunctis inclytis vita!*, not found anywhere in the West which must, therefore, be a Byzantine residue. The Hungarian-Dalmatian *laudes regiae* basically follow the Byzantine model although they contain some elements of Gallo-Frankish and Franco-Roman acclamations. For this reason the leading authority on the topic, Ernst Kantorowicz, suggested renaming them *Franco-Byzantine laudes*.[44]

3   *Cingulum militiae*

In 997, at the very start of his independent reign as the prince of Hungary, Stephen I faced a major political crisis. Following the death of Stephen's father, Grand Prince Géza (970–997), Koppány, the Duke of Somogy and a member of the Árpád dynasty, made his claim to the princely throne. The young Stephen, still on the cusp of adulthood, withdrew to Esztergom and later to the Duchy of Nitra seeking support and assembling a military force against Koppány.[45] Before any military confrontation took place, a highly significant ritual was

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43   Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, p. 151.

44   Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, p. 153.

45   György Györffy, *König Stephan der Heilige* (Budapest: Corvina, 1988), pp. 99–104; Gyula Kristó, *Histoire de la Hongrie Médiévale. Tome 1. Le temps des Árpáds* (Rennes: PUR, 2000), pp. 36–38.

performed in Stephen's camp in Bíňa. Three different versions of this survive
in Hungarian narrative sources, which will be cited in the Latin original for the
sake of clarity:

> 1. Chronicon pictum c. 41: Adierunt etiam istis diebus Hunt et Paznan,
> qui Sanctum Stephanum regem in flumine Goron gladio Theutonico
> more accinxerunt.[46]
> 2. Chronicon pictum c. 64: Postmodum vero congregato exercitu per-
> rexit obviam hosti suo et ad amnem Goron primitus accinctus est gladio
> ibique ad custodiam corporalis salutis sue duos principes Hunt et Paznan
> constitutit.[47]
> 3. Simonis de Keza Gesta Hungarorum c. 78: Qui detenti per ducem
> Geicham, tandem sanctum regem Stephanum in flumine Goron
> Teutonico more gladio militari accinxerunt.[48]

The only other case of a Hungarian ruler being girded by a sword known from
the Árpád era was recorded in 1146 and relates to King Géza II (1141–1162). The
circumstances are rather similar to the case of Stephen I. In the autumn of 1146
the young monarch Géza II faced the threat of military confrontation with the
Bavarian prince Henry XI (Jasomirgott). Just before the inevitable battle, fol-
lowing the example of St Stephen depicted in the Hungarian chronicles, Géza
resolved to perform the familiar ritual: "*Rex autem accinctus est gladio et gloria
Domini apparuit super eum . . .*"[49] Fortunately, a more detailed depiction of this
ceremony survives in a chronicle written by a contemporary, bishop Otto of
Freising (d. 1158):

> Altera die rex in predicto campo ad quandam ligneam aecclesiam accedit,
> ibique ab episcopis—nam eo usque in puerilibus annis positus nondum
> militem induerat—accepta sacerdotali benedictione ad hoc instituta
> armis accingitur.[50]

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46   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 41, SRH 1, p. 297.
47   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 64, SRH 1, p. 313.
48   *Simonis de Keza Gesta Hungarorum*, c. 78, SRH 1, pp. 188–189.
49   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 165, SRH 1, p. 455.
50   *Ottonis et Rahewini Gesta Friderici I. imperatoris*, I. 33, MGH SSrG 46, p. 51. The English
     translation was published (originally in 1953) in *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*. ed.
     Charles Christopher Mierow (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 68: *The next
     day the king went to a certain wooden church in the plain I have mentioned and, having there
     received from the bishops the priestly blessing designed for this purpose, was girt with his
     arms: for up to that time, since he was still a youth, he had not yet been knighted.*

For a proper understanding of the rituals mentioned above we must take a closer look at the function of the exchange of weapons in the Middle Ages, and the symbolic significance of weapons, specifically that of the sword, as well as the evolution of the chivalric ceremony of girding by sword.[51]

Early and high medieval society was warrior-led. The primary role of the nobility was to protect the other orders of society. It was the ownership and use of weapons that enabled the sovereigns and their armed forces to exercise power on territories entrusted to them; the same applied to the local nobility. And it was weapons that distinguished them from the peasantry and the clergy. Weapons therefore enjoyed high social prestige and their symbolism was omnipresent, since the medieval warrior culture was, at the same time, a culture of self-representation.[52]

Not every exchange of arms automatically amounted to a knighting ceremony.[53] This ceremony was an integral part of the ceremonial investiture into power, of the rites of passage from childhood to adulthood, of the assumption of a public role or rank, or the ceremonial expression of certain political claims.[54] The origins of this ritual can be traced back to heathen Germanic societies, although in their case it did not serve as a rite of passage to adolescence and adulthood. This role was performed by the shaving of the beard for the first time and the cutting of hair. It was not until the 8th century that the custom of receiving weapons as a sign of reaching adulthood took root in the Frankish kingdom under Carolingian rule. It occurred mainly between the ages of thirteen (Louis the Pious) and fifteen (Charles the Bald).[55]

From the 11th century onwards the girding by sword and the exchange of weapons acquired additional meanings. The *cingulum militiae* (in the Middle Ages the term was used to signify a number of objects and meanings: in the

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51 Karl Leyser, "Early Medieval Canon Law and the Beginnings of Knighthood," in *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe. The Carolingian and Ottonian Centuries* (London/Rio Grande: Hambledon Press, 1994), pp. 51–71; Georges, Duby, "The Origins of Knighthood," in *The Chivalrous Society* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 158–170; Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 64–82.

52 Régine Le Jan, "Frankish Giving of Arms and Rituals of Power. Continuity and Change in the Carolingian Period," in *Rituals of Power. From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*. ed. Frans Theuws (Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2000), p. 282.

53 Jean Flori, *Chevaliers et Chevalerie au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Fayard, 2013), pp. 219–222.

54 Zbigniew Dalewski, "The Knighting of Polish Dukes in the Early Middle Ages. Ideological and Political Significance," *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 80 (1999), pp. 16–19; Paravicini, *Die ritterlich-höfische Kultur*, p. 9.

55 Le Jan, "Frankish Giving of Arms", p. 285.

first instance it referred to an arms belt, i.e. weapons and sword, but it also served as a symbol of a noble's warrior role, his right to exercise political power, and his obligation to protect the weak)[56] symbolized the social supremacy of the warrior order and its members' right to exercise power and provide protection. There are no grounds for the frequently made claim that this symbolic meaning of weapons was specifically Germanic. Rather, it was a continuation of the ancient late Roman tradition of wearing ceremonial belts.[57] Until the 11th century the giving or receiving of *cingulum militiae* was not usually associated with the dubbing of knights, since knighthood as a specific class of medieval society did not even exist before this time.[58] The ceremonial acceptance of the sword signified the acceptance of a public secular role, primarily the power to rule.[59] Similarly, when kings or other powerful nobles, due to old age or under pressure, resolved to withdraw from worldly affairs and to devote themselves to a monastic life, the transition was symbolically demonstrated by the unbuckling of their weapons and laying them on the altar. After performing this ritual they could no longer return to performing any secular public role.[60] What had originally been a purely secular ceremony of girding by sword had been gradually taken over by the church, which imbued it with new meanings (the sword as the symbol of the duty to protect the poor, widows, orphans and, of course, the church itself) and imposed a number of moral demands on those who performed this ceremony. Therefore in the early and high Middle Ages the exchange of weapons ceremony, most commonly in the form of girding by sword, fulfilled three key functions:

(1)   it served as a rite of passage from a warrior's childhood to adulthood;
(2)   it inaugurated him into the society of warriors, i.e. a secular social elite, obliging him to exercise the duties related to this status;
(3)   it signified a show of acceptance and investiture into a certain public function, usually the assumption (or re-assumption) of royal or princely power.

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56   See Leyser, "Early Medieval Canon", pp. 55–64; Paravicini, *Die ritterlich-höfische Kultur*, p. 9.
57   Le Jan, "Frankish Giving of Arms", pp. 286–7.
58   Flori, *Chevaliers*, pp. 222–23.
59   Dalewski, "The Knighting", p. 16; Flori, *Chevaliers*, pp. 222–23. For the uses of swords in inauguration rites see Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning*, p. 127.
60   This was for example the case of the deposed Emperor Louis the Pious in 833. Cf. Mayke De Jong, "Power and Humility in Carolingian Society: the Public Penance of Louis the Pious," *Early Medieval Europe*, 1 (1992), pp. 29–52; Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, pp. 57–64.

These conclusions allow us to shed some light on the rather obscure events relating to the girding of King St Stephen and Géza II. The two rituals were presumably not identical, certainly not in terms of their significance, taking into account the respective circumstances. What is identical is the approximate age of their protagonists, and the passage from adolescence to adulthood. At the time of his girding Géza II was between fifteen and sixteen years of age and in the early days of his adult rule. The same applies to Stephen whose year of birth is the subject of endless speculation and various interpretations. However, in 997 Stephen was in all likelihood between 16 and 18 years old.[61] Louis the Pious and Charles the Bald were approximately the same age (13 and 15 respectively) at the time they received weapons from their fathers. This threshold marking the passage from childhood to adulthood is also documented with regard to the mid-11th century ritual of girding by sword. In 1065, the German king Henry IV was also girded at the age of 14.[62] These rituals were performed under identical circumstances. Both protagonists faced a military threat and the girding took place just before a decisive battle, in the army camp. At the same time, it marked their first active participation in an open battle, a fact that had to be ritually demonstrated. Up to this point, everything followed widely known rules.[63]

There are, however, some key differences between the two events, which relate to the actual performance of the ritual. In the case of Stephen the girding occured near or in the river Hron, and according to Hungarian chroniclers was performed by his personal bodyguards Hont and Poznan, two of his most devoted nobles, who were of non-Hungarian origin. Two different accounts of the event attempt to persuade us that the rite followed German custom (*Theutonico more*), although this claim is quite certainly a later, 13th century interpolation in the chronicle.[64] The fact is that the girding by sword (in all

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61 Györffy, *König Stephan*, pp. 99–104; Múcska, "Uhorsko na ceste", p. 109.

62 *"Et ibidem accinctus est gladio, anno regni sui 9, aetatis autem suae 14." Bertholdi Annales ad. a. 1077*, MGH SS 5, p. 272.

63 Dalewski, "The Knighting", pp. 17–18.

64 The question of whether Hont and Poznan were of German or Slavonic origin and likewise the German or Slavonic origin of the ceremony of girding with sword of Grand Prince Stephen continues to be a matter of lively debate. Ján Steinhübel claims that Hont and Poznan were Slavonic dukes, and as such would not have performed the rite according to German custom on their own territory. He believes that this was rather a continuation of the Great Moravian tradition of wearing the military belt. See Ján Steinhübel, *Nitrianske kniežatstvo* (Bratislava: Veda, 2004), pp. 208–209. László Veszprémy, by contrast, interprets these events as knightly girdings by Hont and Poznan who he claims were German knights. But there is no mention of such rituals in contemporary sources between 936

its semantic forms) was not an exclusively German custom. The practice is documented throughout Europe. And while it is unusual that the girding was performed by a *comes*, in the persons of Hont and Poznan, it is by no means unique. Parallels can be found, for example, in the royal investiture of the German king, Henry II (1002) who received a lance from the hands of Bernard, the Duke of Saxony, or the girding of the French King Philippe I by the Flemish Count Baldwin VI in the mid-11th century.[65] In addition to being an official confirmation of his reaching adulthood and of his initiation into the military community of warriors, Stephen's girding carried a further important meaning, namely that of the spontaneous presentation of his sovereign princely power and a public demonstration of the fact that he was prepared to respond militarily to Koppány's challenging of his legitimacy. What we see here is thus a legitimizing as well as a purely secular ritual.[66]

By comparison, the girding of Géza II in 1146 is considerably sacralized. The venue chosen was the sacred interior of a wooden church not far from the battlefield. Instead of being performed by members of the king's military entourage the ritual was conducted by bishops of whom little is known. The entire process of girding was liturgized and accompanied by a bishop's blessing, devised specifically for the occasion (*accepta sacerdotali benedictione ad hoc instituta*). This ritual was necessitated by the king's youth which had until then prevented him from exercising his most important royal duty, that of military service (*militia*). The girding (*armis accingitur*), complemented by an ecclesiastical blessing, enabled Géza II to publicly demonstrate his readiness to assume his (sacral) royal role in practice and thus affirm his leading role at the helm of the Hungarian army. As can be seen, compared with the girding of Stephen in the field a significant semantic shift occurred. In conclusion we should add that beginning in the 14th century at the latest, girding by sword became an integral part of the coronation rites of the Hungarian kings.[67]

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and 1065. Therefore, according to Veszprémy we are dealing with an interpolation from the cusp of 11th and 12th century at the earliest. Veszprémy, *Lovagvilág*, pp. 69–73. See also Ján Lukačka, *Formovanie vyššej šľachty na západnom Slovensku* (Bratislava: Minor, 2002), pp. 21–22, 23–32.

65   *Thietmari Merserburgensis Chronicon*, V.17, MGH SSrG NS 9, p. 241; Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, p. 88; Dalewski, "The Knighting", p. 21.

66   Before designating Stephen as his heir and successor on the grand princely throne, Géza had to fend off his own brother Michael. Seniority was meant to be replaced by the principle of primogeniture.

67   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 212, SRH 1, p. 504; Fügedi, "Coronation," p. 163.

4   Court Festivities and Royal Majesty

Of the many rituals that accompanied medieval monarchs at almost every step, those aimed at strengthening communal cohesion were among the most important. The community in question could have been the monarch's immediate entourage or the entire royal court. By performing these rituals the monarch and his entourage sought to re-enact events binding the community together and to strengthen their mutual (dynastic or hierarchical) bonds. In addition, the performance of these rituals affirmed their validity and their binding nature for their protagonists.[68]

Such ritual situations included, for example, frequent court festivities marking church holidays, important events in the life of the ruling family, as well as festivities held on specific holidays throughout the year.[69] Every significant event in the life of the medieval nobility had to be accompanied by a feast (*convivium*).[70] This was because of both the enormous symbolic importance ascribed to food and feasting in the Middle Ages as well as to the traditional supernatural bond generated by ritual feasts,[71] which represent an anthropological feature shared by all societies throughout the history of mankind. The *convivia* did not derive their importance from the mere fact of their participants' wining and dining. Rather, it was the desire to publicly demonstrate consensus, friendship and peaceful coexistence that endowed them with their unique importance. It was during ceremonial feasts that future family relationships were agreed, conflicts resolved, treaties negotiated and alliances forged, and it was the convivial atmosphere of the feasts that was meant to reinforce the agreements. Feasting, often lasting several days to weeks, held the same significance in the minds of medieval people as the drawing up of contracts or the swearing of oaths. Participation in a *convivium* obliged those involved to maintain friendly relations in the future.[72] Feasts in Árpád-era

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68   Gerd Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers. Political and Social Bonds in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 152–159.

69   For more information about life in the medieval court and ceremonial and courtly culture, see the monumental work of Bumke, *Courtly Culture*.

70   Karl Hauck, "Rituelle Speisegemeinschaft im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert," *Studium Generale*, 3 (1950), pp. 611–621; Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, pp. 178–196; Paravicini, *Die ritterlich-höfische Kultur*, p. 9.

71   See also Anna Adamska, "Founding a Monastery over Dinner: The Case of Henryków in Silesia (c. 1222–1228)," in *Medieval Legal Process: Physical, Spoken and Written Performance in the Middle Ages*. eds. Marco Mostert – P.S. Barnwell (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), pp. 18–20; Třeštík, "Čtyři tisíce let starý ritual", pp. 7–27.

72   Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, pp. 152–54.

Hungary also served, inter alia, as a way of honouring and reinforcing alliances with the German monarchs.[73]

As with all public actions, an important role was also played by the appropriate seating arrangements, which were intended to reflect society's hierarchical and power structure. The seating protocol—whether one was allocated a place on the right-hand side or on the left, elevated or lowered—all these issues were subject to endless negotiations and frequent wrangling. In our day and age it is almost impossible to understand the strict observance of the protocol, yet in the Middle Ages it could cause argument and conflict.[74]

Furthermore, in Central Europe, including Hungary under the Árpáds, whether someone was sitting or standing was apparently an important means of expression. The chronicler Thietmar of Merseburg complained that the increase in the power of Bolesław the Brave was reflected in his official behaviour. While Bolesław's father Mieszko was expected to rise from his seat whenever Hodo, the Margrave of the Eastern Saxon March, was standing in his presence, Bolesław himself no longer had to observe these signs of respect.[75] Otto of Freising (d. 1158) reports that Hungarian nobles would bring their own chairs (*sella*) to their talks with the king, as a symbolic way of demonstrating their participation in ruling the country.[76] King Béla IV (1235–1270) adopted the opposite strategy after ascending the throne, in that he strove to reinforce his royal majesty and increase the royal prestige by setting himself apart from other Hungarian leaders. For this reason he decreed that no member of the royal council (except for nobles and prelates of the highest rank) should be seated in his presence. The chairs that had been used by the royal council were demonstratively burned in public.[77]

These events are closely related to another form of symbolic display of royal power, the accessibility of the monarch. The anointed king's exclusive

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73   For example, the visit to Székesfehérvár of Henry III in 1045 and his son Henry IV in 1063: *"regio luxu convivium" Annales Altahenses maiores ad a. 1045*, MGH SSrG 4, p. 40; *"celebratisque conviviis" Annales Altahenses maiores ad a. 1063*, MGH SSrG 4, p. 63.

74   Hans Werner Goetz, "Der 'rechte' Sitz. Die Symbolik von Rang und Herrschaft im Hohen Mittelalter im Spiegel der Sitzordnung," in *Symbole des Alltags—Alltag der Symbole* (Graz: Akademische Druck, 1992), pp. 11–47; Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, pp. 103–104; Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, pp. 183–87.

75   *Thietmari Merserburgensis Chronicon* v.10, MGH SSrG NS 9, p. 232; Leyser, "Ritual, Ceremony and Gesture", p. 207.

76   *"…ad curiam regis sui, singulis ex primoribus sellam secum portantibus…" Ottonis et Rahewini Gesta Friderici*, I.32, MGH SSrG 46, p. 50.

77   *"…Si aliquis baronum sedere in sede aliqua in sua presentia auderet, debita pena plecteretur, comburri faciens ibidem ipsorum sedes, quas potuit invenire." Rogerii carmen miserabile*, SRH 2, p. 555.

and superior status was reflected not only in the necessity to remain standing in the presence of a seated monarch but also in the access, or lack of direct access, to him. However, this form of demonstrating royal power was not as widely used in Hungary as elsewhere in Europe where unfettered access to the king was usually reserved for his closest associates and the most powerful nobles.[78] The third Hungarian king Samuel Aba (1041–1044) already faced criticism from the nobles and high-ranking church dignitaries for frequently meeting, dining with and talking to peasants, behaviour that was deemed to be more than undignified for an anointed sovereign.[79]

Nevertheless, it is likely that access to Hungarian kings remained quite easy, as evidenced by the fact that Béla IV took fresh steps to formally strengthen the king's majesty. He decided to restrict supplicants' personal appearances before the monarch and replaced them with written supplications that had to be submitted through the royal chancellery. Only the most weighty and important cases (or supplicants) were to have direct contact with the monarch.[80] However, his effort did not have a lasting effect. Two centuries later, in the second half of the 15th century, King Matthias Corvinus at the behest of his wife Beatrix of Aragon, had to make fresh efforts to strengthen the king's majesty by limiting access to the king.[81]

Among the most common occasions for holding court festivities and sumptuous feasts were the many and varied rites of transition[82] in the sovereigns' lives: the birth of the heir to the throne, his baptism and his engagement. In adulthood such occasions included especially weddings, coronations (including festival crownings) and funerals. Unfortunately these rites of transition are very poorly documented in contemporary sources relating to the Árpád era. The first detailed description of a coronation dates back to the 15th century and concerns the accession of Vladislav I to the Hungarian throne. The earliest description of wedding rites comes from 1476 and relates to the marriage of Matthias Corvinus and Beatrix of Aragon. The first detailed record of a funeral rite dates back to the Anjou period: the 1342 burial of King Charles Robert. The funeral rites lasted several days and were held at various important venues

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78   A fine example is to be found in the behaviour of emperor Otto III. Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, pp. 90–93.

79   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 76, SRH 1, p. 330.

80   *Rogerii carmen miserabile*, SRH 2, p. 556.

81   András Kubinyi, "Alltag und Fest am ungarischen Königshof der Jagellonen. 1490–1526," in *Alltag bei Hofe. Residenzenforschung Band 5*. ed. Werner Paravicini (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1995), p. 212.

82   For *rites de passage* and their significance in people's lives, cf. Gennep, *The Rites*.

around the kingdom with the participation of numerous actors and distinguished guests.[83]

Ritual life at the royal court involved various other festivities recorded from the Árpád period. Royal hunts were undoubtedly among the most widespread and popular. The fact that they constituted a genuine ritual with its own rules and profound symbolism is also evidenced by the period term for this aristocratic 'sport': *ritus venandi*.[84] It is still astonishing to see how serious and passionate the medieval monarchs were about hunting. Typical in this respect is the story of the son of St Stephen, Prince (later Saint) Emeric (d. 1031). It was in a hunting accident that the young man, extolled by contemporary sources as a paragon of virtue who abstained from all worldly pleasures and spent all his time praying and doing charitable deeds, lost his life at an early age.[85] Nearly all Árpád monarchs spent their free time hunting and many had their favourite hunting grounds in thick woods. One of the better-known ones was the Igyfon forest on the border of Bihar (now Bihor, Romania) county and Transylvania, where (the future) King Géza I spent his Christmas in 1073.[86] During a subsequent dynastic dispute King Coloman is reported to have gone to great lengths to ensure that his brother and rival Álmos would spend as much time as possible hunting, so that the latter had little time left to plot against him.[87] Furthermore, hunts provided ideal opportunities for contact between monarchs when distinguished visitors visited Hungary. When Frederick Barbarossa stopped in Hungary during his 1189 expedition to the Holy Land, Béla III and the Emperor spent several days hunting in various parts of the country.[88]

Let us go back to the court festivities mentioned earlier, as their importance and role in social life cannot be overestimated. Belonging to a particular group, lineage or family was of utmost importance in the Middle Ages. An individual could not function in isolation, nor could he achieve any success in public life.

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83   *Joannis Dlugossii seu Longini canonici Cracoviensis Historiae Polonicae Libri XII*, ed. Alexander Przezdziecki, Tomus 4 (Cracoviae, 1877), p. 644; Volker Honemann, "The Marriage of Matthias Corvinus to Beatrice of Aragón (1476) in Urban and Court Historiography," in *Princes and Princely Culture 1450–1650* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2005), pp. 213–26; *Johannes de Thurocz Chronica Hungarorum*. ed. Elisabeth Galántai – Julius Kristó (Budapest, 1985), c. 128, pp. 154–59.

84   Nelson, "The Lord's Anointed", p. 169; Jean Verdon, *Les loisirs en France au moyen âge* (Paris: Tallandier, 1980), p. 49.

85   *Annales Hildesheimenses ad a. 1031*, MGH SSrG 8, p. 36.

86   "… *in Igfan venabatur.*" *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 114–115, SRH 1, pp. 380–81.

87   "*Delectabatur autem dux in venationibus et assidus erat in eis, et dabat ei rex omnia ad venandum necessaria.*" *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 147, SRH 1, p. 427.

88   *Historia de expeditione Friderici*, MGH SSrG NS 5, p. 26.

That is what lent such great importance to the rites that constituted and constantly reinforced these allegiances.[89] Court festivities and feasts accompanying them provided ideal opportunities for the performance of the rites. These occasions had many positive but also some negative implications. Their main advantage was the opportunity to forge friendships, form alliances and link dynasties. On the other hand, they carried the risk of inciting conflict among the participants if events took an unfortunate turn or if they were manipulated by actors whether central or marginal.

Although only in exceptional cases, shrewd individuals were sometimes able to exploit the pleasant atmosphere, good food and, especially, the consumption of alcohol, which put the king into a 'relaxed' mood, to enrich themselves or to seek other advantages. In Árpád-era Hungary King Béla the Blind (1131–1141) was famously prone to this in his later years when, due to ill health, he often consumed excessive quantities of wine, which his courtiers took ample advantage of:

> (The King) consumed a lot of wine. His courtiers were accustomed to getting whatever they asked of the King while he was drunk, which he could no longer take back when he sobered up.[90]

Similar cases are documented in Czech and Polish sources. This was how, according to the Zbraslav Chronicle, Bohemian nobles allegedly acquired vast holdings and privileges from King Wenceslas III, who had previously ruled Hungary as Ladislas (V).[91] In the 13th century Silesian princes faced similar pitfalls.[92]

The ceremonial exchange of gifts played an extremely important role in symbolic public communication. Just like feasting, the handing over of gifts formed an integral part of every significant ruler's business.[93] Gifts were used to welcome distinguished guests, as illustrated by the account of an encounter between Stephen I and the Polish prince Bolesław the Brave in Esztergom in 1001. The Hungarian-Polish Chronicle records that "gifts were bestowed on all Polish soldiers, from the highest to the lowest rank, as well as on the Prince

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89   Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, pp. vii, 136.

90   "... *utebatur ex vino multum. Cuius aulici consueti erant, ut quicquid in ebrietate regis petebant, habebant et post ebrietatem rex recipere non poterat.*" *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 162, SRH 1, p. 452.

91   *Chronicon Aulae Regiae*, FRB 4, p. 107.

92   Adamska, "Founding a Monastery", pp. 1–30.

93   Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, pp. 228–30.

himself."[94] Although the author quite certainly exaggerates, his account does confirm the important role played by exchanges of gifts.

In 1189 King Béla III and his wife Margaret received Frederick Barbarossa in Esztergom with sumptuous and extraordinarily precious gifts. Among other things the Emperor was given an exquisitely decorated and comfortably furnished tent, an ivory armchair and, on his departure from Hungary, four camels.[95] Emissaries charged with arranging important talks abroad were also usually dispatched laden with gifts. The bestowing of a gift could be used literally as a bribe or a strong argument to influence key decisions. This was the case when King Béla II's envoy, Bishop Peter, set off for Prague laden with gifts (*magnis cum muneribus*) to try to persuade Bohemian Prince Soběslav I to intercede with Emperor Lothar III on behalf of the King of Hungary. After receiving a favourable response he passed on the gifts, including those intended for the Emperor, in this case two white stallions, equipped in a way fit for an emperor.[96] Gifts were used to show respect in communication, most frequently during personal encounters between monarchs. During their 1099 meeting at Lucké pole in Moravia, King Coloman I and the Bohemian Prince Břetislav exchanged gifts as a part of the sealing of a peace treaty (*ac inter se inmenses mutatim datis muneribus renovat antiqua amicicie et pacis federa*).[97] This report is particularly significant since its author, the Bohemian chronicler Cosmas, was an eye-witness to the meeting.

As a rule, the more emphasis a host placed on displaying his majesty and power, the more generous and inventive he was in bestowing gifts on his guests. A specific kind of gift was deemed appropriate for each particular social group.[98] Gift were not infrequently imbued with profound symbolic significance, often evoking a certain event, utterance or obligation from the past,

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94   *"… omnis Polonorum exercitus a maiori usque ad minorem muneribus replentur, duci vero dona offeruntur." Chronicon Hungarico-polonicum*, c. 7, SRH 2, pp. 311–12. For a detailed account of these events and the role of rulers' gift-giving as a political tool, see Florin Curta, "Gift-giving and Violence in Bulgaria and Poland. A Comparative Approach to Ruling Strategies in the Early Middle Ages," in *Consensus or Violence? Cohesive Forces in Early and High Medieval Societies (9th–14th c.)* eds. Sławomir Moździoch – Przemysław Wiszewski (Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies, 1) (Wrocław: Institute of History at the University of Wrocław, 2013), pp. 113–44.

95   *Arnoldi Lubicensis: Chronica Slavorum*, IV.8, MGH SSrG 14, pp. 129–31.

96   *Canonici Wissegradensis*, FRB 2, p. 218.

97   *Cosmae chronicon Boemorum*, III.9, MGH SSrG NS 2, p. 169.

98   Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, p. 228.

and thus acting as a guarantee of the continued validity of a particular treaty.[99] Exchanges of gifts also served to reinforce alliances or affirm a reconciliation.[100]

5   The Symbols and Rituals of the Hungarian Monarchs

A number of additional rituals related to the person of the medieval monarch and his public role, to the sacral nature of his royal status and the moral qualities of the individual ruler. A monarch's behaviour (in the case of kings almost all actions were public, that is, official) was thus governed by the unwritten rules and expectations (*Spielregeln*) that he had to bear in mind.[101] This is illustrated, for example, by the story of King Samuel Aba (1041–1044), who had initially enjoyed the favour of Hungarian nobles and prelates but once he felt his power was sufficiently consolidated no longer observed the required rules and did not behave in a way befitting his status as an anointed monarch. It was on these grounds that the nobles approached the German king, Henry III, demanding that he depose Samuel Aba: "He pays no heed to his oath, disdains the nobles who appointed him king, while dining, riding and conversing with peasants and people who are not of noble birth."[102]

King Aba's greatest transgression was the breaking of his oath. The sanctity and profound importance of ceremonial oath-taking is well-known[103] as we are talking of an era when nearly all public interactions among contemporary sovereigns were vouchsafed by oaths. Oaths served to confirm treaties, forge alliances and settle conflicts.[104] For example, the oath as a ritual form guaranteeing the cessation of hostilities, at least temporarily, was used on several

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99   Koziol, *Begging Pardon*, pp. 6, 297–98.

100   Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, p. 155.

101   Althoff, "Demonstration und Inszenierung", especially pp. 229–57.

102   "*…pro nichilo iuramentum reputaret, nobilesque, qui eum regem super se constituerant, contempneret et cum rusticis ignobilibus ederet, equitaret et continue loqueretur.*" *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 76, SRH 1, p. 330.

103   See the entry "Eid" in *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 3, pp. 1673–92.

104   Gerd Althoff, "Das Grundvokabular der Rituale. Knien, Küssen, Thronen, Schwören," in *Spektakel der Macht. Rituale im alten Europa 800–1800.* eds. Gerd Althoff – Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2008), pp. 153–4; Koziol, *Begging Pardon*, pp. 6, 16. The use of oaths in political communication was also a long-standing tradition in the Central European region. For examples from the 9th century, see Miroslav Lysý, *Moravania, Mojmírovci a Franská ríša. Štúdie k etnogenéze, politickým inštitúciám a ústavnému zriadeniu na území Slovenska vo včasnom stredoveku* (Bratislava: Atticum, 2014), pp. 210–21.

occasions by the parties to the dynastic conflict over the Hungarian throne in the second half of the 11th century. King Solomon and Géza, the Duke of Nitra, swore their first oath in public in the presence of nobles and clergymen at Esztergom in 1064 and repeated it there in 1073, after a further stage of their dispute came to a close.[105] Similarly, King Coloman I and Duke Břetislav II affirmed their good relations and assured their future friendship in 1099 during their encounter on the Hungarian-Moravian border referred to earlier.[106]

The ceremonial oath also served as a guarantee of a peaceful submission and handover of power. A detailed description of events relating to such an oath, involving King Coloman and Dalmatian cities in 1105, can be found in the chronicle of the Archdeacon of Split, *Historia Salonitana*. Specifically it involved seizing control of the city of Split, preceded by its population's submission. Negotiators on both sides had agreed every detail of the procedure in advance, and both parties had to affirm and determine its observance and binding nature by a ceremonial oath. Once the treaty was drawn up:

> . . . the King and his nobles swore to strictly observe everything. On the following day the oath was taken by the citizens of Split, first by members of the most distinguished families, followed by the less distinguished ones and finally by all the people, with everyone swearing that they would forever remain faithful subjects of King Coloman, his successors and the Kingdom of Hungary.[107]

Virtually the same scenario with only minor variations was deployed in the high and late Middle Ages. From the 13th century onwards, however, oaths were more and more frequently used in tandem with written charters.[108]

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105   The sources do not mention the oath explicitly, but from the context and from the logic of the events we can assume that it was sworn. *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 97, SRH I, pp. 362–63; c. 112, p. 378.

106   "*. . . sacramentis confirmant.*" *Cosmae chronicon Boemorum*, III.9, MGH SSrG NS 2, p. 169.

107   "*. . . iuravit rex cum suis principibus, omnia firmiter observare. Postera vero die iuraverunt Spalatenses, primo quidem maiores, deinde iuniores, postea vulgus omne, ut Colomanno regi et eius posteris, ac regno Hungarie subiecti et fideles omni tempore permanerent.*" *Historia Salonitana*, c. 17, p. 96.

108   Although as part of the oaths of Split King Coloman issued a charter, it was most likely only a confirmation of the city's privileges that the King agreed to respect. There is a considerable time delay between Split and the rest of Central Europe. The Dalmatian cities were strongly influenced by the development of towns on the Apennine Peninsula and its urban literate cultures. In Hungary proper, such developments appear only from the second half of the 13th century.

In 1271 oaths (as well as charters) were used to confirm the truce between King Ottokar II of Bohemia and the Hungarian king Stephen V during peace talks on an island in the Danube near Bratislava.[109] A ceremonial oath provided an opportunity for purification and for bearing witness in a binding and unchallengeable manner.

In Hungary as elsewhere in Central Europe oath-swearing was accompanied by the placing of the hand on a sacred object. The 1271 charter issued by King Ottokar II refers to oath-taking by touching the gospels, holy relics and a wooden cross.[110] The Holy Scriptures often served as the object intended to sanctify the ceremonial oath, enhancing its binding nature. For example, King Ladislas IV (the Cuman) took an oath on the gospels in 1279 in the presence of a papal emissary.[111] King Stephen V also swore on the gospels and a wooden cross when he visited Krakow in 1270.[112] Helene Kottanner, writing in the mid-15th century, refers to the traditional Hungarian custom of swearing on holy relics.[113] Her claim is supported by the abundance of oaths using the reliquiae of St Ladislas in Oradea.[114]

The system of relationships relied wholly on the taking and, even more importantly, the observing of oaths. They compensated for the almost total lack of binding written documents (especially in the early Middle Ages) and the extremely limited possibilities of monitoring the observance of treaties. Everything depended on the personal quality and trustworthiness of the specific individuals involved. Nevertheless, in actual political struggles the breaking of an oath was far from unusual. On the contrary, particularly in Central Europe in the early and high Middle Ages, oaths were repeatedly broken and constantly misused.[115] However, this type of oath needs to be distinguished

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109   *"…ibidem perpetuem pacis concordiam et sinceram amiciciam sigillis et privilegiis sub forma iuramenti coram episcopis, prelatis, baronibus ex utraque parte asistentibus confirmantes." Continuatio Vindobonensis*, MGH SS 9, p. 703.

110   *"…iurauimus et iuramus, tactis corporaliter sacrosanctis Euangeliis, multorum sanctorum reliquiis, et viuificae crucis ligno…"* CDH V/1, p. 124.

111   *"…sollemniter promisimus et iuravimus ad sacrosancta Dei euangelia…"* CDH V/2, p. 508.

112   *Joannis Dlugossii*, Tomus II, Liber VII, pp. 416–17.

113   *The Memoirs of Helene Kottanner*, p. 49.

114   Mária Makó Lupescu, "Between the Sacred and Profane: The Trial by Hot Iron Ceremony Based on the 'Regestrum Varadinense'," *Mediaevalia Transilvanica*, 3/1–2 (1999), pp. 5–26, especially p. 11; Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, p. 146.

115   Dalewski, "Political Culture", pp. 82–3.

from two other, distinctive forms of oath, namely the oath of fealty and the oath of fidelity.[116]

The demands placed on monarchs had repercussions in several other areas. Paramount among these was the Christian character of royal power in the Middle Ages. The act of anointment, which formed part of the coronation rites of Hungarian kings from the earliest days of the Christian monarchy, elevated the king to the sacred sphere. He was thenceforth no longer a mere ordinary mortal or one of the nobles. The anointed king was God's representative on earth and it was from His mercy alone that he derived his sovereign power over society,[117] albeit curtailed by the participation of the prelates and most influential nobles. People in medieval times were quite adept at framing the prevailing demands arising from the ethics and values linked to a monarch's Christian mission in the context of the royal ceremonial repertory. Naturally, the sovereign had to take an active part in every significant church festivity. The Christian high days and holidays and the days of patron saints of individual countries provided excellent opportunities to display the royal majesty. Kings also demonstrated their Christian virtues by actively participating in liturgical processions, by endowing church institutions and bestowing gifts upon them, and by performing charitable deeds (providing alms for the poor, and for the upkeep and protection of widows and orphans). For example, the chronicler Simon of Kéza records the story of King Solomon who, after being dethroned in Hungary, is alleged to have appeared in Székesfehérvár in the guise of a hermit just as King Ladislas I was dispensing alms on the steps of the basilica.[118]

In this respect Hungary's dynastic saints Stephen I and Ladislas I as well as Stephen I's son Prince Emeric, appear at first sight to personify the ideal Christian ruler.[119] Under the influence of hagiographic literature and a powerful local cult the surviving image of these three rulers is highly idealized.[120]

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116   For the importance of oaths of fealty and oaths of fidelity in Bohemian environment, see most recently Libor Jan, "Lenní přísahy a přísahy věrnosti na dvoře posledních Přemyslovců," in *Stát, státnost a rituály přemyslovského věku*, pp. 101–12. For Hungary, see Nora Berend, "Oath-taking in Hungary. A window on medieval social interaction," in *Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages: A Cultural History*. eds. Piotr Górecki – Nancy Van Deusen (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009), pp. 42–9.

117   Bloch, *Les Rois thaumaturges*, pp. 59–73; Erkens, *Herrschersakralität im Mittelalter*, pp. 166–7, Roux, *Le roi*.

118   *Simonis de Keza Gesta Hungarorum*, c. 61, SRH 1, p. 181.

119   For more detail, cf. Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*; Györffy, *König Stephan*, pp. 5–11; *László király emlékezete*. ed. György Györffy (Budapest: Helikon, 1977); Hóman, *Geschichte*, p. 292.

120   Modern Slovak editions with substantial introductory studies may be found in *Legendy stredovekého Slovenska*. ed. Richard Marsina (Budmerice, 1997).

All three are presented as abundantly endowed with the key Christian values of boundless mercy and generosity. As part of their public activities they all engaged in the founding of church institutions, personally assisted the poor and the weak, providing generous alms and being demonstrative in their forgiveness. They were said to have devoted a great deal of their time to prayer, often accompanied by public acts of penitence. We must assume that Stephen, Emeric and Ladislas did indeed carry out most of these acts of Christian charity. Apart from some 'miracles' relating to their sainthood, the fact is that their contemporaries and successors, who were not canonized, acted in much the same way. We know that King Solomon participated in matins and vespers, at least on important church holidays.[121] In the introduction we mentioned the penitential rites performed by King Peter Orseolo in the churches of Székesfehérvár to thank God for regaining the throne of Hungary. Many Hungarian kings and princes were founders and patrons of church institutions. Suffice it to mention the most important ones: Stephen I (Pannonhalma, Székesfehérvár, Esztergom), Peter Orseolo (Pécs), Andrew I (Tihany), Géza I (Hronský Beňadik, Szekszárd, Vác), Álmos (Dömös), Ladislas I (Oradea), Béla IV (Pest).

A particularly fascinating set of rituals that arose in this context is the concept known as voluntary humiliation or the expression of Christian humility. This is certainly a reference to the christomimetic nature of royal power in the early and high Middle Ages.[122] Demonstrations of humility and self-humiliation took several forms. To express reverence and respect a monarch could voluntarily bow before another ruler. He could also bow before an enemy as a means of ending a conflict and as a token of reconciliation. Also quite common were acts of humiliation before God and the saints.[123] This process eventually developed into a distinct ritual complex that scholars refer to as *humiliatio—exaltatio*.[124] At its core was the voluntary display of humility and self-humiliation on the part of a high-ranking monarch (during a crisis of power, for example, before a critical military confrontation, or after the commission of certain grave sins, but also as part of preparations for the assumption of a high social rank). This ritual display of humility, which was always performed in public, was meant to secure the assistance of the celestial powers

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121   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 114–116, SRH 1, pp. 380–82.

122   Jacques Le Goff, "Le Roi dans l'Occident médiéval: caractères originaux," in *Kings and Kingship in Medieval Europe*. ed. Anne J. Duggan (London: King's College, 1993), pp. 3–5; Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, pp. 47–48.

123   Koziol, *Begging Pardon*, pp. 100–102.

124   Althoff, "Humiliatio", pp. 39–51.

and thus ensure the favourable course of subsequent events. The act of humiliation (*humiliatio*) was followed by exaltation (*exaltatio*).[125] The latter might take the form of a victory in battle, the favourable conclusion of a dispute, or the forgiveness of evil deeds.

This form of ritual communication flourished especially in Germany in the 10th and 11th centuries. However, similar cases are also known from all across Europe: among others, Otto I (the Great) prostrated himself before the Holy Lance in March 939 shortly before the decisive battle at Birten against the numerically superior forces of his brother Henry,[126] and public displays of humility and penitent rites accompanied Bolesław III's pilgrimage to Hungary, intended to purify the Polish prince after he blinded his brother Zbigniew.[127]

Examples of this kind of ritual action can also be found in Hungarian sources. They are particularly prominent in the account of the German chronicler Wipo of Burgundy. In his biography of Emperor Conrad II (1024–1039) he describes the emperor's military confrontation with the Hungarian King Stephen in 1030. The Emperor reportedly arrived at the Hungarian border with a huge army while Stephen could muster only a small number of troops. However, the King of Hungary relied on God's protection and assistance, and to secure it he decreed that prayers be performed and feasts observed throughout his dominions.[128] As a result Conrad's campaign failed, and he did not succeed in invading Hungary. In addition, Stephen was able to conclude a separate peace treaty with the Emperor's son, the later king Henry III.[129] In this instance Stephen I acted in the same way as Otto I had done nearly a hundred years earlier at Birten. Begging for God's favour in a difficult situation called for an appropriate ritual form of expression. In the chronicler's reading both rulers were rewarded with victory.

Ladislas I pursued a similar course of action when he found himself in an almost identical situation. On the morning of 14 March 1074, the day of the decisive battle at Mogyoród, where Princes Ladislas and Géza fought

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125   Althoff, "Humiliatio", p. 39.

126   *Liudprandi Antapodosis*, IV.24, MGH SSrG 41, pp. 117–18.

127   *Gesta principum Polonorum. The Deeds of the Princes of the Poles*. ed. Paul W. Knoll – Frank Schaer (Central European Medieval Texts 3) (Budapest/New York, 2003), III.25, pp. 276–78. Hereafter referred to as *Gesta principum Polonorum*.

128   *"Rex autem Stephanus minime sufficiens adversus imperatorem orationibus et ieiuniis in universo regno suo indictis praesidium Domini tantummodo flagitabat." Gesta Chuonradi II. Imperatoris*, c. 26, MGH SSrG 61, p. 44.

129   *Gesta Chuonradi*, c. 26, MGH SSrG 61, p. 45.

King Solomon, Ladislas marshalled his troops. However, before setting out for battle, the Prince picked up his arms, publicly prostrated himself on the ground and asked for God's mercy (*in terram se prostravit et omnipotentis Dei clementiam postulavit*).[130] In the event of a victory he promised to build a cathedral at this spot dedicated to St Martin, the patron saint of knights and soldiers.[131] The blessing of Géza II by the bishops mentioned earlier, as well as Géza I prostrating himself before church dignitaries at the monastery of Szekszárd at Christmas 1076,[132] are further examples of this kind of symbolic action.

There are also examples of the inverse of this model. Those participants in acts of political communication who act haughtily and with pride instead of humility, who do not observe the rules or indeed try to manipulate the ritual, are generally punished by defeat and involuntary public humiliation. In the scholarly literature this process is usually illustrated by the 10th century example of Henry the Quarrelsome, Duke of Bavaria, who according to contemporary sources was literally degraded for his unjustified desire to be elevated, which in his case represented his striving for royal status.[133] The best-known example of this model of behaviour in early medieval Hungary is undoubtedly count (*comes*) Vid whom the chroniclers blame for inciting most of the conflicts in the second half of the 11th century.[134] Vid's actions were driven by his inordinate desire for illegitimate social elevation to the rank of Duke of Nitra. Since Vid was not a member of the Árpád dynasty, he was not entitled to assume this role. Nevertheless, he repeatedly urged King Solomon to permanently depose the Dukes Géza and Ladislas to pave the way for him to assume the duchy of Nitra. Sources report that it was his just punishment for being so presumptious when he lost his life in the decisive battle at Mogyoród. The Hungarian chronicler has Ladislas utter the following words over the count's dead body:

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130   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 121, SRH 1, p. 389.

131   The Hungarian chronicler erroneously substituted St Martin for St George. See *Kroniky stredovekého Slovenska*. ed. Július Sopko (Budmerice, 1995), p. 47, ref. 62.

132   *Ottonis et Rahewini Gesta Friderici*, I. 33, MGH SSrG 46, p. 51; *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 130, SRH 1, pp. 402–403.

133   *Annales Quedlinburgenses ad. a. 985*, MGH SS 3, p. 67; Althoff, "Humiliatio", pp. 46–47.

134   Cf. Kristó, *Histoire de la Hongrie*, pp. 57–58; Zoltan J. Kosztolnyik, *Five Eleventh Century Hungarian Kings: Their Policies and their Relations with Rome* (New York/Boulder: East European Quarterly, 1981), pp. 83–87; Steinhübel, *Nitrianske kniežatstvo*, pp. 279–81.

But I wonder why you had designs on the duchy although you were not
of princely lineage, why you demanded the crown without being an off-
spring of the royal family. Now I can see your heart, which had longed
for the duchy, lying here pierced by a lance and your head that had
demanded the crown severed by the sword.[135]

Thus in the imagination of medieval people humility helped monarchs achieve
success and rise to power, while public demonstrations of pride resulted in
social downfall. In this case we see a symbiosis of true political action with
deliberate stylization and interpretation of events by the sources. The con-
temporary authors (the overwhelming majority of them from the clergy) also
undoubtedly sought to overemphasize the Christian virtues of the main actors
in the events depicted. This is especially true of royal saints. But despite this we
cannot regard these events purely as invented propaganda, if for no other rea-
son then because they also relate to monarchs who have never been regarded
as saints (Géza I, Géza II, Solomon). This is how we can certainly read the
account of the penitent deeds of Stephen I by the German biographer Wipo
who, as a champion of Emperor Conrad II, King Stephen's direct rival, was
surely not interested in idealizing the Hungarian king. However, we must bear
in mind that in citing God's mercy as the source of his power, the medieval
king had to demonstrate his gratitude in actual public life and this was the
purpose of the rituals demonstrating his humility. As Gerd Althoff has said,
the *humiliatio—exaltatio* model was an example of a synchronic occurrence
of the descriptive pattern (*Erzählmuster* = the account of the events in the
sources) and cultural pattern (*Kulturmuster* = the actual execution of power).[136]

6   Summary

Kings enjoyed a special position in medieval society, which was reflected in
appropriate rituals. Rituals of power, as we have called these public symbolic
forms of communication between rulers and their environment, could take
a variety of forms and occur in a great variety of guises. However, they were
always aimed at the royal power, which had to be emphasized, publicly dis-

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135   *"Sed miror, quia de genere ducum non fuisti, cur ducatum volebas, nec de regum, quare coro-*
       nam optabas? Video nunc, quia cor, quod ad ducatum anhelabat, lancea perforatum iacet,
       et caput, quod coronam optabat, gladio scissum est." Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV, c. 122,
       SRH 1, p. 392.
136   Althoff, "Humiliatio", pp. 50–51.

played and constantly reaffirmed. In addition to the basic inauguration rite (coronation) this purpose was served by recurrent rituals, which gave a visual form to the initial elevation to power (*Festkrönung* and *Unter-Krone-gehen*).

Monarchic ideology can also be studied in terms of several other specific rites. The singing of royal praises (*laudes regiae*) on important occasions also points to the sacred nature of kings' power, acquired through anointment. The military role of Hungarian kings found its ritual expression in rites involving the laying down of arms. As so often in the case of rites, girding by sword or the laying down of the military belt (*cingulum militiae*) carried multiple meanings. It symbolized passage from childhood to adulthood, opened the door to the community of warriors, and symbolized his assumption of a particular public role (in this case, royal status).

Probably most widespread were courtly rituals and festivities. The royal court was central to the public life of a monarch and his entourage. The King marked all significant religious, social, and family holidays with the requisite pomp and circumstance and these events provided excellent opportunities for displaying his majesty and power. Equally important was the unifying or binding nature of these festivities, which were always closely connected with feasts (*convivium*). Cohesion rites were used to establish, reinforce and reaffirm bonds, friendships and alliances. A specific type of ritual served to demonstrate the monarch's Christian virtues, particularly the most important one—humility (*humilitas*).

The Settling of Disputes and Submission—Rituals of Reconciliation

At the turn of the first and second millennium the first king of Hungary Stephen I (1000–1038) shepherded Hungary into the community of Christian Europe. By assuming a royal rank, bolstering the country's internal as well as international standing and, above all, through his policy of uncompromising Christianization, he transformed Hungary into a strong state, fully integrated into the contemporary Latin orbit. Along with its new religion and the legislation deriving from it, the country also adopted new ways of perceiving the world, new moral values, as well as new forms of public communication between the various elements of Hungarian society. The extant corpus of Hungarian chronicles and legends as well as foreign sources allow us to trace the norms of behaviour and ritual interaction that the Hungarian ruling class began to copy from their contemporaries, particularly in Western Europe, from the 11th century onwards. A key area in which ritual communication came to be used was the settling of disputes by means of reconciliation and submission rituals. In this chapter we shall attempt to outline the forms of ritual communication employed by the Hungarian ruling class in the early and high Middle Ages, focusing on the phenomenon of ritual reconciliation in the form recorded primarily by Hungarian narrative sources.

European medieval history may sometimes appear to be a period of unceasing fighting and constant disputes. Power grabs, dynastic disputes and invasions by foreign ethnic groups continually exposed the population to threats and insecurity. Considering that until the late Middle Ages there was no centralized and effectively administered state to speak of and given the almost complete absence of an effectively functioning administrative system, and the fact that law enforcement was largely in the hands of those in power or those who were able to secure the support of influential people, it is sometimes amazing that this network of interrelations was able to survive or, on occasion, even thrive. This was because medieval rulers were able to develop alternative methods of governing the state and resolving problems. One of the successful areas was the settling of disputes by means of reconciliation rituals.[1]

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1 Scholarship on this subject is very extensive. Most recently, for the settlement of disputes within Central Europe in the Middle Ages, see for example *Rituál smíření. Konflikt a jeho*

In the early Middle Ages in Central and Eastern Europe, including Hungary, ritual reconciliation was also frequently used as a way of settling existing disputes. The meeting that took place in 1001 in Esztergom and was recorded in the Hungarian-Polish Chronicle that we mentioned earlier was but one possible manifestation of this process. Parties in a dispute (primarily royalty and members of the higher nobility) usually resorted to this act only in intractable situations or during stalemates. Whenever a dispute could not be resolved by military confrontation or force of authority, ritual reconciliation would be brought into play as a part of the public ritual communication process.[2]

As we shall demonstrate with examples from Hungarian sources, the reconciliation would take place only once all the details had been meticulously agreed in advance. The ritual would be performed before the greatest possible number of witnesses, and variations and additions would be made to reflect the specific requirements of the case and the political and power relations at play. Ritual reconciliation would occasionally also involve public submission by one of the parties (usually the party that had been defeated or was facing defeat), through the ritual known as *deditio*. We will also explore the accompanying symbolic gestures demonstrating the humility and sincerity of the participants in these events. Ritual behaviour could also include a plea for mercy (or supplication).[3] Equally important was the role of mediators in the peaceful settlement of disputes.[4]

řešení ve středověku. eds. Martin Nodl – Martin Wihoda (Brno: Matice Moravská, 2008), especially pp. 9–11; Dalewski, *Ritual and Politics.* For a general overview, see *The Settlement of Disputes in Early Medieval Europe.* eds. Wendy Davies – Paul Fouracre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Patrick Geary, "Vivre en conflit dans une France sans état: Typologie des mécanismes de règlement du conflit (1050–1200)," *Annales E.S.C.*, 41 (1986), pp. 1107–33; Althoff, "Demonstration und Inszenierung", especially pp. 21–153; Timothy Reuter, "Peacebreaking, feud, rebellion, resistance: violence and peace in the politics of the Salian era," in *Medieval Polities and Modern Mentalities.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 355–87.

2 Gerd Althoff, "Das Privileg der 'Deditio'. Formen gütlicher Konfliktbeendigung in der mittelalterlichen Adelsgesellschaft," in *Nobilitas. Funktion und Repräsentation des Adels in Alteuropa.* ed. Otto Oexle (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), pp. 28–30, 50.

3 For a detailed account of this issue, see Koziol, *Begging Pardon.*

4 Symbolic gestures are examined in detail in Dušan Zupka, "Symbolické gestá pokory—podrobenie sa a suplikácia. Ritualizované formy riešenia sporov v arpádovskom Uhorsku (11.–12. storočie)," in *Historické štúdie. Medzi antikou a stredovekom. Acta historica Posoniensia XIII.* eds. Miroslav Daniš – Pavol Valachovič (Bratislava: Katedra všeobecných dejín FiFUK, 2010), pp. 88–103. For more on the role of mediators see Hermann Kamp, "Vermittler in den Konflikten des hohen Mittelalters," in *Segni e riti nella chiesa altomedievale occidentale* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 1987), pp. 675–710.

1   **Reconciliation Rituals in Internal Political Struggles and in the Settling of Disputes with Foreign Monarchs (11th Century)**

1.1   *Reconciliation Rituals in the Struggles for the Hungarian Throne in the Second Half of the 11th Century*

Saint Stephen had laid the foundations of the Hungarian Christian monarchy, yet barely a few years after his death in 1038 the kingdom was shaken by internal dynastic unrest and twice confronted with pagan uprisings. This state of affairs characterized the period from the late 1030s to the early 1080s. It is times of unrest, of uncertain or disputed power or social chaos that provide the historian with the best opportunities to study the evolution and use of ritual communication, since it was at times like these that the rulers most often resorted to symbolic forms of expression and utilizing the 'power of ritual'.[5]

A good example of the settling of a dispute by means of ritual reconciliation in Hungary's history are the dynastic divisions during the Árpád era in the middle of the 11th century. The succession dispute, known in historiography as the conflict between King Solomon I and the Dukes (Géza and Ladislas),[6] illustrates most of the political events of the 1060s and 1070s recorded in the sources. However, the origins of the conflict go back to the 1050s, the reign of Andrew I (1046–1060), or even earlier, to the early days of the Hungarian kingdom under Stephen I.

In the course of the 10th century the Hungarians observed the ancient dynastic principle of seniority. The title of Grand Prince was traditionally conferred on the oldest member of the Árpád family.[7] The first to break with this tradition was Prince Géza, Stephen's father, who had his brother Michael removed (or killed) towards the end of the 10th century. Stephen I later acted in the same way with his cousin Vazul, Duke of Nitra, whom he ordered to be blinded. Stephen's designated successor to the throne as the second Hungarian king was his son Emeric. Since, however, he had died in his father's lifetime (1031), a foreigner—Peter Orseolo (1038–1041 and 1044–1046), the son of the Doge of Venice and nephew of the King of Hungary—was chosen as his successor. Following a short reign by a leading local noble Samuel Aba (1041–1044), and

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5   Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, pp. 63–64. For more on this issue in the Hungarian context see Dušan Zupka, "Rituály zmierenia v zápasoch o uhorský trón v druhej polovici 11. storočia," in *Rituál smíření. Konflikt a jeho řešení v středověku*. eds. Martin Nodl – Martin Wihoda (Brno: Matice Moravská, 2008), pp. 57–70.

6   Hóman, *Geschichte*, p. 276; Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, p. 129.

7   *Dejiny Slovenska I*. ed. Richard Marsina (Bratislava: Veda, 1986), pp. 164–66; Deér, *Heidnisches*.

Peter Orseolo's second reign, Vazul's eldest son Andrew I (1046–1060) ascended to the throne.

It is in the reign of King Andrew I that the direct roots of the ensuing succession conflict between King Solomon (1063–1074 and 1074–1081) and the Princes Géza and Ladislas must be sought. Andrew returned to Hungary from exile in (successively) Bohemia, Poland and Kievan Rus. The chronicles report that in the early 1050s Andrew summoned his younger brother Béla back from Poland because his first wife was unable to bear him a son. Sources say that he granted Béla a third of the kingdom and installed him as the Duke of Nitra.[8] The position of the Duke of Nitra was the first step to ascending to the throne of Hungary.[9] However, all this changed in 1053 as Andrew's second wife, the Russian Princess Anastasia, gave birth first to Solomon and later a second son, David. In keeping with the practice of his predecessors, the king decided to break his succession agreement with Béla. In 1058 he had his son Solomon, then some five years of age, anointed and crowned (*in regem fecit inungi et coronari*) in the presence and with the consent[10] of his brother Béla and his sons (the later dukes and kings Géza and Ladislas). However, according to the chronicles Béla was very angry during the ceremony, especially as during the mass a song proclaimed that the child king should rule over his brothers (cousins).[11]

After King Andrew I suffered a stroke sometime in 1058, rendering him practically immobile for the rest of his life, he resolved to bolster the standing of his successor by forging a family relationship with the German royal dynasty. Thus it came about that on 20 September 1058, near the river Morava (*iuxta fluvium Morva*), the five-year-old Solomon was formally betrothed to the 11-year-old Judith, sister of Emperor Henry IV. At the same time, Hungarian and German nobles concluded a peace treaty in the names of their rulers, sealing it with an oath.[12]

Nevertheless, Andrew was aware that his life was nearing its end and that his child successor would lack the strength to defend the throne against Duke Béla. The sources provide an account of this, one of the best-known episodes

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8   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 88, SRH 1, pp. 344–45.

9   Cf. Gyula Kristó, *A XI. századi hercegség története Magyarországon* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1974).

10   *Simonis de Keza Gesta Hungarorum*, c. 58, SRH 1, p. 180.

11   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 91, SRH 1, pp. 352–53.

12   *Annales Altahenses maiores. ad a. 1058*. MGH SSrG4, *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 91, SRH 1, p. 351; *Simonis de Keza*, c. 57, SRH 1, p. 179. This fact is confirmed by a charter issued by Henry IV on 20 September 1058 "*actum Marahafelt*" MGH DD H IV 1, pp. 47–48.

of the Árpád era, dating from 1059. Although it may be just an anecdote of the kind found quite frequently in narrative sources throughout medieval Europe, it is highly valuable in terms of ritual communication and the significance of symbolic actions.[13] The king, now gravely ill, arranged to meet Béla in the village of Várkony. Lying in bed, he had the royal crown, the symbol of the royal power, and the sword, a symbol of ducal power, placed on a purple-coloured rug on the floor. Upon the Duke's arrival Andrew sought to justify his actions, explaining that Solomon's coronation was part of a peace treaty and a condition of his marriage to Henry's sister Judith. Eventually, however, he allegedly acknowledged Béla's claim to the throne and gave him an opportunity to determine his future fate. If the Duke had opted for the royal crown, two hired assassins were on hand instantly to put an end to his earthly life. Fortunately, however, Béla had learned of this in advance and opted for the sword, the symbol of the duchy, and was thus able to walk free. The chronicler reports that Andrew had acted in an unprecedented way in that he, a monarch, had voluntarily bowed down at the feet of his hierarchically lower-ranking brother, thereby publicly and symbolically affirming their reconciliation.[14]

Nevertheless, a year later, in 1060, Béla defeated Andrew I in battle and ascended the Hungarian throne, marking the beginning of a protracted struggle for power and succession to the Árpád throne between Solomon, his wife Judith and King Henry on the one hand, and King Béla and his sons Géza and Ladislas on the other. Since Béla realized that the conflict could no longer be resolved by means of ritual reconciliation with Solomon, he opted for a new kind of public self-presentation and communication with his subjects as a way of settling the dispute. In spite of the new king's triumphant entry into Székesfehérvár on 6 December 1060 where he was crowned by bishops, Béla realized he was on shaky ground. He could not rely on being acknowledged throughout Hungary because he had driven out the legitimately crowned ruler, forcing him to seek refuge at the court of Europe's most powerful ruler of the time, the German King Henry IV. Béla therefore decided to legitimize his reign and reconcile with the Hungarians by means of an interesting ritual. Following

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13   One only has to recall the famous meeting between the Emperor Otto II and Hugh Capet, the King of France, on the river Rhine and the attempt to hand over the sword which had been left behind, which could have been construed as the submission of Hugh as Otto's vassal. See Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, p. 96; *Richer von Saint-Remi Historiae* III.85, MGH SS 4, p. 216.

14   *"Habeat filius tuus coronam, quia unctus est, et da mihi ducatum, statimque gladium accepit. Rex itaque inclinavit se ad pedes eius, quod raro factum est."* Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV, c. 92, SRH 1, p. 355.

an ancient Hungarian custom he summoned two representatives (eloquent sages) from every village in the land to represent the Hungarian people at a general assembly. However, in addition to the dignitaries, huge crowds of servants and peasants flooded into the capital. Incited by pagan opposition in the country they provoked an uprising against the king and Christianity. Béla could escape this difficult situation only through drastic military intervention. The failed 'general' assembly can thus be interpreted as the king's attempt to achieve reconciliation and recognition of his power by means of public approbation from his subjects.[15] Nevertheless, this attempt ultimately failed because rituals (including reconciliation rituals) are interactive in nature.[16] In return for accepting and recognizing Béla's legitimacy his subjects expected to be allowed to return to the pagan way of life,[17] which the king flatly refused. The legitimacy of Béla's claim to the Hungarian throne was eventually resolved by his early death in 1063. This was the beginning of the rivalry between King Solomon on the one hand and his cousins, dukes Géza and Ladislas, on the other. Again the conflict could be resolved only by military means.

In late summer of 1063 German forces, 'led' by the 13-year-old King Henry IV invaded Hungary, and met little resistance as they penetrated deep into the heart of the country. Upon their entry into Székesfehérvár the King and his protégé Solomon were given a triumphant welcome, *adventus*, by the nobility, bishops and the people:

> The Emperor [in fact, the King—D.Z.] spoke to all Hungarians on behalf of his brother-in-law King Solomon, renewing peace between them and sealing it with an oath. Following a ceremonial coronation with the consent and acclamation of Hungary [or rather, the Hungarians—D.Z.] he installed King Solomon on his father's throne. Solomon bestowed copious royal gifts on the Emperor, enabling his happy return to this homeland.[18]

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15   Kristó, *Histoire de la Hongrie*, p. 56. For assemblies in general see Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900–1300*. 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

16   Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, pp. 26–28.

17   For further details on this in the context of the struggle against paganism in Hungary see Vincent Múcska, "Boj uhorského štátu proti pohanstvu v 11. storočí," in *Pohanstvo a kresťanstvo*. eds. Rastislav Kožiak – Jaroslav Nemeš (Bratislava: Chronos, 2004), p. 207; János M. Bak – Pavel Lukin, "Consensus and Assemblies in Early Medieval Central and Eastern Europe," in *Political Assemblies in the Earlier Middle Ages*. eds. Marco Mostert – P.S. Barnwell (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), p. 101.

18   *"Concionatus est autem imperator ad universum cetum Hungarorum pro genero suo rege Salomone pacemque inter eos reformatam iusiurandi religione interposita confirmavit, regem autem Salomonem in paterno solio glorie coronatum cum assensu et clamatione*

Following Béla's death the dynastic dispute was thus temporarily resolved by Solomon's (re)instatement on the Hungarian throne. King Henry IV's military expedition succeeded in confirming the alliance and peace between the Holy Roman Empire and Hungary and strengthening familial ties between the two kings, and the triumphant welcome and acclamation resulted in King Solomon being accepted and reconciled with his nobles and subjects. However, the restoration of order and the stability of rule over Hungary as a whole required one further, and most important, step: reconciliation with Duke Géza and his brother Ladislas.

Both dukes, who had been staying in Poland, embarked on a military expedition against Solomon immediately after Henry's departure. Fearing military confrontation, Solomon withdrew to the fortified castle of Moson close to the German border.[19] It is at this stage that a mediator and peacemaker comes to the fore, a role which, as was customary throughout medieval Europe, was taken on by a bishop,[20] in this case Dezider, Archbishop, probably of Kalocsa. After trying to settle the dynastic dispute by force, by forging an alliance with a powerful neighbour, and by means of an elaborately staged symbolic agreement, the parties eventually opted for the most viable and generally most effective way: performing a public reconciliation ritual. The meeting was presumably preceded by extensive preparations and negotiations between envoys from both camps. Their efforts culminated in a meticulously planned encounter in the guise of symbolic acts aimed at demonstrating the binding nature and irrefutable validity of individual elements of the ritual. The reconciliation consisted of three parts: the meeting and public affirmation of the reconciliation by means of an oath; the affirmation of the validity and binding nature of the agreement through a collective celebration, and last but not least an affirmation of the king's legitimacy by means of festival crowning (*Festkrönung*). This ensured several years of peace and peaceful coexistence between the king and the dukes, lasting until the early 1070s, the longest period of stability the country had seen since St Stephen's death.

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totius Hungarie sedere fecit. Ipse vero imperator divite gaza Hungarie a rege Salomone largissime remuneratus prospere rediit ad propria." Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV, c. 97, SRH 1, pp. 361–62. See also *Annales Altahenses maiores ad. a.1063*, MGH SSrG 4.

19   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 97, SRH 1, p. 362.

20   An example is to be found in the actions of Pope Leo IX, who tried to reconcile King Henry III with Andrew I in Bratislava in 1052. *Herimannus Augiensis monachus Chronicon a. 1052*, MGH SS 5; *Annales Altahenses maiores ad. a. 1052*, MGH SSrG 4. Cf. Drahomír Suchánek, "Role duchovních osob při řešení konfliktů ve středověku a smiřujíci rituály," in *Rituál smíření*, pp. 273–89.

The reconciliation ritual was preceded by intensive negotiations between representatives of both parties, in which Archbishop Dezider is said to have played a particularly effective role. It was in response to his insistent pleas that Géza agreed not to prevent Solomon from exercising power in Hungary and to perform a public reconciliation. In exchange Géza would be allowed to keep a third of the kingdom, as had his father Béla before him. Géza became the Duke of Nitra while his younger brother Ladislas received the region of Bihar.[21] Géza could continue to nurture hopes for the royal crown because Solomon, only 10 years old at the time, had yet to father a son. Once both parties consented, the ritual reconciliation could take place:

> On the Holy Day of the martyrs Fabian and Sebastian, King Solomon and Duke Géza sealed their peace in Győr before Hungary (the Hungarians) by an oath. Subsequently both of them, together with the entire court, celebrated the day of our Lord's Resurrection in Pécs. There on Easter Sunday King Solomon was honourably crowned by Duke Géza's own hand in the presence of the nobility, and ceremonially led to the royal basilica of the Prince of the Apostles, the blessed Peter, where they celebrated the Holy Mass together. When the throngs of Hungarians saw the reconciliation (peace) between the King and the Duke and their mutual love, they praised the Lord, the lover (originator) of peace, and great joy reigned among the people.[22]

The first phase of ritual reconciliation got under way in the course of a personal meeting in Győr, a city in the part of Hungary that belonged to the King but was located very close to the border with the Duchy of Nitra. This was where both men expressed their willingness to settle their dispute by peaceful means, confirming it with a ceremonial oath. Before the next symbolically charged ritual act could take place, hostilities between them had to be brought to a close.

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21 Steinhübel, *Nitrianske kniežatstvo*, pp. 274–75.

22 *"In festo autem sanctorum Fabiani et Sebastiani martyrum rex Salomon et Geysa dux coram Hungaria in Geur pacem firmaverunt, deinde festum dominice resurrectionis ambo simul cum plena curia Quinqueecclesiis celebraverunt. Ubi rex Salomon ipso die pasche assistentibus regni proceribus per manus Geyse ducis honorabiliter est coronatus et in regiam beati Petri principis apostolorum basilicam ad audiendam missam gloriose deductus. Universa ergo congregatio Hungarorum videntes pacem regis et ducis et mutuam inter eos dilectionem, laudaverunt Deum pacis amatorem, et facta est letitia magna in populo."* Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV, c. 97, SRH 1, pp. 362–63.

The ending of the succession dispute had subsequently to be substantiated and validated. In the Middle Ages joint feasts and celebrations of major holidays served this purpose. The King thus met the Duke again at Easter in the heart of Solomon's royal territory at Pécs, to celebrate Easter Sunday. We can assume with some certainty that the above mentioned ritual feast formed part of this encounter even though this is not explicitly mentioned in the sources.[23] The point of this act was the public affirmation of goodwill and the alliance between the two protagonists, which was to seal the reconciliation concluded at Győr. The third and final phase of the ritual was the grandest. On Easter Sunday Duke Géza is said to have crowned Solomon "honourably by his own hand" and led him to the ceremonial mass. This action served the purpose of symbolically confirming Géza's acknowledgement of the legitimacy and indisputability of Solomon's right to the succession. That the festival crowning (*Festkrönung*) took place anew indicated that Solomon's rule was recognized throughout the land.[24] Their subsequent attendance at the ceremonial mass at the cathedral can be read as the symbolic expression of their determination and obligation to uphold the status agreed before God.

What is interesting though are the reasons for, and the form of, the repeated inauguration ceremonies. It is truly remarkable that Solomon underwent another coronation since he had already been crowned once. In 1058 his father Andrew I had him crowned and anointed (*Erstkrönung*) and additionally in 1063 he was installed on the throne during the visit of King Henry IV (*Unter-Krone-gehen*). A possible explanation is that the first two 'coronations' had taken place 'by the will' or 'under the auspices' of the German monarch (in 1058 as a part of the peace treaty and a condition of Solomon's engagement to Princess Judith; in 1063 as a result of the German military incursion). Furthermore, the 5-year-old Solomon's crowning had broken the succession agreement between Andrew I and his brother Béla I. That is why only the third coronation (*Festkrönung*), which took place in Pécs in 1064, could be regarded as beyond dispute, carried out voluntarily and with the free consent of all Hungarians. Only the 1058 anointment and crowning can, therefore, be regarded as a genuine coronation (*Erstkrönung*) since it was the only one that included all the requisite 'shared' activities: Solomon's anointment and coronation in Székesfehérvár, while the following two coronations could claim only a symbolic status. The enthronement in 1063 was carried out by the German

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23   Ritual feasts (*convivium*) were common components of festive crownings (*Festkrönung*) in this period. See Koziol, *Begging Pardon*, p. 299; Leyser, "Ritual, Ceremony and Gesture", pp. 201–205.

24   Hóman, *Geschichte*, pp. 272–73. For the relations between the crown, coronations and power, see *Insignia Regni Hungariae*; Bartoniek, *A magyar királykoronázások*, pp. 8–84.

King while the 1064 reconciliation in Pécs was concluded by Solomon's festival crowning (*Festkrönung*), performed by Duke Géza's own hand.[25] Also remarkable is the venue chosen for the ceremony, since the coronation city at the time was Székesfehérvár. Yet the ritual appeasement took place in Győr and the subsequent *Festkrönung* in Pécs.[26] We thus have a record of the use of all three types of coronation as defined in the previous chapter, in the course of just a few years.[27]

A final observation with regard to the form and venue of the symbolic reconciliation. Every phase of the ritual took place in public and in the presence of nobles, prelates and the people, a fact explicitly noted by the chronicler every time: the oath of peace was sworn "before the Hungarians—Hungary" (*coram Hungaria*); the Easter holiday was jointly celebrated by both protagonists "along with their entire courts" (*simul cum plena curia*), and the coronation was held "in the presence of the kingdom's nobles" (*assistentibus regni proceribus*).[28] It is well-known that ritual actions derived their binding force from being performed in public, before witnesses. A public symbolic proclamation or action thus replaced written documentation or guarantees vouchsafed by means of hostages. An action performed in this way could not be called into question or cancelled without detrimental consequences.[29]

The settlement of dynastic disputes between the King and the Dukes by means of ritual reconciliation consisted of clearly defined and symbolically justified phases, and took place at venues chosen in advance. Both parties to the dispute benefited from these actions. Solomon could finally begin to rule while Géza retained power over one third of the kingdom. The agreement sealed in this way was binding until the early 1070s.

The King and the Dukes took advantage of the peaceful years (1064–1071) to embark on successful military campaigns in Croatia, Bohemia and against the

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25   The oldest preserved coronation *ordines* from Hungary date from the 14th century. We cannot therefore know with any certainty which elements formed part of the inauguration rituals of the Hungarian rulers in the 11th century. Emma Bartoniek's hypothesis that the so-called Egbert coronation *ordo* was used at the coronation of Solomon has been questioned by later scholarship. Bartoniek, "A magyar királlyáavatáshoz", p. 297; Bak, "Mittelalterliche Königskrönung", pp. 165–66; there is a summary in Fügedi, "Coronation," pp. 164, 174–75.

26   The importance of choosing appropriate symbolic venues for meetings and the role of borders in the communication between medieval monarchs is examined masterfully in Le Goff, "Le rituel symbolique", pp. 372–74.

27   See Chapter 2.

28   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 97, SRH 1, pp. 362–63.

29   Althoff, "The Variability of Rituals", pp. 74, 86.

Pechenegs.[30] It is noteworthy that the sources have no record of activities from this period that the protagonists might have used for symbolic ritual purposes (apart from references to lavish gifts handed out by the defeated monarchs). Ritual actions came into play again at the point when peaceful coexistence came to an end and the dynastic conflict flared up again.

In 1071 the 18-year-old Solomon, along with Géza and Ladislas, set out on a punitive military campaign against Belgrade, whose Byzantine commander had previously allowed Pecheneg troops to lay waste to southern Hungary.[31] After being besieged for three months, the inhabitants of Belgrade acknowledged defeat and tried to save their lives by handing over the castle and its treasures in exchange for freedom and their lives. The King and the Dukes shook hands with the castle's representatives as a sign of assurance that they would be spared (*manibus itaque regis et ducum in fidei pignus extensis*). The commander of the fortress (*dux*) Niketas, carrying a silver icon of the Virgin Mary, and with him most of the inhabitants of the besieged city, surrendered to Duke Géza (*in potestatem ducis Geyse se contulit*), who was famed for his piety and fair treatment of prisoners of war. However, only a small group of inhabitants surrendered to King Solomon (*ad manus autem regis Salomonis*), which threw him into a great rage.[32] Solomon decided to compensate for the small number of his prisoners of war by redistributing the bounty in a way that was disadvantegous to Géza. As a result of this a fresh dispute and conflict flared up between them. Adding insult to injury, when the Byzantine Emperor Michael VII Dukas, in his capacity as the sovereign lord of Belgrade, offered a peace and friendship treaty, he approached only Géza, who responded to the offer by releasing his prisoners of war, completely ignoring the Hungarian monarch.[33] This was the last straw for King Solomon who, goaded by his advisers, realized he was losing the ground under his feet and decided to eliminate his troublesome co-ruler once and for all.

According to the chronicles the King kept looking for an excuse to have Géza killed but the latter avoided Solomon's plots by skilful political manoeuvring and alliances. Both men mustered armies but since neither felt quite ready for military conflict they were forced to make another attempt to resolve their disagreement by peaceful means. On this occasion, too, the symbolic reconciliation ritual was preceded by painstaking preparations and negotiations via

30   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 99–103, SRH 1, pp. 363–69; Steinhübel, *Nitrianske kniežatstvo*, pp. 276–77.

31   Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, p. 31.

32   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 109, SRH 1, pp. 374–75.

33   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 110, SRH 1, p. 376.

envoys (*nunciis frequenter missis*), eventually resulting in a meeting. This meeting involved ritual reconciliation, albeit performed in a very different manner from the first occasion:

> The King and the Duke arrived at Esztergom both accompanied, as agreed, by eight men chosen from among the bishops and nobles, and crossed the river to an island close to the town for negotiations. There they spent a long time trading accusations and excuses, before finally making peace with one another by swearing an oath.[34]

Géza returned to the Duchy of Nitra and Solomon to Székesfehérvár and they exchanged high-ranking hostages.

The second symbolic reconciliation between Géza and Solomon thus occurred in a very different ritual context. On this occasion, instead of meeting on Solomon's turf, the King and the Duke met on an island in the middle of the Danube close to the city of Esztergom, right on the border between the royal and ducal parts of Hungary. This venue was chosen deliberately in order to symbolize the equal standing and vast power of both protagonists. This time the reconciliation was not witnessed by large crowds and all of the nobility but was instead supervised only by a carefully chosen group of eight representatives on each side. One possible consideration may have been that a larger gathering that would have included soldiers and the king's subjects might have sparked an armed conflict.[35]

However, the most significant variation consisted in the fact that the reconciliation, confirmed by the concluding of a peace treaty, was followed by a new element of ritual communication between the Hungarian king and nobles—the exchange of hostages. In this way the protagonists tried to prevent the failure of their first reconciliation, whose validity and binding nature was guaranteed only by an oath and a public demonstration of peace by means of a festival crowning. This time the observance and validity of the reconciliation

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34   *"… tandem rex et dux venerunt Strigonium ibique ex condicto utrique eorum tantum cum octo hominibus inter episcopos et principes navigaverunt in insulam civitati proximam ad colloquendum, ubi diu semet ipsos incusantes et excusantes tandem roborato federe pacis."* *Chron. Hung. comp. Saec. XIV*, c. 112, SRH 1, p. 378. The meeting of rulers in the middle of a river is a tradition that has roots in antiquity. There are examples in the work of Gregory of Tours from the 6th century. In his *History of the Franks* he mentions that Kings Clovis I and Alaric met on an island in the river Loire. King Guntram met King Childebert on a stone bridge. *Gregorii episcopi Turonensis Libri Historiarvm X*, MGH SS rer. Merov.1, II.35, p. 84 and V.17, p. 216.

35   Steinhübel, *Nitrianske kniežatstvo*, pp. 278–79.

was to be guaranteeed by high-ranking hostages, whose lives depended on its strict observance.

The second public reconciliation between Solomon and Géza did not last long either. Eventually everyone realized that the long-standing conflict could be resolved only by force of arms. The two rivals therefore decided to return each other's hostages, in the meantime concluding a supplementary peace treaty that was to last from St Martin's Day (November 1073) to St George's Day (April 1074). However, this agreement was not observed and on 14 March 1074 King Solomon lost the Hungarian throne for good at Mogyoród in a battle against Géza and Ladislas, who had the support of Otto, Duke of Olomouc, Géza's brother-in-law. Solomon, along with his wife Judith and mother Anastasia, was forced to seek refuge in the fortified castles of Moson and Bratislava (Lat. Posonium, Ger. Pressburg, Hung. Pozsony), fervently hoping for his German brother-in-law's assistance.[36] Control over all of Hungary passed to Géza (1074–1077), who assumed the royal rank although he had not succeeded in gaining universal acceptance. The actual Hungarian crown also remained in Solomon's hands. Géza entrusted the Duchy of Nitra to his younger brother Ladislas. Finding himself in an invidious position, the desperate Solomon took the fatal decision that cost him any sympathy he retained among the Hungarians. According to an account in the Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle, Solomon recognized the German king's feudal sovereignty and invited him to come and liberate 'his kingdom' (*tuum regnum*)[37] and reinstate Solomon on the throne. And so in the late summer of 1074 Henry IV embarked on a military expedition, penetrating deep into Hungarian territory as far as Vác. However, several weeks of besieging fortresses failed to bring about the desired result.[38]

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36   *Simonis de Keza Gesta Hungarorum*, c. 60, SRH 1, pp. 180–81; *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 123, SRH 1, pp. 393–94. See also Juraj Šedivý et al., *Dejiny Bratislavy I. Od počiatkov do prelomu 12. a 13. storočia. Brezalauspurc. Na križovatke kultúr* (Bratislava: Slovart, 2012), pp. 365–67.

37   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 126, SRH 1, p. 398; For this deed, Salomon was also sharply rebuked by Pope Gregory VII. See György Székely, "Kronensendungen und Königskreationen im Europa des 11. Jahrhunderts," in *Insignia regni Hungariae*, p. 22.

38   *Lamperti Hersfeldensis monachus ad a. 1074*, MGH SS 3; *Simonis de Keza Gesta Hungarorum*, c. 61, SRH 1, p. 181; *Chron Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 127–128, SRH 1, pp. 398–400.

ILLUSTRATION 3   *Hungarian King Solomon offers a vassal's tribute to German King Henry IV. Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle (14th century).*
REPRODUCED BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE ORSZÁGOS SZÉCHÉNYI KÖNYVTÁR.

Solomon withdrew to Bratislava, finding himself under threat from Ladislas, Duke of Nitra. At Christmas 1076 the final stage of conflict resolution took place as a last attempt was made at ritual reconciliation between Solomon and King Géza, who had not achieved full recognition of his royal status in spite of having been on the throne for three years. He was denied recognition by the Pope as well as the German monarch, nor was he recognized throughout Hungary.[39] This state of affairs, combined with a foreboding of his early demise

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39   For the complicated issue of Géza's royal status, his relations with the Byzantine Emperor and the Pope, and relations between Hungary and the Papacy in general, see *Insignia*

and a sense of guilt over having deposed a legitimate ruler, prompted Géza to undertake another reconciliation attempt:

> At this time King Magnus [Géza] celebrated the holiday of Our Lord's birth in Szekszárd. At his request the mass was celebrated by Archbishop Dezider, whose brilliant sermon brought calm to the King's soul and inclined him towards beneficial peace. At the end of the mass, which followed the prescribed rite, the King ordered everyone except for bishops and abbots to depart. When they did so, the King, with tears in his eyes, prostrated himself before the Archbishop and other abbots and dignitaries and confessed to have sinned by usurping the throne that belonged to a legitimately crowned king. He promised to restore Solomon as king and to conclude peace by keeping the crown and a third of the kingdom, the equivalent of the duchy. Solomon, as the crowned king, would regain power over two-thirds of the kingdom as before.[40]

The assembled prelates praised the Lord, overjoyed that the King chose to resolve the dispute peacefully. Géza subsequently sent his envoys to Solomon to present his conditions for reconciliation. The monarchs engaged in talks through messengers but differences of opinion prevented them from concluding the matter before Géza's sudden death in April 1077.

The failed attempt to find a new form of ritual reconciliation was, in fact, a logical outcome of the ongoing conflict. In his attempt to find a path to lasting peace, Géza, drawing a lesson from the failure of the public swearing of peace, the military victory, and the confirmation of the end of hostilities by sending out guarantors of peace, eventually decided to resort to a ritual most commonly used in ecclesiastical penitential practice[41] and in symbolic communication between a monarch and his subjects. A unilateral admission of guilt in combination with ritual prostration before church dignitaries or

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Regni Hungariae, pp. 21–23; Vincent Múcska, *Uhorsko a cirkevné reformy 10. a 11. storočia* (Bratislava: Stimul, 2004), pp. 30–34; Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, p. 32.

40   *"Rex autem magnus eo tempore natale Domini in Zugzard celebravit, quo petente archiepiscopus Desiderius sollempnem missam celebravit et sermone lucidissimo animum regis delinivit et ad bonum pacis inclinavit. Celebrataque missa, omnibus rite peractis precepit rex, ut omnes egrederentur preter episcopos et abbates. Tunc rex cum lacrimis prostratus est archiepiscopo et aliis ecclesiasticis personis seu prelatis dicebat se peccasse, quia regnum legittime coronati regis occupaverat, promisitque regnum redditurum Salomoni cum pace firma hoc modo, quod ipse coronam iure teneret cum tertia tamen parte regni, que ducatui appropriata erat, Salomon quoque duas partes regni coronatus teneret, quas prius detinebat." Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 130, SRH 1, pp. 402–403.

41   Schreiner, " *'Nudis pedibus'* ", pp. 80–84.

monarchs was widely used throughout medieval Europe, and has also been recorded in several Hungarian sources.[42]

The accession of King Ladislas I (1077–1095) to the throne is the beginning of the final stage in the dynastic dispute with King Solomon. Although the deposed monarch controlled only a small part of the territory and was totally dependent on German support, he had, nevertheless, not given up hope that he might succeed. His spirit was not broken by the loss of the strategic castle of Moson, or another failed mission by Henry IV, who came to his rescue again in 1079.[43] He had dynastic legitimacy on his side. As in Géza's case, Hungarian sources indicate that Ladislas also strove to restore the legitimate king and to reach a lasting reconciliation. Hungarian bishops again played a significant role in this endeavour. Ladislas, conscious of being a usurper (*ius legitimum Ladizlaus non habebat contra eum*),[44] "... in the fourth year of his reign [i.e. 1081] made peace with Solomon and provided him with sufficient means to keep a royal court."[45] However, the Hungarian nobility did not allow the country to be divided again into a Kingdom and a Duchy (*ducatus*). In response, Solomon hatched an assassination plot, which landed him in prison at Visegrád for two years. Legend has it that it was not until 1083, when Ladislas was engaged in the canonization of the first Hungarian King Stephen and his son Emeric, that Solomon was freed.[46] This was when, according to one version in the conclusion of the Hungarian-Polish Chronicle, the final encounter and reconciliation between the long-standing adversaries took place. Solomon's release was alleged to be a condition of elevating the body of King Stephen. Ladislas had

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42 References to prostrations are preserved in Hungarian legends: King Stephen and the man who tried to kill him, in *Legenda sancti Stephani regis ab Hartvico episcopo conscripta*, c. 21, SRH 2, p. 430; Bishop Gerard and his servant *Legenda sancti Gerhardi episcopi*, c. 5, SRH 2, p. 475; see Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, pp. 45–48 a 57–59.

43 Kristó, *Histoire de la Hongrie*, p. 63; Steinhübel, *Nitrianske kniežatstvo*, p. 288.

44 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 133, SRH 1, p. 407. The issue of Ladislas's coronation and the perception of his illegitimate act remain controversial. About his unwillingness to be crowned and anointed and his order that the royal insignia be worn in front of him, because he had received the royal office "by the Grace of God", see: ibid., pp. 404–405 and *Legenda S. Ladislai regis*, c. 5, SRH 2, p. 518; Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, p. 173. More recently also Dániel Bagi, "Herrscherporträts in der ungarischen Hagiographie," in *Macht und Spiegel der Macht: Herrschaft in Europa im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert vor dem Hintergrund der Chronistik*, eds. Norbert Kersken and Grischa Vercamer (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013), p. 412.

45 "... *quarto anno regni sui pacificatus est cum Salomone donans ei stipendia ad regales expensas sufficientia.*" *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 133, SRH 1, p. 407; *Annales Posonienses ad a. 1081*, SRH 1, p. 126.

46 *Legenda sancti Stephani regis ab Hartvico*, c. 24, SRH 2, pp. 433–35. See also Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, p. 124; *Annales Posonienses ad a. 1083*, SRH 1, p. 126.

Solomon freed from prison and brought before him. He stepped down from his throne, asking his former prisoner's forgiveness and mercy. The latter, to prove his forgiveness and final reconciliation, is said to have greeted him with the sign ('kiss') of peace. Unfortunately, the account of this scene of a most personal and moving act of reconciliation is found only in a single source, and in only one of its many extant versions at that.[47]

As in the past, Solomon's restless soul was not content with this state of affairs and he continued to tempt fate. After his alliance with the German king collapsed, his marriage to Judith broke up and he suffered another defeat at Ladislas' hands (1085), Solomon's unfortunate life came to an end in 1087 in a battle in Byzantium.[48]

1.2   *Conciliatory Settlement of Disputes between Hungary and the Holy Roman Empire*

During his reign King Stephen I was able to resist direct intervention by the German monarchs. Following his death, however, the influence of the German kings on Hungary's dynastic and internal political affairs became quite apparent. Pretenders to the Hungarian throne addressed their requests for assistance to their western neighbours who, in turn, came to regard Hungary as their fiefdom. This state of affairs gave rise to numerous conflicts and rivalries. In the first instance, of course, both parties sought to resolve their conflict by military confrontation. Where a military intervention did not happen or ended in an impasse, the protagonists often opted for a resolution by means of ritual reconciliation. This was most often the case when the rival forces obviously matched each other in strength, or the losing side saw reconciliation as a way of avoiding harsh punishment and reprisals.

In the introduction we focused on the copious use made of rituals in events relating to the reign and struggle for reinstatement on the throne of Hungary's second king, Peter Orseolo (1038–1041 and 1044–1046). In this section we shall explore some of these ritualized forms of political communication in greater detail.

The image of St Stephen's successor preserved by the Hungarian chronicles is not particularly positive. From the beginning of his reign Peter is said to have been involved in constant disputes with local Hungarian nobles because of the preferential treatment and appointment to office of members of his

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47   *Chronica Hungaro-Polonica*. Pars I. Textus cum varietate lectionum. ed. Béla Karácsonyi (Szeged, 1969), p. 71.

48   *Bernoldus Monachus S. Blasii Chronicon ad a. 1083, 1084*, MGH SS 5; Steinhübel, *Nitrianske kniežatstvo*, p. 289.

retinue, who were of Italian and German origin. After holding council, the Hungarian nobles allegedly demanded that Peter mete out punishment for misdemeanours committed by the foreigners he had appointed. Since the monarch did not respond to their request, in the third year of his reign, 1041, the country's nobles met on the bishops' advice and decided to confront Peter militarily. They resolved to replace the king by one of their number and appointed the king Stephen's brother-in-law, Samuel Aba (1041–1044). Realizing that he was on shaky ground, Peter fled to Bavaria to seek the help of the German king, Henry III.[49]

When Aba learned that Peter had succeeded in gaining Henry III's support, he sent his envoys to the German monarch to find out whether to expect military retaliation for Peter's banishment. Since Henry supported his protégé, Aba decided to respond by pillaging the borderlands of the Eastern March and Carinthia. After consulting his nobles and prelates the German king decided to retaliate. His army, jointly with that of Bohemia's Duke Břetislav I, marched to the Hungarian border on the river Danube, pillaged the borderlands and conquered Hainburg and Bratislava. At this point a message from the Hungarians reached Henry. The Hungarian side tried to ward off further military confrontation and end the conflict by means of (ritual) reconciliation. The Hungarian envoys admitted their guilt and promised Henry to provide redress for their earlier actions. They sent him gifts and promised to release prisoners of war taken during previous forays into German territory. The only condition set by the Hungarian side was that they would not accept Peter as king again. It was on this condition that the entire reconciliation foundered since Henry had taken an oath to reinstate Orseolo on the Hungarian throne.[50]

Negotiations were resumed in the following year. In May 1043 King Samuel Aba's representatives came to see Henry at Paderborn and Regensburg. Again they promised to release German prisoners of war or pay ransom for those who had died. Nevertheless, the German king ended the negotiations prematurely (allegedly due to the absence of Aba and the aggrieved individuals) and moved his army to the Hungarian border on the river Rebnitz/Rábca.[51] However, Samuel Aba still insisted on settling the conflict by peaceful means and tried to bring Henry round to this solution. Again he dispatched his envoys, asking that

49   *Annales Altahenses maiores ad a. 1041*, MGH SSrG 4, *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 71–72, SRH 1, pp. 323–26.

50   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 73–74, SRH 1, pp. 326–28; *Annales Altahenses maiores ad a. 1042*, MGH SSrG 4, *Herimannus Augiensis Chronicon ad a. 1042*, MGH SS 5.

51   Gyula Pauler, *A magyar nemzet története az Árpád-házi királyok alatt I* (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1899), p. 83.

a date be set for the return of prisoners of war and offering to reward Henry
and his entourage with sumptuous gifts. Eventually the rulers were able to
reach an agreement beneficial to both sides. Henry recognized Samuel Aba as
King of Hungary, thereby also ceasing (or suspending) his support for Orseolo.
The Hungarian King, on the other hand, ceded to Henry a swathe of land in the
Austrian Margraviate, which had been earlier seized by St Stephen.[52]

One year later (1044) the Hungarian nobles again appeared before King
Henry as supplicants. This time they came asking for his help against Aba,
who had turned the Hungarian nobility against himself by the way he ruled
and behaved. Moreover, he had yet to fulfil his promise to release prisoners
of war or reimburse Germany for the damage caused. Initially Henry sent his
army to the Austrian Margraviate, pretending that he was willing to reach an
agreement with Aba. The Hungarian King demanded the return of the nobles
who had defected to Henry's and Orseolo's side. Henry was no longer able to
conceal his real intentions and attacked Sopron on the Hungarian border. The
decisive battle took place near the village of Ménfő and Samuel Aba suffered
a defeat.[53] This was mainly because soldiers sympathetic to King Peter aban-
doned Aba but also due to the unexpectedly fierce tornado mentioned earlier.[54]

The Chronicon Pictum gives the following account of the last phase of the
dynastic dispute and the final reconciliation:

> Meanwhile the Hungarians gathered, and came to the Emperor [or rather,
> King Henry—D.Z.] weeping and begging for his mercy. The Emperor gave
> them a kindly and friendly welcome and granted their wishes. Then, with
> his entire army, he entered Székesfehérvár, a city called Weissenburg
> in German, which is the capital of the Kingdom of Hungary. Here he
> was welcomed with the honour that was his due. He placed the Royal
> Crown on Peter's head again and by royal ordination decked him out
> in St Stephen's regalia. By his own hand he led him into the Basilica of
> the Mother of God, the eternal Virgin Mary, and placed him upon the
> royal throne, thus reconciling the King with the Hungarians and the
> Hungarians with the King. At the Hungarians' request he allowed them to
> keep their Hungarian customs and be tried in accordance with their legal

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52 Steinhübel, *Nitrianske kniežatstvo*, p. 259; *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 75, pp. 328–29;
    Simonis de Keza, c. 48, SRH 1, p. 175; *Annales Altahenses maiores ad a. 1043*, MGH SSrG 4.

53 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 76–77, SRH 1, pp. 330–32; *Herimannus Augiensis Chronicon*,
    MGH SS 5, ad a. 1044.

54 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 76–77, SRH 1, p. 332; *Annales Altahenses maiores ad a. 1044*,
    MGH SSrG 4.

practice. Having arranged everything as he wished, he left some body-guards with Peter while he himself returned to Regensburg. A year later the Emperor returned to Hungary. During the holy festival, in the presence of Hungarians and Germans, King Peter surrendered the Kingdom to him together with a golden lance. The King further honoured the Emperor with copious precious gifts, whereupon the latter ceremonially returned to his motherland.[55]

After Aba's defeat, and after the country's population also submitted to Henry (...*omnes Ungarii ad deditionem Heinrico regi catervatim concurrunt, subiectionem serviciumque promittunt*),[56] Hungary found itself under the control of the German King. He chose to give it to Peter as his fiefdom. This fact had to be expressed by a symbolic action, i.e. Peter's enthronement and the handing over of the kingdom to Henry.

The King first received Hungarian representatives, granted them a pardon and agreed the course of the reconciliation with them. Only then could he appear in Székesfehérvár jointly with Peter for the festive (re)enthronement. Following the welcome (*adventus regis*) Henry could install Peter on the Hungarian throne and invest him in his office by his own hand by handing him the crown and other royal insignia. The core of the ritual was Peter's public reconciliation with the Hungarians, which took place by the throne in the Basilica of Virgin Mary (*regem Hungaris et Hungaros regi reconciliavit*). As mentioned in the introduction, Orseolo decided to publicly demonstrate his gratitude for being reinstated on the throne also in the sacral sphere, by carrying out a penitential procession through the churches of Székesfehérvár.

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55   "*Interea Hungari congregati supplices venerunt ad cesarem veniam et misericordiam implorantes. Quos cesar placido vultu et benigne suscipiens, quod rogabant, concessit. Indeque cum omni multitudine sua Albam venit, que Teutonice Veyzmburg dicitur, que est principalis sedes regni Hungarie. Ibi ergo cesar imperiali honore et latissimo preparatu ab Ungaris honoratus Petrum regem regali corona plenarie restitutum et sacris insignibus sancti regis Stephani more regio decoratum in regali throno manu sua deducens, in basilica gloriose genitricis Dei semper Virginis Marie regaliter sedere fecit et ibidem regem Hungaris et Hungaros regi reconciliavit concessitque petentibus Vngaris Hungarica scita servare et consuetudinibus iudicari. Hiis itaque taliter ordinatis cesar Petro rege cum presidio suorum in Hungaria relicto cum optata prosperitate Ratisponam rediit. Sequenti vero anno reversus est cesar in Hungariam, cui Petrus rex in ipsa sancta sollempnitate regnum Hungarie cum deaurata lancea tradidit coram Hungaris simul et Teutonicis. Multis etiam insuper et magnificis muneribus cesar honorificatus a rege ad propria rediit cum Gloria.*" Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV, c. 77–78, SRH 1, pp. 333–34.

56   *Herimannus Augiensis Chronicon*, MGH SS 5, ad a. 1044.

However, for reasons that are not entirely clear, the actual reconciliation and Peter's instatement was delayed for a year. The events that took place at Pentecost in 1045 are disputed to this day as historians are unable to agree on an unambiguous interpretation. When Henry III returned to Székesfehérvár, he accepted the Kingdom of Hungary from Peter's hand, along with the golden lance (*In ipsa sancta solemnitate Petrus rex regnum Ungariae cum lancea deaurata tradidit caesari domino suo coram omni populo suo et nostro*).[57] Subsequently Henry gave the kingdom back to Peter as his fiefdom and decided to keep Orseolo in Hungary as his vassal. The golden lance used in the ritual was probably the one the Germans had seized from Samuel Aba after the battle of Ménfő.[58] It is thus likely that rather than being merely part of the royal insignia it was a symbol of the German monarch's military victory in a decisive battle.[59] Subsequently Henry III sent the very same insignia to Rome where they were exhibited in St Peter's Cathedral.[60] The royal crown, on the other hand, remained in Orseolo's hands (although three decades later Pope Gregory VII tried to prove the opposite),[61] thus strengthening the legitimacy of his claim to the Hungarian throne.

The entire course of events is rather unclear and invites complex interpretations. Every source and, based on them, most historians, unanimously claim that it was Orseolo who handed the golden lance to Henry. Yet János M. Bak claims that it was Henry who handed the lance to Peter as a symbol of investiture into the rank of the King of Hungary (i.e. a king who was Henry's vassal). This reading is, of course, more logical since in the context of vassal commendation it was the senior who handed the fiefdom into his vassal's hands by entrusting him with a symbolic object. Nevertheless, the King

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57   *Annales Altahenses maiores ad a. 1045*, MGH SSrG 4. The Hungarian source informs in the same sense. *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 77–78, SRH 1, p. 334.

58   *Bonizo episcopus Sutriensis Liber ad amicum*, Liber V, Gombos Catalogus 1, p. 421.

59   Cf. Deér, *Die heilige Krone*, pp. 199–200. The victory at the battle of Ménfő had far-reaching consequences for the Empire and was recorded in several contemporary sources.

60   According to the eyewitness account of Bishop Bonizo of Sutri (d. 1091) the Hungarian golden lance could still be seen in Rome during his lifetime: *"…capta est a Ungarici regis lancea, quae per eosdem nuntios Romae delata est, et usque hodie ob signum victoriae ante confessionem beati Petri apostoli apparet."* *Bonizo episcopus Sutriensis Liber ad amicum*, Liber V, p. 421.

61   His notion of the subjection of Hungary to Rome and of the acceptance of the royal crown from the Pope is expressed by Gregory VII in his letters to kings Géza and Ladislas. See *Gregorius VII papa Epistolae*, Gombos Catalogus 1, pp. 1081–1086; Zoltan J. Kosztolnyik, "The Relations of Four Eleventh-Century Hungarian Kings with Rome in the Light of Papal Letters," *Church History*, 46/1 (1977), pp. 33–47, especially p. 41.

later took the golden lance out of Hungary and sent it to Rome, as attested by Bonizo of Sutri. Therefore it is unlikely that he would have handed it to Peter as a symbol of his status and power, only to send it out of the country later. This indicates that rather than being part of the insignia this was a symbol of his victory in the battle of Ménfő. Peter had handed over the Kingdom of Hungary to Henry only to receive it back immediately as a fiefdom. This form of vassal commendation is well documented in medieval Europe. A vassal would hand over his (allodial) property to his senior and would subsequently receive it back as a fiefdom (beneficium). As a matter of fact, Peter Orseolo did indeed hand over the golden lance to Henry III. Unfortunately, sources say nothing about whether some other symbolic object was used during the handing over of Hungary to Peter.[62]

However, the Hungarians' opposition to a foreign ruler turned out to be stronger than the threat of German military intervention. As early as the autumn of 1046 Peter faced a fresh rebellion from his nobles and as a result of this, and of the Vata pagan uprising that raged at the same time, he ended up being deposed, this time for good. Soon after his deposition he was blinded, and he died in prison in Székesfehérvár.

He was succeeded by Andrew I who began by consolidating his power over the country and then proceeded to suppress the pagan opposition. King Henry III cannot have been happy about the situation in Hungary. He could not leave the deposition and blinding of his protégé and vassal Orseolo go unchallenged. The King of Hungary therefore sent Henry a message explaining that he had only accepted the crown by popular demand and that he would hand over Peter's torturers and murderers whom he had not yet put to death. He promised to affirm his loyalty to the Emperor (Henry was crowned in Rome in 1046) by paying annual tribute and offering military assistance provided the latter recognized him as the King of Hungary. In view of other, more serious problems in his empire, Henry temporarily abandoned the military campaign he had planned.[63]

However, Hungarian-German relations started to deteriorate significantly after 1050, with more or less protracted battles and sieges occurring on an annual basis. In 1050 both parties pillaged one another's borderlands. In the

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62   See János M. Bak, "Holy Lance, Holy Crown, Holy Dexter: Sanctity of Insignia in Medieval East Central Europe," in Bak, *Studying*, p. 58; Deér, *Die heilige Krone*, pp. 199–200; Le Goff, "Le rituel symbolique", pp. 338–47; Vincent Múcska et al., *Dejiny európskeho stredoveku. I. Raný stredovek.* (Prešov: Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 2006), p. 233; Jacques Le Goff, *La civilisation de l'Occident médiéval* (Paris: Flammarion 1982), pp. 70–71.

63   *Herimannus Augiensis Chronicon*, MGH SS 5, ad a. 1046 et 1047.

following year, notwithstanding the peace offerings of the King of Hungary, the Emperor himself attacked Hungary with a large army, while Gerhard, the bishop of Regensburg, Duke Welf, and Břetislav I of Bohemia, attacked Hungary from the north. Since the Emperor's armies failed to achieve a decisive victory, and in addition suffered from hunger and lack of supplies, they decided to withdraw and return home empty handed. Andrew I subsequently managed to conclude at least a separate peace with Margrave Adalbert.[64]

Hungarian sources give a much less favourable picture of the campaign. Henry's army was allegedly cut off both from supplies and military assistance by its allies, and was being decimated during night raids by the Hungarians. The chroniclers report that the Emperor, finding himself in a desperate situation, resolved to make a humble plea for peace:

> The Emperor, seeing himself thus surrounded by such threats, sent a message to King Andrew and Duke Béla proposing to conclude perpetual peace ... He promised the hand of his daughter Sofia [the correct name was Judith—D.Z.] in marriage to King Andrew's son Solomon ... thereby to seal more strongly the conclusion of eternal peace ... The Emperor confirmed personally, by swearing a ceremonial oath, that he would faithfully carry out all his promises.[65]

The Hungarian sources' version of events may contain a grain of truth. However, it is more likely that this account combines events from several different campaigns, since Henry's campaign is dated as taking place after the siege of Bratislava (1052) and there is also mention of the engagement of Judith and Solomon, although this was certainly arranged later, as was the Emperor's oath never to attack Hungary or be accursed. Only a year later, Henry proved that he had certainly never made such an oath in 1051 or, at least, could not have possibly have meant it seriously.

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64   *Herimannus Augiensis Chronicon*, MGH SS 5, ad a. 1050.

65   *"Caesar ergo videns tot et tantis periculis se esse perplexum misit ad Andream regem et Belam ducem rogans perpetue pacis firmitatem ... Filiam quoque suam Sophiam nomine Salomoni filio regis Andree daret in uxorem ... Caesar autem in propria persona sua iureiurando confirmavit omnia, que dixerat fideliter se facturum."* Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV, c. 90, SRH 1, pp. 349–350. Simon of Keza gives a similar account. Compare *Simonis de Keza*, c. 57, SRH 1, pp. 179–80.

In the summer of 1052 Henry again found himself on the Hungarian-German border. This time he focused on conquering Bratislava,[66] laying siege to the city with a huge army and siege equipment. On this occasion, too, Henry failed to achieve success. While German sources justified his failure on the grounds that the Hungarians had won the favour of the Lord by constantly invoking Him, Hungarian sources emphasized the valour of Bratislava's defenders.[67]

Before the siege was even over Andrew turned to Pope Leo IX (1049–1054) for help in mediating a reconciliation. The Pope did indeed arrive in Bratislava in the summer of 1052, after his envoy, Abbot Hugo of Cluny, arranged the conditions of a truce, which included the payment of a tribute and submission to the Emperor.[68] Henry ended the siege but when it was time to actually conclude peace, the King of Hungary refused to accept the final treaty. This earned him the Pope's admonition and the threat of excommunication for deprecating the Roman Curia. Leo eventually withdrew along with the Emperor, acknowledging that Hungary's subservience dating back to Peter Orseolo's time, was irretrievably lost (*ideo Romana respublica subiectionem regni Hungariae perdidit*).[69]

Peace negotiations went on for several years. At the Diet of Tribur Hungarian emissaries promised money, territories and subservience, which Henry readily accepted. However, because of plotting by Conrad, the banished Duke of Bavaria, in Hungary and by some courtiers in the Empire, Andrew allowed himself to be persuaded to pillage Carinthia in 1053 instead.[70] It was not until Henry's death in 1056 that peace was finally concluded and a strong alliance forged. As mentioned, in 1058 Henry's daughter Judith became betrothed to Andrew's son Solomon.

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66 *"Henricus imperator castrum Poson obsedit." Annales Posonienses ad a. 1052*, SRH 1, p. 125; *"… urbem Preslawaspurch, in finibus utriusque regni sitam, diutina premerent obsidione …" Annales Altahenses maiores ad a. 1052*, MGH SSrG 4.

67 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 89, SRH 1, pp. 346–47; *Herimannus Augiensis Chronicon*, MGH SS 5, ad a. 1052.

68 *"Idcirco Hungariae principes, a Romano nuper imperio dissidentes, mutiplicibus legatis adierat, ne detractarent solita subiectione imperatori prisca persolvere tributa, quod et consenserant, si praeteritorum commissorum eis concederetur indulgentia.: Vita s. Leonis IX papae*, II. 8, Gombos Catalogus 3, p. 2466.

69 *Vita s. Leonis IX papae*, II. 8, Gombos Catalogus 3, p. 2466. See *Herimannus Augiensis Chronicon ad a. 1052*, MGH SS 5; *Annales Altahenses maiores ad a. 1052*, MGH SSrG 4.

70 *Herimannus Augiensis Chronicon ad a. 1053*, MGH SS 5; *Vita s. Leonis IX papae*, II. 8, Gombos Catalogus 3, p. 2466.

2   The Evolution and Transformation of the Ritual of Reconciliation in the 12th Century

2.1   *Coloman and Álmos*

Examples of ritual reconciliation can also be found in Hungarian sources relating events in the country in the 12th century, specifically in its first half, that is, during the reign of King Coloman I (1095–1116) and his son Stephen II (1116–1131). Their reign ushered in a renewed period of internal strife and confrontation with other countries. The settling of disputes documented from this period follows the patterns we have observed in the 11th century, while at the same time new forms and innovations in ritual actions occur.

Hungarian chronicle tradition does not paint a particularly pleasant picture of King Coloman, portraying him frequently in a rather unfavourable light, some depictions bordering on mockery laced with Schadenfreude. At the same time, an extraordinary number of references to the settling of disputes by means of reconciliation ritual survive from the rule of this king who was, in fact, a very active and wise ruler. Almost throughout his reign he had to face dynastic challenges from his younger brother Álmos, who regarded himself as a favourite of St Ladislas, and thus a suitable candidate for the Hungarian throne. In the course of their long-standing rivalry Coloman and Álmos underwent four ritual reconciliations. Each took place in a slightly different spirit, though all strictly observed the 'rules of the game'.[71]

The first encounter between the two rivals took place in 1098, after their dispute first erupted and as they were preparing for armed confrontation by the river Tisza near the village of Várkony. Before the battle, however, the nobles from both camps requested an armistice in order to meet for talks (*colloquium haberent*). As a result of the negotiation prominent warriors refused to participate in the fratricidal battle. They proposed that their lords meet in a duel and resolve the conflict man to man. The winner of such a 'Lord's Judgement' would then be able to claim recognition from the entire population of Hungary. Since Coloman and Álmos did not accept the nobles' proposal, the latter resolved to resort to untraditional measures, imposing a reconciliation on the rulers against their will (*absque voluntate eorum quieverunt*).[72] Rejecting on principle military confrontation, which was the monarchs' preferred option, the nobles

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71   Gerd Althoff, *Spielregeln der Politik im Mittelalter. Kommunikation in Frieden und Fehde* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997), pp. 3, 253–54, 287. The main critic of the *rules of the game* theory in medieval political communication is the German historian Peter Dinzelbacher. See Dinzelbacher, *Warum weint der König?*

72   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 144, SRH 1, p. 423; Hóman, *Geschichte*, p. 377.

chose to disregard a basic rule of public ritual communication, namely its voluntary character, for tradition dictated that participation in the ritual had to be voluntary to demonstrate the protagonists' acceptance of the reconciliation and its binding character.[73]

The conflict flared up again in 1105 after Coloman had his son Stephen II crowned as co-ruler.[74] This was a rerun of the events of 1058, when King Andrew had his young son Solomon crowned. Duke Álmos tried to forge an alliance with the German king, Henry V, as well as the Polish Prince Bolesław III. In 1106, after his attempts had failed, Álmos, who was besieged at Abaújvár Castle, resolved to settle the conflict by reconciliation. He made use of the well-known ritual of submission combined with prostration:

> As (Coloman) was about to set out for battle, the prince suddenly leapt on a horse, coming out of the castle gates and riding into the king's camp. When he reached the king's tent, he jumped off his horse immediately, prostrated himself and declared himself to be guilty of all manner of things. The king was taken aback but he pardoned the prince. In response to the prince's pleas he averted his anger also from the Hungarians who had stayed in the (besieged) castle. Then the prince set off for Jerusalem . . .[75]

This account includes all the basic elements of the ritual submission used to reach a peaceful settlement of conflict. Álmos acted publicly (*ad castrum regis*), voluntarily and, whatever the chronicler might claim about Coloman's surprise, probably after the details and conditions had been agreed through emissaries.[76] The ritual included penitential prostration (*ad pedes regis venisset / prostratus/*) as well as a unilateral admission of guilt on Álmos's part (*se*

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73   Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, p. 67.

74   Kristó, *Histoire de la Hongrie*, p. 69; Steinhübel, *Nitrianske kniežatstvo*, p. 296; Font, *Coloman*, p. 79.

75   *"Cumque in crastinum pugnare vellet, ecce dux subito equum ascendens portas castri exiens citissime equitavit solus ad castrum regis. Et cum ad tentorium regis venisset, statim de equo descendens et ad pedes regis venisset (prostratus) et in ore omnium se culpabilem proclamavit. Rex autem nichil tale scientibus duci indulsit. Nam et indignationem suam ab Hungaris, qui in castro erant, per intercessionem ducis amovit. Deinde dux Iherosolimam profectus est . . ."* Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV, c. 147, SRH 1, p. 427.

76   The agreement on the procedures in advance—one of the main rules of symbolic political communication—is also well attested in contemporary Hungarian sources: *nunciis frequenter missis; per fideles nuncios convenerunt; inter se legationibus transmandantis.* Cf. Althoff, "Das Privileg", p. 29.

culpabilem proclamavit). This was followed by the obligatory granting of mercy and forgiveness by the King (*Rex duci indulsit*) and Álmos giving satisfaction by means of a penitential pilgrimage to Jerusalem (*Deinde dux Iherosolimam profectus est*).[77]

However, a third option for resolving their dispute by reconciliation remained available to the king and the prince, to which they resorted in order to prevent the direct threat of a further rift. On this occasion, too, they made use of a new kind of public ritual communication. After his return to Hungary Álmos did not resume power over the ducal part of the kingdom (Nitra and Bihar). Coloman took care of all his material needs and made sure that, above all, he spent more time hunting than plotting.

In 1108 Álmos invited Coloman to take part in the consecration of a new monastery he had built at Dömös.[78] However, upon his arrival the King received word that Álmos had planned the event as a ruse for deposing the King during the festivities. Enraged, Coloman had Álmos imprisoned. However, the bishops and nobles present persuaded the King that the Prince had been falsely accused.

> ...they interceded with the King on his behalf and reconciled them under oath. The Prince was set free by the King in peace and allowed to go hunting in the Bakony woods (...*intercesserunt pro eo apud regem et pacificaverunt eos iuramento, dimisitque ducem in pace, ut in Bokon venaretur*).[79]

Under the pretext of showing his respect for him, Coloman assigned to his brother two castle servants (*iobagiones*) having secretly instructed them to keep a close eye on his intentions. This time the reconciliation framework was slightly altered. The negotiations as well as the actual process of reconciliation were handled by mediators-peacemakers, a role played by the Hungarian clergy and nobility. Both protagonists then vouched for their peaceful intentions under oath. Nevertheless, no longer trusting his brother, the king enlisted his 'personal guards' to supervise the observance of the oath.[80]

Álmos managed to give his unwanted guards the slip and again began to incite his foreign allies against Coloman. As a result, Henry v and Prince

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77   *Ibid.*

78   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 147–148, SRH 1, pp. 427–28; Kristó, *Histoire de la Hongrie*, p. 70; Steinhübel, *Nitrianske kniežatstvo*, p. 297.

79   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 148, SRH 1, p. 428.

80   *Ibid.*

Svatopluk of Bohemia embarked on a military campaign against Hungary, in the course of which they laid siege to Bratislava.[81] Unable to make any significant gains Henry was eventually forced to retreat. However, before he left, his negotiators succeeded in reconciling Coloman and Álmos. Coloman had to pay his respects to Henry by proffering many precious gifts and agreeing to reconcile with his brother. (*Rex autem imperatori plurima dona misit et sic honorifice repatriavit. Post hec rex reduxit ducem Almum ad pacem*).[82] Nevertheless, both protagonists regarded this fourth reconciliation, which had come into being under the patronage and at the behest of the German ruler, as having been imposed on them and hence a pure formality. Coloman knew that Álmos would continue to try his luck and so, as soon as Henry V crossed the Hungarian border, he ordered that the prince and his son Béla should be blinded.[83] By doing so he eliminated Álmos from the struggle for the throne.

2.2 *Coloman and Foreign Rulers*

During his reign Coloman I also had to deal with conflicts in foreign relations. Contemporary sources as well as later accounts refer to several disputes resolved by means of reconciliation. The first relates to 1096 when Crusaders crossed Hungary on their way to the Holy Land. Because of bad experiences with the first contingents, which had pillaged the countryside, Coloman was reluctant to let further expeditions cross the country. Coloman and his representatives subsequently participated in a number of negotiations aiming to restore peace and allow the Crusaders free passage through the country.[84]

The most detailed extant accounts depict two separate instances of reconciliation. Both occurred in 1099, yet followed very different courses.

In May 1099, at the request of the Grand Prince of Kievan Rus Sviatopolk, Coloman and the Hungarian army embarked on a military campaign against

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81 *Ekkehardus Uraugiensis chronicon universale*, ad a. 1108, MGH SS 6; *Ottonis episcopi Frisingensis Chronica sive historia de duabus civitatibus* VII.13, MGH SSrG 45; *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 150, SRH 1, pp. 429–30. *Cosmae chronicon Boemorum*, III.22, FRB 2.

82 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 150, SRH 1, p. 430.

83 The latest scholarship on the blinding of Álmos suggests 1108, rather than 1113 or 1115 as the date for this event. Cf. Steinhübel, *Nitrianske kniežatstvo*, pp. 299–300 and ref. 1727. The year 1113 is also the year (erroneously) given in the Hungarian Chronicles. *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 150, SRH 1, p. 429.

84 Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades I.* (Cambridge: Cambridge Universty Press, 1986), pp. 140–41, 147–48; Kristó, *Histoire de la Hongrie*, pp. 67–68; "…*concilio usus pacem cum illis firmavit…et in pace ire dimisit." Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 143, SRH 1, p. 422. Cf. Chapter 5.

Prince Volodar, ruler of Peremyshl (present-day Przemyśl).[85] Following the death of a member of Volodar's retinue and the chief defender of Przemyśl, David Igorevich, his wife, Princess Lanca is said to have tried to save the besieged city by performing a reconciliation ritual.[86] The sources give the following account of events that were supposed to have taken place under the town's fortifications:

> . . . a Russian princess named Lanca, (widow) of this king [in fact, prince or duke—D.Z.] came up to the King, falling at his feet and begged the King with tears in her eyes not to destroy her people. Since the King would not hear her, her pleading became more fervent until the king kicked her and pushed her away, with the words: 'It is not fitting to denigrate the royal majesty by female wailing.'[87]

What we see here is an attempt to achieve reconciliation by ritual submission, *deditio*, as seen in 1106 with Álmos in Abaújvár. All the classic elements of the ritual are present: the supplicant arrives voluntarily, prostrates herself before the object of her pleading (*pedibus provoluta*), expresses her remorse over her actions through tears and wailing (*obsecrabat regem cum lacrimis*), ending with impassioned pleas for forgiveness (*instantissimis sollicitaret precibus*). The sticking point is Coloman's surprising reaction, that is, his refusal to reconcile and to grant mercy. Instead of the expected forgiveness[88] the king

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85   See *The Russian Primary Chronicle. Laurentinian Text.* eds. Samuel Hazzard Cross – Olgerd P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor (Cambridge, Mass: The Medieval Academy of America, 1953), pp. 196–98.

86   *Die Ungarische Bilderchronik. Chronica de Gestis Hungarorum* (Berlin, 1961), p. 207 and ref. 322; *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 145, SRH 1, p. 424 and ref. 1.

87   *". . . et ducissa Rutenorum nomine Lanca eiusdem regis (vidua), venit obviam regi, pedibus provoluta obsecrabat regem cum lacrimis, ne disperderet gentem illam. Cumque regem non audientem instantissimis sollicitaret precibus, calcitravit eam rex et ammovit a se dicens: 'Non oportet regalem maiestatem fletu muliebri deturpari.' " Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 145, SRH 1, pp. 423–24.

88   Coloman could have tried to imitate the behaviour of his predecessor Ladislas. After defeating the Galicians in 1092 and inhabitants of Krakow in 1093, the future Saint King showed his mercy and took the subjected enemies into his grace: *"Post hec autem rex gloriosus invasit Rusciam, eo quod Kuni per consilium eorum Hungariam intraverunt. Cumque vidissent se Ruteni male coartari rogaverunt regis **clementiam** et promiserunt regi fidelitatem in omnibus. Quos rex piissimus gratanter suscepit . . . Exinde Hungari castrum Korokou tribus mensibus obsederunt . . . arcem cum universis regi reddiderunt et pacem ad voluntatem regis ordinaverunt seu conposuerunt." Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 138, SRH 1, pp. 414–15.

literally kicked Lanca away, claiming that her behaviour had offended the royal majesty. Based on other sources and accounts from other countries depicting ritual reconciliations from the same period and following a similar course, there are three possible explanations for his behaviour.

First, it is possible that the Russian princess acted spontaneously, off her own bat, so to speak. In that case she would have broken the first rule of ritual communication in the Middle Ages. Every public act had to be agreed in advance and approved by both parties in a dispute. This may explain why Coloman, on his part, did not feel duty bound to show clemency to the supplicant.[89] Another possible explanation might be that it was the Hungarian king who had deliberately broken the customary pattern of reconciliation. From the turn of the 11th and 12th century onwards, particularly in Western sources, a shift and certain changes can be identified in the way a victor was supposed to respond in cases like these. Besides clemency (*clementia*), the preferred virtue up till then, another virtue, that of justice (*iustitia*) makes an increasingly frequent appearance. This is why it was up to the victor or the object of someone's submission, to choose how to respond to an offer of reconciliation. Coloman, as the anointed king and God's representative on earth, could insist on meting out justice to rebellious enemies. This is the spirit in which the following statement by Coloman could be read: "*Non oportet regalem maiestatem fletu muliebri deturpari*".[90] A third explanation might be the fact that the Hungarian king simply deliberately acted in a way that contradicted the agreed and expected course of reconciliation because he intended to end the conflict by force. This interpretation was probably closest to the heart of the author of the chronicle who depicted these events, as he mentions that the disrespectful thwarting of the reconciliation was followed by a just punishment in the form of the almost complete crushing of Coloman's army by the Cumans and, to add insult to injury, also the loss of royal treasure.[91]

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89 The same conduct can be observed in 984 from the Bavarian Duke, Henry the Quarrelsome. Two Saxon counts were turned away when they tried to obtain his grace by undergoing the ritual of *deditio* without making prior arrangements. *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi chronicon* IV.1, MGH SSrG NS 9. See Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, p. 84.

90 The preference of justice over grace in the 12th century is nicely shown in the behaviour of Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa during his coronation. The ruler refused to show grace to a certain ministerialis who fell at his knees during the ceremony as a sign of submission. The Emperor in this case chose to show his so-called *rigor iustitiae* (judicial rigour). It was up to the ruler which virtue he showed on any particular occasion: "*…dicens non ex odio, sed iusticiae intuitu illum a gratia sua exclusum fuisse.*" *Ottonis et Rahewini Gesta Friderici I. imperatoris*, II.3, MGH SSrG 46. For more details, see Althoff, "The Variability of Rituals", p. 79.

91 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 145, SRH 1, pp. 424–26.

In late May 1099 Coloman went through another set of peace talks. He met Prince Břetislav II (1092–1100) at the river Olšava that formed the Hungarian-Bohemian border at the time. The two monarchs spent some time negotiating at Lučské pole, poring over the details of their impending reconciliation and the treaty of alliance. Eventually they proceeded to the ritual public demonstration of their agreement:

> . . . they negotiated for a long time, in order to reach an agreement. Then they exchanged copious gifts, renewed old peace agreements and friendship, sealing them by a ceremonial oath.[92]

A few years later, in 1106, Coloman concluded a treaty of peace and friendship with the Polish prince, Bolesław III Wrymouth (1102–1138) in a similar way. The reconciliation involved negotiating the conditions through emissaries, a personal encounter of the monarchs, assurances of goodwill and, finally, the sealing of peace and friendship by an oath.[93]

Another example of reconciliation, this time a failed (or manipulated) one, relates to the reign of Coloman's son and successor to the Hungarian throne, Stephen II (1116–1131). Immediately after his father's death in 1116 the Hungarian nobles sent a message to Vladislav I of Bohemia (1109–1117 and 1120–1125), asking him to confirm the alliance and peaceful coexistence of old. On this occasion, too, the two kings met on the border between their countries, at Lučské pole near the Olšava River, as was the case in 1099, during Coloman's reconciliation with Břetislav. However, according to Bohemian sources the terms of the peace proposed by the Hungarian nobles (acting on behalf of the minor Stephen II) were too presumptuous, and Vladislav refused to attend the talks in person. The Hungarian chroniclers, on the other hand, ascribe the escalation of tension to intrigues within both camps. Either way, the talks ended prematurely and the planned peace agreement turned into a military conflict, in which the Hungarians suffered a defeat and their king had to flee for his life.[94]

Reconciliations or new peace treaties were thus achieved by forms of public communication characteristic of medieval encounters between royalty. The main emphasis in these reconciliations was on the equal status of both

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92   *". . . multa sunt in invicem concionati placitantes ad placitum utrarumque partium. Ac inter se inmensis mutuatim datis muneribus renovant antiqua amicicie et pacis federa et ea sacramentis confirmant." Cosmae chronicon Boemorum*, III.9, FRB 2.

93   *Gesta principum Polonorum*, II.29, p. 172.

94   *Cosmae chronicon Boemorum*, III.42, FRB 2; *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 153, SRH 1, pp. 434–37.

protagonists, symbolized by the venue chosen for the negotiations: in the majority of cases, the border between the two countries concerned. The interactive character of the actions was also stressed, and the expression of respect, usually demonstrated by an exchange of precious gifts, was also essential.

2.3 Hungary and Byzantium

In exploring the use of political ritual in public communication we have so far looked primarily at examples in domestic, Hungarian settings or those involving Hungarian kings' confrontations with their closest neighbours (German, Bohemian and Polish rulers) in the medieval West. In the following section we turn our attention to another area, specifically, relations between Hungary and Byzantium. This will provide us with an opportunity to compare forms of symbolic communication in Hungary with those used in Byzantium while at the same time pointing out the universal character of ritual means of communication. Making allowances for some minor local peculiarities, we will see that power rituals worked in an almost identical way in the medieval West (whether at its West European centre or the Central European periphery) and in the eastern, Byzantine environment. In addition to the Hungarian, Bohemian and German narrative sources we shall now rely primarily on the Byzantine chroniclers of the time (the chronicles of John Kinnamos and Niketas Choniates).[95]

Political developments in Hungary in the second and third quarters of the 12th century were marked by continual confrontations between the house of Árpád and Byzantium, either in the form of military conflict involving the (re) conquest of border regions or the lending of support to one of the pretenders competing for the Hungarian throne.[96] As we saw earlier, it was at times like these that the protagonists resorted to ritualized actions. We shall now take a closer look at some illustrative examples.

The beginning of an open confrontation between the Árpád and Komnenian dynasties dates back to the 1120s when King Stephen II learned that his uncle, the blinded Prince Álmos, had fled to Byzantine territory and was graciously

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95   We have used the Latin and English editions of the Greek originals. *Iohannes Cinnamus Epitome rerum ab Iohanne et Manuele Comnenis gestarum. A. 1118–1176. Libri VII*. Gombos Catalogus 2, pp. 1268–1297; *John Kinnamos: Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus*. ed. Charles M. Brand (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976); *Nicetas Acominatus Choniates Byzantina historia annorum 88* (1118–1206), Gombos Catalogus 2, pp. 1685–1699; *O City of Byzantium. Annals of Niketas Choniates*. ed. Harry J. Magoulias. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984).

96   For details, see Ferenc Makk, *The Árpáds and the Comneni. Political Relations between Hungary and Byzantium in the 12th Century* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1989), pp. 27–122; Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, pp. 49–53.

received by Emperor John II Komnenos (1118–1143).[97] Hungarian sources
claim that Stephen II had further learned from his aunt Priska (Piroska), the
Byzantine Emperor's wife, that John II had referred to the King of Hungary as
his vassal (*regem Hungariae esse hominem suum*).[98] In 1127 Stephen responded
by pillaging territories on the Hungarian-Byzantine border. In retaliation, John
Komnenos launched a military campaign against Hungary (1128), conquering
a number of fortresses and inflicting a crushing defeat on the Hungarian army.
At this point, according to the Illuminated Chronicle, the two antagonists tried
to settle the dispute by peaceful means in a manner strikingly resembling the
way Solomon and Géza acted in 1073:

> Then, through faithful emissaries, the Emperor and the King arranged
> a meeting, crossing [the river] to an island that is in the vicinity of the
> town of Braničevo. Here, among their nobles, they did indeed spend a
> great deal of time accusing each other and apologizing. Eventually, after
> concluding peace, they both returned to their home country.[99]

For our study it is of little import whether the reconciliation at Braničevo took
place exactly as described in Chronica Hungarorum or whether the chronicler
simply mechanically reproduced the model of the 1073 Esztergom encounter.
The very fact that this account is found in the source is evidence that this form
of public ritual reconciliation was regarded as a viable option and that it was
used in conflict resolution both at a domestic political level (Solomon ↔ Géza)
and in foreign relations (Stephen II ↔ John II Komnenos).

Byzantine sources provide more detailed and more reliable information on
reconciliations in the wake of military conflicts. Border towns and fortresses
such as Belgrade, Braničevo and Zemun were the sites of recurrent conflict
and under constantly changing rule. In the 1150s and 1160s the Zemun fortress,

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97   *Iohannes Cinnamus Epitome rerum gestarum*, pp. 1269–71; *John Kinnamos: Deeds of John
     and Manuel*, pp. 17–19.

98   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 156, SRH 1, pp. 439–40. An interesting interpretation of
     the origins of this opinion comes from Péter Váczy, who suggests that John II Komnenos
     could, in fact, consider the king of Hungary as his vassal. The Árpáds bore the image of
     the Byzantine *basileos* (Michael VII Doukas) on their royal crown. The so-called *corona
     graeca* was sent by Michael to King Géza I between 1074 and 1077 and it became part of
     the Holy Crown. See Váczy, "The Angelic Crown", p. 16.

99   *"Post hec imperator et rex per fideles nuncios convenerunt ad colloquendum, navigantes
     in insulam, que civitati Bororich proxima est. Ibi vero inter principes suos diu excusantes
     et incusantes, tandem pace roborata redierunt ad propria."* Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV,
     c. 156, SRH 1, p. 442.

which had been built under Stephen II exactly opposite Belgrade, as well as the entire province of Syrmium, became the focus of bloody battles.[100]

In 1151, as a result of one of these conflicts, Zemun was captured by Manuel I (1143–1180) of Byzantium. When the Emperor's troops had almost penetrated the fortifications, the defenders decided to ask Manuel for free passage in exchange for surrendering the fortress. However, the monarch was not content with a simple handing over of bounty. He also needed to demonstrate his victory over the rebellious community on a symbolic level. The garrison was thus forced to perform the humiliating ritual of submission and supplication:

> When he refused, they tied ropes around their necks, took off their head coverings and, thus humiliated, submitted to the Emperor. The Emperor forbade the Romans to kill any of them but allowed them to pillage the fortress, which contained plentiful supplies.[101]

John Kinnamos, the author of the account of the surrender, adds that many Hungarians, whose numbers exceeded those of the entire imperial army, were taken away as captives by the Byzantines. Niketas Choniates reports that the Emperor used the captive Hungarians and Serbians to add lustre to his triumphant return to Constantinople. During the festive ceremony Manuel paraded the (mostly noble) Hungarians, in a procession right across the city.[102]

In 1165 Manuel again found himself triumphant at Zemun. The purpose of his military campaign was to punish the fortress because its inhabitants had killed his protégé Stephen IV, whom he had installed as King of Hungary (his reign lasted only a few months in 1163, and he died in 1165), once again bringing the city under the control of the legitimate Hungarian ruler and Manuel's enemy Stephen III (1162–1172). The Hungarian conquerors had gone so far as to throw Stephen IV's dead body ignominiously over the fortifications and left it there without funeral rites. His remains were subsequently removed and

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100   Zoltan J. Kosztolnyik, *From Coloman the Learned to Béla III (1095–1196). Hungarian Domestic Policies and Their Impact upon Foreign Affairs* (New York/Boulder: East European Monographs, 1987), pp. 144–51; Makk, *The Árpáds*, pp. 67–69.

101   *"Quam rem cum abnueret, funibus collo appensis abiectisque capitum operculis, per summum dedecus sese ipsos imperatori dedidere. Tum ille, ne eorum quisquam a Romanis interficeretur, prohibuit; arcem vero gravi refertam praeda iis diripiendam concessit." Iohannes Cinnamus Epitome rerum gestarum*, p. 1276; *John Kinnamos: Deeds of John and Manuel*, pp. 91–92; Kosztolnyik, *From Coloman*, pp. 147–48.

102   *Nicetas Choniates Byzantina historia*, p. 1687; *Annals of Niketas Choniates*, p. 54.

buried in Székesfehérvár.[103] On this occasion, too, the defenders of Zemun, sensing that they could not hold the fortress since they were outnumbered by the Byzantines, tried to obtain mercy by repeating the scenario of fourteen years earlier:

> When the Hungarians realized they were being driven back on every side, they sent envoys to ask the Emperor to let them surrender the town in exchange for free passage. At first he told them he would allow this only on condition that Gregorius and other commanders holding the rank of *comes* tied ropes around their necks and came out barefoot and with their heads bare. He sent them back with these conditions while the Romans pushed even more fiercely, conquering the town. Once the town was under their control, Gregorius and other Hungarian commanders humbly approached the Emperor, wearing the supplicant garb mentioned above, presenting their lamentations. [Manuel] refused to look at them for some time. Later, however, on Béla's intercession, they were spared execution but he sent them to prison immediately. The Romans burst into the city in a towering rage and slaughtered its inhabitants like sheep.[104]

Both accounts of the submission and humble supplications before Manuel I by the representatives of the conquered citizens of Zemun sound similar to one of the best known Western European parallels of this period—the surrender of Milan to the Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa in 1158 and 1162. These rituals of reconciliation indeed have a great deal in common. During their first

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103 *Iohannes Cinnamus Epitome rerum gestarum*, p. 1288; *John Kinnamos: Deeds of John and Manuel*, p. 180; See also Kristó, *Histoire de la Hongrie*, pp. 81–82; See *Chronicon Henrici de Mügeln Germanice conscriptum*, c. 54–55, SRH 2, pp. 200–202.

104 *"Hungari vero ut angustiis se undique premi adverterunt, missis legatis principem rogavere, ut dedentes civitatem salvi et incolumes possent excedere. At ille non se prius id facturum respondit, quam Gregorius et qui cum iis erant zupani astricto funibus collo, pedibus capitibusque nudis venissent. Quibus cum hoc responso remissis, Romani longe acrius urbem adorti eam per vim expugnant. Qua capta, Gregorius et caeteri Hungarorum duces cum ignominia, ad eum quem diximus modum miserabili habitu nec sine eiulatu ad principem accessere. Verum ille aliquandiu ne aspectu quidem eos dignatus est: sed tandem Bela intercedente, mortem condonavit, eosque in custodiam extemplo coniici iussit. Romani autem summo animi ardore urbem ingressi homines ibi velut agnos trucidarunt."* *Iohannes Cinnamus Epitome rerum gestarum*, p. 1290; *John Kinnamos: Deeds of John and Manuel*, p. 184. The submission is also described by Niketas Choniates: *Nicetas Choniates Byzantina historia*, p. 1691; *Annals of Niketas Choniates*, p. 76.

surrender the inhabitants of Milan performed a classic *deditio* as this is known from numerous depictions throughout Europe before and after this date. The defeated burghers were forced to humbly submit to the Emperor in a ceremonial procession, wearing penitential robes, barefoot and with unsheathed swords at their throats, that is, with symbols of complete submission.[105]

Since the Milanese did not keep their undertaking and continued to give Barbarossa trouble, the Emperor was again forced to lay siege to the city in the winter of 1162. The city's desperate inhabitants again had to submit, pleading for Frederick's mercy for the second time. This time, however, apart from the mercy expected of him, the Emperor also exercised the rigour and relentlessness of justice (*rigor iustitiae*). The city's inhabitants, who had abused his merciful forgiveness during the first reconciliation, did not deserve this kind of concession. Following the *deditio*, which comprised several elements of an even more humiliating nature, Milan was razed to the ground.[106]

The 1151 and 1165 rituals at Zemun can be interpreted in a similar spirit. On the first occasion Manuel was not content with gaining control over the strategically important fortress. Its inhabitants also had to make amends on a symbolic level for their betrayal and for defecting to the enemy since by doing so they had offended the Emperor's majesty (*honor imperii*).[107] That is why they were forced to perform the humiliating *deditio* as well as supplication. A bare head (probably also bare feet, just like 14 years later) and ropes around the supplicants' necks symbolized unconditional submission to the rule of the conqueror who wielded absolute power over their life and death. After obtaining such satisfaction Manuel pardoned the Hungarians, allowing his soldiers merely to plunder their homes and supplies. He spared the inhabitants' lives although he took a great many of them to Byzantium as captives.

Fourteen years later, however, the Hungarians had not only seized Zemun again but had also murdered the pretender to the Hungarian throne, who enjoyed the support of the Emperor. Manuel immediately resolved to punish this fresh insult and breach of the peace. Nevertheless, the seizure of the fortress in the summer of 1165 followed a slightly different scenario. As we have

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105   *Ottonis et Rahewini Gesta Friderici I. imperatoris*, III.48, MGH SSrG 46; Althoff, "Das Privileg", pp. 33–34.

106   Knut Görich, *Die Ehre Friedrich Barbarossas. Kommunikation, Konflikt und politisches Handeln im 12. Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001), pp. 229–61; Althoff, "Das Privileg", pp. 31–36.

107   For this in the context of Western Empire see Görich, *Die Ehre*. Timothy Reuter is thought-provoking on this topic: "The defence of honour was at the same time defence of power and possessions." Reuter, "Peace-breaking", p. 361.

seen above (and in the Milan example), a particular reconciliation ritual and the expected peaceful conclusion of the dispute could be performed in the same way only once. If the supplicant abused or failed to meet the conditions defined and agreed in the first instance, he could no longer expect that on another occasion he could be delivered in the same way and be treated with the same leniency. Only in exceptional cases would supplicants be given a second chance of a *deditio*, and they had to be prepared to undergo it in a modified and harsher form.[108]

Zemun's second submission to Manuel I in 1165 took place in a similar vein. The Byzantine Emperor initially turned away the Hungarian messengers and their offer to surrender the town in exchange for the free passage of the army. He was not prepared to let a repeated breach of loyalty pass without harsher, more appropriate punishment. At first he ordered the Hungarian commanders to appear before him wearing penitential garb and in the same humble manner as in 1151, while at the same time ordering his soldiers to conquer the fortress at all costs. When this was done and immediately after the defences fell, the commanders, led by a man called Gregorius, appeared before Manuel barefoot and bareheaded, and with ropes tied around their necks (*astricto funibus collo, pedibus capitibusque nudis venissent*).

However, the Emperor was not prepared to let them get away as easily as the first time and for that reason he refused even to look at them. Eventually, at the intervention of the despot Béla (future Hungarian King Béla III),[109] who wanted to save at least some of the Hungarians, Manuel relented and granted them mercy.[110] He spared the lives of the key leaders and had them imprisoned instead. Ordinary citizens were less fortunate, falling victim to the rampaging and massacres of the Byzantine soldiers. At this stage the Emperor was neither obliged nor willing to show excessive leniency and mercy. On the contrary, he sent a powerful signal to anyone who might have been tempted to behave like the populace of Zemun in the future.

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108   Althoff, "Das Privileg", pp. 34–35.

109   King Géza II's son Béla took the name Alexios during his stay in Constantinople. At that time he was designated as Emperor-to-be by the ruling *basileos* Manuel Komnenos. He received the rank of *despota* and was engaged to Manuel's daughter Maria. With the birth of Manuel's son, Béla/Alexios forfeited his chance of becoming the Byzantine ruler, but he was raised to the Hungarian throne as Béla III (1172–1196) with the help of the Emperor. Cf. Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, p. 182; Kristó, *Histoire de la Hongrie*, pp. 82–83.

110   In 1162 Frederick Barbarossa watched with a poker face the ritual submission of the Milanese, who were sobbing and expressing their regrets in emotional terms. The admission of the supplicants into his grace was enabled by an intermediary, the count of Biandrate. *Chronica regia Coloniensis ad a. 1162*, MGH SSrG 18, p. 111; Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, p. 153.

3 Symbolic Gestures of Humility—Submission and Supplication

The public character of medieval rituals found its expression in the symbolic actions that accompanied them. This applied to all forms of ritual, from ritual reconciliation (*reconciliatio*), through submission (*deditio*), to supplication (*supplicatio*), as well as other ways of making demands and claims. A feature shared by these modes of communication were highly symbolic gestures and expression of appropriate emotions. In the following pages we explore some of these forms in greater detail.

In Hungary ritual reconcilation by means of voluntary public submission can be studied in a number of cases from the early and high Middle Ages. Accounts in the *Gesta Hungarorum* give us a good picture of what public submission in this period might have looked like. Although the author of the chronicle places the events in the period of the ancient Magyars' arrival in the Carpathian Basin (the so-called conquest of the homeland—*honfoglalás*)[111] towards the end of the 9th century, it is quite certain that he is, in fact, describing rituals that took place at the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries. By piecing together several episodes from his chronicle, we can obtain a coherent picture of the elements comprising this procedure. The main protagonist of the events is Prince Álmos, conqueror of several Russian and Cuman princes. During Álmos's sojourn in Kievan Rus seven Cuman princes appeared before him, falling at his feet and voluntarily submitting to him (*pedibus eius provoluti se sua sponte . . . subiugaverunt*).[112] Both parties subsequently sealed the action by an oath. Another option, which the anonymous author ascribes to the Prince of Vladimir, was the demonstration of his submission by giving Álmos a ceremonial welcome (*susceptio*). The Prince of Vladimir with his nobles, carrying precious gifts, went to meet Álmos on their country's border, throwing open to him the town's fortifications.[113] The third scenario was enacted by the ruler of Galicia, who came to meet Álmos barefoot and accompanied by all his subjects, and handed him precious gifts (*cum omnibus suis nudis pedibus venit*).[114] He opened the city gates and welcomed him as his lord and master. The picture is complemented by a description of the end of the siege of Bihar castle,

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111 Kristó Gyula, *Magyar honfoglalás—Honfoglaló magyarok* (Budapest, 1996); Múcska, *Dejiny európskeho stredoveku*, pp. 102–104; Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, pp. 8–24.

112 We have used the most recent Latin/Slovak edition, *Kronika anonymného notára kráľa Bela. Gesta Hungarorum.* ed. Vincent Múcska (Budmerice, 2000), hereafter referred to as *Gesta Hungarorum*. Quotation from c. 10, p. 50.

113 *Gesta Hungarorum*, c. 11, p. 50.

114 *Ibid.*

whose defenders, in an attempt to save their lives, opened the fortress gates
and appeared before the Hungarian conquerors Usubu and Velek barefoot as
humble supplicants (*nudis pedibus supplicantes*).[115]

The historical relevance of the events as described by the anonymous
chronicler can be justifiably questioned. However, what is of greater relevance
to our thesis is the actual depiction of the ritual means of communication.
Writing in the late 12th or early 13th century, in this instance, as well as in sev-
eral other passages of his chronicle, the anonymous notary at King Béla III's
court simply projects contemporary facts onto events that took place in the
9th century.[116] Similarly, he describes the rituals that were common in his day
and age, showing that the symbolic means of communication used in late
12th century Hungary were the same as in the rest of Europe. The key gestures
included the protagonists of the ritual, almost invariably barefoot, appearing
before the victor and falling at his feet. In this way they demonstrated their
humility and unconditional submission to the control or benevolence of the
victor. These gestures may have been accompanied by the handing over of pre-
cious gifts, the performance of the *adventus regis* ritual or the swearing of an
oath. In all these instances three basic factors were emphasized: the public
nature of the ritual, its voluntary performance, and the stress on the public
demonstration of humility. The only major difference between these rituals
and their counterparts in Central and Western Europe consists in the author's
attempt to portray these actions as a spontaneous response to the direct threat
posed by the Hungarian conquerors. From what we know about other rituals,
every element had to be agreed in advance. By contrast, improvisation was
often unsuccessful.[117]

The fact that these rituals were always performed in public and intended to
make an impression on their audience is further illustrated by the accompa-
nying gestures and visual requisites. This could take the form, for example, of
appropriate attire, known from ecclesiastical penitence, usually a combination

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115   *Gesta Hungarorum*, c. 51, p. 106.

116   See the introduction by Vincent Múcska, "*K bezmennému notárovi a jeho dielu.*" in *Gesta
       Hungarorum*, pp. 25–26; cf. also Richard Marsina, "Stredoveké uhorské rozprávacie
       pramene a slovenské dejiny," *Zborník Slovenského národného múzea*, 78 (História 24)
       (1984), pp. 173–174, ref. 20; Richard Pražák, "Latinské písemnictví v Uhrách 11.–14. století,"
       in *Legendy a kroniky koruny uherské* (Praha: Vyšehrad, 1988), pp. 21–22; C.A. Macartney, *The
       Medieval Hungarian Historians. A Critical and Analytical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge
       University Press, 1953), pp. 59–84.

117   Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, p. 84.

of penitential robes and bare feet (*cilicium, nudis pedibus*).[118] The symbolism of bare feet, derived from Judaic and early Christian traditions, formed a particularly inspiring and effective part of rituals of penance and reconciliation throughout the Middle Ages. Above all it demonstrated the protagonist's humility and readiness to make amends or do penance.[119]

Another frequently used ritual that also expressed contrition and humility was falling at an adversary's feet or prostrating oneself (sometimes also referred to as *proskynesis*).[120] Accounts of prostration occur quite frequently in chronicles and hagiographical texts depicting the Árpád era. Apart from the examples related by the anonymous author of *Gesta Hungarorum* the practice of falling at someone's feet deserves mention as a form of sincere pleading for forgiveness for certain kinds of wrongdoing. For example Gerard, the bishop of Csanád, fell at his servant's feet and kissed them to beg forgiveness for his unchristian behaviour.[121] The same scenario occurred when a man who had planned to assassinate King Stephen I later prostrated himself. When his plot was unmasked, he immediately fell at the King's feet, embracing them and begging for mercy.[122]

Some examples of the practice of falling at someone's feet in dynastic disputes among the members of the Árpád dynasty have been mentioned earlier (Coloman ↔ Álmos, Andrew I ↔ Béla I). The way of demonstrating submission depicted in the *Gesta Hungarorum* or in 11th and 12th century examples has also been recorded by Thomas, Archdeacon of Split, who describes the conflict in the early 13th century between King Emeric (1196–1204) and his brother Andrew, who later became king (1205–1235). Immediately before their military confrontation King Emeric decided to appear before the soldiers who supported his brother to remind them that they were acting against a legitimate ruler. The soldiers responded by laying down their arms and falling at the

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118   See Raymund Kottje, "Busspraxis und Bussritus," in *Segni e riti nella chiesa altomedievale occidentale* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 1987), pp. 369–95; Cyrille Vogel, *Le pécheur et la pénitence au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Cerf, 1969), pp. 208–22.

119   The ideal and at the same time the only exemplar of such behaviour in the Old Testament is to be found in King David (2 Sam: 15, 30). Schreiner, " '*Nudis pedibus*' ", pp. 53, 74–79 and 104.

120   See the headword "*Proskynese*" in *Lexikon des Mittelalters 7*, 265–66; Gerd Althoff, "Fussfälle: Realität und Fiktionalität einer rituellen Kommunikationsform," in *Eine Epoche im Umbruch. Volkssprachige Literalität 1200–1300*. ed. C. Bertelsmeter-Kierst (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2003), pp. 111–22.

121   "*pedes osculabatur*" *Legenda sancti Gerhardi episcopi*, c. 5, SRH 2, p. 475.

122   "*vir … procubuit, vestigia regis amplexatus est …*" *Legenda sancti Stephani regis ab Hartvico episcopo conscripta*, c. 21, SRH 2, p. 430.

king's feet.[123] These three examples also belong to the category of model narratives whose truthfulness is impossible to prove or disprove. However, what matters in terms of our study is that the diversity of genre and chronology of the sources depicting these events provides evidence of the widespread and universal use of the ritual practices being examined.

The way impassioned pleas and requests (supplications) were presented, most commonly to a high-ranking figure (a king, emperor or bishop) had its own ritualized forms.[124] This form of pleading was quite common in the Middle Ages. Supplications were offered by the faithful to God, by vassals to their superiors, by nobles to the king, by bishops to the pope, and so forth. In this context, on the basis of formulae found in royal charters, Geoffrey Koziol has identified four basic phases comprising the supplication ritual:

(1)   taking note of the supplicant's appearance before the king (a kind of
       adventus in reverse);
(2)   assigning each protagonist an appropriate attribute (humility—majesty);
(3)   the words used to describe the petition itself;
(4)   the words used to describe the way the king has received the petition.[125]

This kind of pleading was also necessary when property or legal issues were being presented to the Hungarian kings. Charters from the Árpád period provide plentiful evidence of their existence.[126]

This kind of ritual discourse required reciprocity. Just as the supplicant was expected to demonstrate his humility and servility, the lord who was the object

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123   *"… ad regis genua provoluti veniam precabantur." Historia Salonitana*, c. 23, p. 142.
124   For supplications in the early and high Middle Ages, see Koziol, *Begging Pardon*.
125   Koziol, *Begging Pardon*, pp. 25–26.
126   Andrew II (1224): *"Accedentes itaque fideles nostri hospites Teutonici Vltrasiluani vniuersi
       ad pedes nostrae maiestatis, humiliter nobis conquerentes, sua querimonia suppliciter nobis
       monstrauerunt…"* CDH III/1, p. 442; Andrew II (1232): *"… ad nostram accedentes presen-
       ciam, nobis sua querimonia monstrarunt…. nobis humiliter supplicarunt…" Codex diplo-
       maticus et epistolaris Slovaciae I–II* (hereafter referred to as CDES) ed. Richard Marsina
       (Bratislava, 1971–1987), CDES I, p. 280; Andrew II (1234): *"ad nostram accessissent pres-
       enciam… nostre maiestati humiliter suplicantes…"* CDES I, p. 318; Béla IV (1238): *"… ad
       nostram accedens presenciam humiliter nobis et instanter supplicando flagitavit…"* CDES
       II, p. 30; Béla IV (1267): *"… Nobiles Hungariae universi, qui Servientes Regales dicuntur, ad
       nos accedentes, petierunt a nobis humiliter, et devote, ut ipsos in libertate, a S. Stephano Rege
       statuta, et obtenta, dignaremur conservare, ut ipsi tanto nobis, et coronae, tenentur fideli-
       bus, et affectuosius famulari, quanto pretiosoribus libertatibus eos donaremus."* CDH IV/3,
       p. 391; Karpat, *Corona regni*, pp. 25–26.

of the pleading was obliged to show mercy and generosity.[127] In due course a formal language of supplication came into being, which was used to record these events in charters.[128] However, this does not necessarily mean that patterns were adopted mechanically. Nevertheless, the accounts in narrative sources confirm that supplications did indeed take place in this spirit.

Very often the supplicant accompanied his actions with emotional weeping and sobbing (*cum lacrimis et gemitu*).[129] This was meant to demonstrate the supplicant's sincerity while exerting a greater pressure on the person addressed and those close to him. The Hungarian king Peter Orseolo opted for this method on several occasions to court the favour of the German king, Henry III. In 1041, after being banished from Hungary by Samuel Aba, he first sought refuge in the Eastern March with his brother-in-law Adalbert. From there, with Adalbert's assistance, he managed to gain access to the German king.[130] Peter humbled himself before Henry, falling at his feet, asking for forgiveness, sobbing and begging for the King's mercy (*ad regem Heinricum veniens pedibusque eius provolutus veniam et gratiam imploravit et impetravit*).[131] Eventually he succeeded and Henry offered Orseolo his protection.

We should explain why Peter was obliged to make such a humiliating and, at the same time, penitent, plea for the king's mercy and favour. This was because earlier in the same year Peter had opposed the German king militarily, lending his support to Břetislav I of Bohemia.[132] Now, finding himself in a tight corner and needing Henry's help, the Hungarian King first had to ritually atone for his earlier wrongdoing. The prostration served as an admission of guilt. Only after doing this could he publicly plead for the King's mercy and a return to his favour. It is quite likely that this was thanks to Peter's brother-in-law Adalbert's intercession on his behalf as a mediator, thus enabling Peter to appear before

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127   For 1291: "*. . . regiam decet coronam, fidelium iustis precibus locum dare . . .*" CDH VI/1, p. 120; Karpat, *Corona regni*, p. 62.

128   For more see Koziol, *Begging Pardon*, pp. 55–58.

129   Matthias Becher, " *'Cum lacrimis et gemitu'*. Vom Weinen der Sieger und der Besiegten im frühen und hohen Mittelalter," in Althoff, *Formen und Funktionen*, p. 52; on emotions in medieval Europe, see for example Barbara Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," *American Historical Review*, 107/3 (2002), pp. 821–45.

130   *Herimannus Augiensis Chronicon ad a. 1041*, MGH SS 5, p. 123; *Lamperti Hersfeldensis Annales ad a. 1040*, MGH SSrG 38, p. 56; *Ottonis episcopi Frisingensis Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus*, VI.32, MGH SSrG 45, p. 298.

131   *Herimannus Augiensis Chronicon ad a. 1041*, MGH SS 5, p. 123.

132   *Frutolfi et Ekkehardi chronica necnon Anonymi chronica imperatorum.* eds. Franz. J. Schmale – I. Schmale-Ott (Darmstadt, 1972), p. 62.

the Emperor and present his plea.[133] Henry behaved as behoved his status, strictly following the rules of political communication.

This way of approaching the German monarch and performing the requisite symbolic gestures must have been widespread and well-known in 11th century Hungary, as indicated by the fact that all the parties involved in the ongoing Hungarian dynastic dispute tried to obtain Henry's favours in the same way. An extraordinary scene took place three years later, in 1043, when King Samuel Aba's emissaries appeared before Henry, humbly begging for peace (*legati regis Ungariorum pacem suppliciter orans*). However, their pleas were not crowned with success because the banished Peter Orseolo appeared before the king at the same time, pleading just as passionately for help against this act of violence (*presens erat suppliciterque Heinrici regis auxilium contra illius violentiam implorabat*).[134] By the term act of violence (*violentia*) the chronicler might have been alluding to the wrong done to Peter by his banishment from the throne, but also possibly a breach of the commitment Henry had made to Orseolo. Since he had taken Peter into his favour and pledged under oath to reinstate him on the Hungarian throne[135] he could not abandon him now. To make sure the King would keep his promise, Peter had performed a further act of supplication. The King could not ignore this public reference to his obligation and Aba's emissaries were therefore unsuccessful.

It wasn't until Henry and Peter defeated Samuel Aba for good in the decisive battle at Ménfő in July 1044, resolving the conflict by military force, that the constant endeavours to gain the German King's favour came to an end. After the battle the Hungarians (most likely, the nobles who had fought on the side of the pretender to the throne, Aba) assembled as supplicants, weeping and begging for the King's mercy and forgiveness. Receiving them kindly and graciously Henry granted them their wishes.[136]

Supplication before the king continued to be frequently resorted to as a means of ritual communication in dynastic conflicts well into the 12th century.

133 *"intercessione Adalberti marchionis"* Ottonis episcopi Frisingensis Chronica sive Historia, VI.32, MGH SSrG 45, p. 298. See Kamp, "Vermittler", pp. 675–710. At the same time Břetislav I also atoned for his wrongdoings in a ritualized way. He presented himself before the German king barefoot in penitential garb, begging for his pardon. *Annales Altahenses maiores ad a. 1041*, MGH SSrG 4, p. 27. See also Martin Wihoda, "Obtížné příbuzenství. Konflikty a smiřování přemyslovských knížat," in *Rituál smíření*, pp. 71–72.

134 *Lamperti Hersfeldensis Annales ad a. 1040*, MGH SSrG 38, p. 56.

135 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 73–74, SRH 1, p. 328.

136 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 77, SRH 1, p. 333; *Annales Altahenses ad. a. 1044*, MGH SSrG 4, p. 37.

A few examples will illustrate this continuity. At Easter 1108 Prince Álmos, who was in the middle of an unsuccessful power struggle with his brother King Coloman I, appeared in Mainz before Henry V. All the extant accounts by Hungarian and German chroniclers emphasize that Álmos used emotional techniques, which involved weeping and lamentation, to make the greatest possible impression on the German monarch and his retinue. His impassioned pleas (not least because Henry wanted to halt Coloman's advance into Dalmatia) did not fall on deaf ears and the German king set off on a military campaign against Hungary.[137]

Another example relates to Boris (died c. 1155), an energetic and tireless pretender to the Hungarian throne, who posed a constant threat to Hungary and her neighbours in the second quarter of the 12th century. Boris was the son of Coloman's second wife Euphemia, whom the king had repudiated for adultery. After the demise of Coloman's son and heir Stephen II (died 1131) Boris declared himself the legitimate heir to King Coloman and tried to seize power in Hungary. However, his legitimacy was highly contested by Hungarians. By means of intercessions, impassioned pleas, precious gifts and not inconsiderable bribes Boris repeatedly managed to win over influential allies against the legitimate kings Béla II (1131–1141) and his son Géza II (1141–1162). Thus he made successive appearances before the Polish, French, Byzantine and German monarchs as a supplicant, asking for political and military support. In spite of his ambiguous lineage Boris succeeded in winning over some supporters even in Hungary. For example, his supporters included prominent members of the Hont clan. In 1132, when their plot was uncovered, the *comes* Lampert II lost his life, murdered by his own brother Hypolit in the very presence of King Béla II; his son Nicholas was subsequently executed.[138]

Otto of Freising's account dated 1146 allows us to glean what form this type of pleading before the German King might have taken:

137 *"regis Teutonicorum auxilium imploraturus." Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 148, SRH 1, p. 429; *"regem pro sui restitutione iplorans." Chronica regia Coloniensis ad. a. 1108*, MGH SSrG 18, p. 48; *"ad regem Heinricum veniens iniuriamque suam deplorans auxulium eius impetrat" Ottonis episcopi Frisingensis Chronica sive Historia*, VII.13, MGH SSrG 45, p. 325; *"in auribus totius senatus … miserias suas deplorans Romani imperii magnificentiam in compassionem et defensionem sui flectere curavit." Frutolfi et Ekkehardi chronica*, p. 296.

138 *Ottonis et Rahewini Gesta Friderici I. imperatoris*, I. 31, MGH SSrG 46. *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 161, SRH 1, pp. 448–49. Cf. Ján Lukačka, "K otázke etnického pôvodu veľmožského rodu Hont-Poznanovcov," *Forum Historiae*, 4/2 (2010), p. 10.

After celebrating Christmas at his palace and in Aachen King (Conrad III) entered Bavaria (1146). There Vladislav, Prince of Bohemia, appeared before him, accompanied by the above-mentioned Boris. With weeping and lamentation, Boris complained that he had been deprived of his hereditary kingdom and pleaded for the assistance of the imperial authority, to which the whole world turned for protection. Thanks to the intercession of the above-mentioned Bohemian Prince and his wife Gertrude of Babenberg, the King's sister, he obtained the King's assurances in this matter.[139]

As can be seen, appearing before the king and presentation of the supplication followed clear rules. As in the case of Peter Orseolo and Béla II (as we shall see later on) Boris, too, had to behave in line with traditionally established rituals. He made use of emotional techniques as well as another powerful tool, namely intercession by Prince Vladislav of Bohemia.

The last example relevant to our study took place in January 1158. Emissaries of the Hungarian King, Géza II, came to the Imperial Diet at Regensburg, to demand that the King's brother Stephen (ruled later as anti-king Stephen IV in 1163) be handed over. The latter was forced to flee after Géza accused him of plotting to usurp power in the country. Convinced that the empire (or rather, the person of the emperor) provided refuge to all, Stephen went to see Barbarossa, and shedding tears, he bewailed his unfortunate predicament and pleaded for the Emperor's favour (*lacrimabili conquestione deploravit*). Moved by his impassioned plea (*tali deprecatione permotus*) Frederick decided to send emissaries to Hungary to discover more about the dispute. Eventually however, and after receiving gifts valued at nearly 1000 talents, he decided he would support Géza II.[140]

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139   *"Rex quoque eadem nativitate in palatio Aquis celebrata Baioariam ingreditur. Ibi eum Boemorum dux Labezlaus supra nominatum Boricium secum ducens adiit. Is flebili ac miserabili voce querimoniam suam de privatione paterni regni depromens, quatinus auctoritate imperiali, ad quam tocius orbis spectat patrocinium, ei subveniatur, deposcit eiusque super hoc promissum interventu predicti Boemorumducis eiusque consortis Gerdrudis, sororis regis, honesto intercedente placito impetravit."* Ottonis episcopi Frisingensis Chronica sive historia de duabus civitatibus, VII.34, MGH SSrG 45.

140   *Ottonis et Rahewini Gesta Friderici I. imperatoris*, III.13, MGH SSrG 46, pp. 181–182. Silver was sent to imperial treasury in large quantities also in the course of conflicts within the Přemyslid dynasty. For details, see Martin Wihoda, "Česká knížata na dvorských sjezdech," in *Rituály, ceremonie a festivity*, pp. 195–96.

4   Summary and Conclusions

Although rituals were intended to confirm agreements between particular elements of medieval society and reinforce the importance of conventional behaviour, they were not themselves unalterable and inflexible. Basic forms of symbolic expression enjoyed universal validity (for example, falling at some-one's feet as a sign of submission, witnessing a ritual indicating one's approval or offering to shake hands as a sign of reconciliation). Nevertheless, in specific instances the way rituals were enacted could be subject to change and their repertoire was modified by adding new forms of symbolic expression or by slight shifts in their meaning.[141] However, it is not clear how strong the binding force of ritual statements was since, as has been demonstrated, the validity of symbolic reconciliation was rather limited. Virtually the only successful instance of reconciliation in the dispute between King Solomon and the Dukes was the one that took place in 1064 in Győr and Pécs, ensuring a period of peace that lasted nearly seven years (until they fell out in Belgrade in 1071). In the other cases the 'force of the ritual' was not sufficient to prevent conflicts from flaring up again within a short time. The same applies to the standoff between Coloman I and Álmos, whose reconciliations were never other than temporary.

The evolution of ritual actions can be observed on the example of the origins and development of the dynastic conflict between pretenders to the Hungarian throne in the 11th and 12th centuries, as well as their encounters with foreign monarchs. Various forms of ritual reconciliation were used to settle disputes. To begin with, reconciliation was attempted through recognition of the German king's feudal sovereignty (Andrew I and Henry III, Peter I and Henry III); by joining dynasties (Solomon I and Henry IV); by symbolically giving one of the parties to the dispute a free hand in choosing their fate followed by prostration (Andrew I and Béla I); by meeting in public and confirming the reconciliation by a peace oath followed by a common feast, coronation, and cathedral visitation (Solomon I and Géza I); by exchanging hostages as a guarantee of observing peace and by meeting on neutral ground (Stephen I and Bolesław I) and, last but not least, by an admission of guilt and falling at the feet of the victor (Coloman vs Álmos) or representatives of the Almighty (Géza and the bishops).

Rituals of submission and supplication had their own rules. Most often they took place in public in the presence of numerous witnesses. The suppli-cant complemented his behaviour with a large array of ritualized gestures of

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141   Althoff, "The Variability of Rituals", p. 73; Koziol, *Begging Pardon*, pp. 7–8.

humility (bare feet, penitential garb, tears and lamentation). The supplicant would appear before his protector or the victor at an appropriate time, usually accompanied by an influential figure from the monarch's inner circle, who would mediate or intercede on the supplicant's behalf.

From the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries onwards, new forms or variations of ritual actions came to the fore in Hungary as well as in other countries. Sometimes their protagonists continued to mechanically adopt common patterns, while sometimes new forms of public communication were employed. With the passage of time all these forms of ritual communication would change in response to the specific situation and power relations between the protagonists. This is best illustrated by the public reconciliations of 1064 and 1073 where attempts to alter the ritual demonstrate how flexible they were.[142]

These conclusions further show that the ruling class in Hungary (or, at the very least, the chroniclers depicting their views and actions) were highly skilled at using and varying the elements of ritual actions. In this respect the Hungarian situation does not differ at all from practices common throughout Central Europe:

> The readiness with which Polish, Bohemian and Hungarian rulers resorted to the ceremony of *deditio* or *satisfactio*, as well as their ability to take advantage of it in response to the demands of a given situation or opportunity, leaves no doubt as to the fact that it was widely accepted into the local political tradition.[143]

The inclusion of ritual actions in the corpus of Hungarian narrative and diplomatic sources confirms that in the early and high Middle Ages Hungarians found these forms of ritual and symbolic communication unequivocally comprehensible and accepted, and made use of them as they tried to reach a peaceful resolution to a variety of conflicts.

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142   Cf. *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, SRH 1, c. 97, pp. 362–63 and c. 113, p. 378.
143   Dalewski, "Political Culture", p. 76.

Adventus regis in Medieval Hungary

1 *Adventus regis*

Adventus regis is one of the oldest and most widespread monarchic rituals used in medieval Europe. The festive ceremonial welcoming of the king by a city or a church was not limited to the Middle Ages in Europe: its variants are known from the Greco-Roman period and have survived until modern times.[1]

At the core of the welcoming ritual was the joyous, solemn and ceremonial welcome of a monarch by representatives of a particular community, which involved the handing over of keys to the city and tokens of due respect (often including submission). This was followed by a joint entry into the city and accompanying events such as feasts, festivities, the granting of privileges, tournaments, and games. The number of accounts of the welcoming ritual in the contemporary sources suggest that it was indeed frequently used irrespective of geographical or chronological factors. To some degree, this is certainly due to the way in which royal power was exercised, particularly in the early and high Middle Ages, when the absence of firmly fixed capital cities of kingdoms forced the monarchs to constantly travel their domains. This way of governing and administering a country (*itinerant kingship, rex ambulans*) was common throughout Europe until the late Middle Ages.[2] For example, in Hungary the role of a quasi-capital city was played, successively and in no particular order, by Esztergom, Székesfehérvár, Visegrád and Buda. Further places on the kings' itinerary included Bratislava, Pannonhalma, Veszprém, Szekszárd as well as Oradea. The king had repeatedly to reinforce and reaffirm his sovereignty over each particular urban or monastic community.[3] At the same time, this provided him with an opportunity to accept gifts, honours and oaths of loyalty

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1 The ceremonial welcoming of rulers has received considerable scholarly attention. Most importantly, see: "Adventus regis," in *Lexikon des Mittelalters 1*, pp. 170–71; David A. Warner, "Ritual and Memory in the Ottonian Reich: The Ceremony of Adventus," *Speculum*, 76/2 (2001), pp. 255–83; Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, pp. 213–20; Lawrence M. Bryant, "The Medieval Entry Ceremony at Paris," in Bak, *Coronations*, pp. 88–113. There are detailed accounts especially for the later Middle Ages: Kipling, *Enter the King*; Blanchard, "Le spectacle", pp. 475–519; Guenée, *Les entrées royales*, especially pp. 7–30.

2 For the administration of the realms in this period, see John W. Bernhardt, *Itinerant Kingship and Royal Monasteries in Early Medieval Germany c. 936–1075* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 45–49.

3 Erkens, *Herrschersakralität im Mittelalter*, p. 167.

from his subjects, for which he typically rewarded them by granting new prerogatives or privileges or by resolving disputes and complaints that had accumulated in his absence. Thus the king, in his capacity as the supreme arbiter and executor of justice, repeatedly demonstrated his power in public. As in the cases described earlier, the ritual of *adventus regis* primarily represented interactive symbolic actions beneficial to both parties.[4]

The medieval *adventus regis* derived from two main sources.[5] The first was the Greco-Roman welcoming ceremonies for the Hellenic monarchs and Roman emperors (epiphany, triumph, *adventus*). These were held when a monarch ascended the throne, in the wake of victorious military campaigns and on the main religious holidays. The triumph of Christianity in the Roman Empire was also reflected in monarchic rituals. The welcoming ceremony was adopted by Christian emperors as well as their barbarian successors in the early medieval kingdoms who had Christianized pagan rituals, endowing them with a quasi-liturgical form.

The second and main source of the medieval *adventus regis* was the Bible.[6] The key references were the accounts of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday: the annunciation of the arrival of the Redeemer by John the Baptist, and the Second Coming of Christ, prophesied in the Apocalypse. Gradually two main forms of the ritual emerged. The first, the historic *adventus*, was inspired by Christ's entry into Jerusalem and was used mostly to welcome medieval monarchs visiting Rome. The second, eschatological *adventus*, inspired by the Second Coming of Christ, asserted itself in countries of the Hispano-Gallican rite.[7]

As the title of this chapter suggests, the welcoming ritual was originally reserved only for monarchs (kings and emperors). In due course, however, the use of the ceremonial welcome extended to include popes, bishops and, in some countries, even prominent nobles. Bishops used *adventus* most frequently when they assumed office, and it was used posthumously for their funerals (known as the posthumous church visitation). As opposed to the relatively strong and centralized Central European monarchies, in France in the 10th and 11th century prominent feudal lords also claimed royal power and

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4 Lecuppre-Desjardin, *La ville des ceremonies*, p. 326; Althoff, "The Variability of Rituals", pp. 73–74.

5 Ernst H. Kantorowicz, "The 'King's Advent' and the Enigmatic Panels in the Doors of Santa Sabina," *Art Bulletin*, 26/4 (1944), pp. 207–31.

6 Especially: Matthew 21:1–12; Mark 11:1–11; Luke 19:28–45; John 12:12–18. See also Warner, "Ritual and Memory", pp. 263–64.

7 Kantorowicz, "The 'King's Advent'", pp. 217 and 221.

its symbolic attributes. Thus the use of the ceremonial welcome by means of *adventus* was extended to include counts and dukes also.[8] However, liturgical acts were reserved for anointed figures, such as emperors, kings and bishops.[9] Although in its purest form the ritual occurs during the king's entry into a city, ceremonial welcomes could also take place at royal residences, castles and monasteries. The earliest attempts at a strict definition of the welcoming ritual are found in the instructions for welcoming kings in monasteries (known as *Ordines ad regem suscipiendum*). These were very detailed and elaborate regulations showing how the ritual was to be organized, often featuring diagrams that illustrated the positions of the individuals taking part.[10]

The extant sources allow us to identify three main forms of this ritual.[11] The first was the *adventus regis* in its original sense. It took place when a newly-elected king first arrived in a city as its sovereign ruler, either as part of his coronation ritual or in its wake. This was de facto a constitutional act, a symbolic expression of power and supremacy.[12] It was by means of a flawless and ostentatious performance of the welcoming rite that the members of a community were obliged to show due respect for their monarch, expressing their submission and willingness to accept the new king as their lord. Most often this involved a ceremonial oath of loyalty and an exchange of precious gifts. This ritual was binding: the monarch granted the community his protection and favour, while its citizens recognized their submission.[13]

The second variant of the ritual was the ceremonial welcome given to a monarch who had previously visited a town. This was solely a ceremonial welcome of the kind the king might undergo several times during his reign, without having to make any major demands of his subjects. Nevertheless, these recurrent advents were used to confirm previously-agreed commitments and

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8   Warner, "Ritual and Memory", pp. 264–66. These are studied at length in Koziol, *Begging Pardon*, pp. 133–34 and Fichtenau, *Lebensordnungen*, pp. 76–78.

9   Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, p. 216.

10   A fine example of such a prescription can be found in the *Ordo Farfensis* of 1039, which was in fact most probably already written down in the 10th century. MGH SS 11, p. 547; Kantorowicz, "The 'King's Advent'", p. 208.

11   Compare, for example, the chapter "Uvítací průvody a slavnostní vjezdy," in František Šmahel, *Cesta Karla IV. do Francie* (Praha: Argo, 2006), pp. 260–71.

12   Most recently: Robert Antonín – Tomáš Borovský, *Panovnické vjezdy na středověké Moravě* (Brno: Matice Moravská, 2009), especially pp. 266–72; Dalewski, *Ritual and Politics*, pp. 22–23.

13   See the detailed account in Andrew Brown, "Civic Ritual: Bruges and the Counts of Flanders in the Later Middle Ages," *English Historical Review*, 112 (1997), pp. 294–97; Peter Arnade, "City, State, and Public Ritual in the Late-Medieval Burgundian Netherlands," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 39/2 (1997), pp. 300–311.

agreements, and often also to extend the privileges and advantages enjoyed by the town. Towns were keen on this recurrent ritual particularly in the late Middle Ages because paying symbolic tribute to the king provided an opportunity to petition for protection and the immutability of their free status. For example, following this kind of public display of favour it would have been difficult for a king to mortgage a town.[14]

The third form of ceremonial entry was reserved for the welcoming of monarchs visiting neighbouring (or more distant) countries. Naturally, in this case the purpose was not a symbolic demonstration of power on the one side and humble obedience on the other. This type of *adventus* was meant to demonstrate respect for the visiting monarch and, at the same time, to show due respect for his status, demanded by his royal majesty. The surviving corpus of contemporary sources includes references to welcomes granted to foreign rulers visiting Hungary, as well as to ceremonial entries of St Stephen's successors into towns beyond their kingdom's borders.

The most detailed and interesting accounts allowing us to reconstruct what these entries entailed in the case of Hungary can be found in narrative sources—chronicles, annals and hagiographical literature. The picture can be complemented by studying charters,[15] letters, and legal codices. We can rely largely on sources of domestic Hungarian provenance, although equally valuable information survives in foreign sources describing life and institutions in Hungary.[16]

The unusually copious records of this ritual in the context of Hungarian-Dalmatian relations are particularly remarkable and extremely illuminating. Specifically, these accounts relate to the entry of Hungarian kings into Dalmatian cities, as recorded by the chronicler Thomas of Split. The ancient cities of the Adriatic coast, located at the intersection of various cultures, enjoyed the influence of both Byzantine imperial ideology via Venice, as well as being influenced by the Roman-Italian ideology transmitted by papal attempts to dominate the region. This, in conjunction with venerable urban pride, created conditions more conducive to a greater sensitivity to these ceremonial acts.

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14   Tomáš Borovský, "*Adventus regis* v životě středověkého města," in *Od knížat ke králům*. eds. Eva Doležalová – Robert Šimůnek et al. (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidových Novin), 2007, p. 341.

15   For example, the 1226 decree requiring the monks of Pannonhalma Abbey to pay a regular levy to the King when he visited them (*in adventu regis*), CDES I, p. 234.

16   Because of the lack of contemporary domestic sources, especially for 11th and 12th century, we are obliged to rely on the information from German, Polish, and Bohemian chronicles and annals.

Upon ascending to the Croatian throne Hungarian kings also became legitimate heirs of their predecessors in respect of monarchic rituals and royal symbolism.[17] In studying these, as in other cases of symbolic public communication, in the early Middle Ages we have to rely on rather rare and frequently laconic accounts of, or allusions to, *adventus*. The story changes in the high, and especially in the late, Middle Ages. In this respect the breakthrough occurs in the 13th century along with the associated growth in the importance of cities in Hungary in particular and in Central Europe in general, as we see an increased use of the welcoming ritual and particularly an increased sensitivity to this ritual on the part of urban populations, and greater efforts to record it in the sources. *Adventus regis* as a monarchic ritual par exellence can thus be easily observed in urban environments also.

The monarch's departure, just like his entry, also had a ceremonial form, called the *profectio*, a ritual equally ancient and rich in symbolism. Leaving the royal court required the host's formal permission (so-called *licentia*), as in the case of the brothers Andrew (later to be king) and Levente when they left the Piast court on their way to Vladimir. Before their departure they received the permission of the Polish prince (*Et accepta a duce licentia*).[18]

2   *Adventus regis* in Political Communication in Hungary under the Árpád Dynasty

Adventus regis had formed an integral part of the political culture in medieval Hungary ever since the early days of the Christianized monarchy in the 11th century. Its significance is amplified by the fact that the very first Árpád codes of law reflect attempts to regulate the procedure and codify the ritual.[19] The first of the two legal codes adopted under King Ladislas I, that issued by the synod of Szabolcs on 20 May 1092, contains two provisions regulating the procedure for receiving royalty.[20] They relate specifically to the way a king or a bishop was to be received by an abbot or a monk (chapter XXXV *De osculo*

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17   On this subject, see Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, pp. 148, 153.

18   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, SRH 1, c. 80, p. 336.

19   This is a rare example of such a ceremony being documented in writing in medieval Hungary. This happened mostly in the case of events where the church played a considerable part (coronations, burials, knightly girdings).

20   *Ladislai regis decretorum liber primus*. In *Decreta Regni Mediaevalis Hungariae. Tomus I. 1000–1301*. The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary. Volume 1. 1000–1301. ed. János M. Bak – Gyula Bónis – James Sweeney (Bakersfield, 1989), p. 53 and following.

abbatis vel monachi erga regem vel episcopum). It specified that in such a case a king (as well as a bishop) arriving at an abbey was not to be welcomed by the abbot and the monks in the temple with a kiss of peace (*osculum*). Instead, they were to form a procession and await the king and his kiss inside the monastery (*in claustrum*). The abbot was also obliged to permit the monarch (or bishop) to enter the temple and let him determine the size and composition of his entourage.[21]

Also of interest is the following passage of the legal code setting out a non-traditional procedure for welcoming an abbot (or a monk) on his arrival at the royal court (chapter xxxvi *De salutatione abbatis vel monachi euntis ad regem*). On arrival at the royal court (*curia regia*) the abbot was not to greet the king inside the temple but rather, after leaving the church, at the king's residence or in his tent.[22] This regulation suggests an attempt to ensure that the show of respect for the royal majesty in the form of a ceremonial greeting be expressed outside the sacred space of a temple, which was reserved for paying one's respects to God (*ecclesia dei* vs. *curia regia*). It also aimed to reinforce respect for the majesty of the king, who had to be sought outside the cathedral to be greeted, thereby setting the ritual clearly apart from everyday liturgical rites.

A reference to the monarch's arrival in a monastery also survives in the oldest hagiographical sources. The description of the welcoming ritual in the Legend of St Emeric serves to emphasize the personal devoutness of King Stephen's son and the great respect in which he was held. Upon his arrival in St Martin's monastery in Pannonhalma Stephen decided to cede to his son the tribute which was due to him as a king. Thus, after completing the ceremonial procession, the monks first welcomed Prince Emeric who granted them kisses of peace in quantities commensurate with the piousness of their life.[23] The

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21   *"Si contigerit regi aut episcopo ad quamlibet abbatiam venire, abbas vel monachi ad regis vel episcopi osculum in ecclesia non accedant, sed egressi in claustrum, ordinatim stantes, regis vel episcopi osculum prestolentur. Regem autem et episcopum, cum quot et qualibus sibi placuerit, abbas claustrum intrare permittat." Ladislai regis decretorum liber primus,* p. 58.

22   *"Si autem contigerit, abbatem vel monachum ad curiam regis venire, in ecclesia dei ad salutandum regem non eat, sed postquam exierit de ecclesia, in domo vel tentorio salutet eum." Ladislai regis decretorum liber primus,* p. 58.

23   *"Quodam tempore, cum beatus rex Stephanus ad ecclesiam beati Martini, quam ipse in Sancto Monte Pannonie inchoaverat et egregia monachorum congregatione decoraverat, una cum filio causa orationis advenit, sed rex sciens pueri precellens meritum, onorem, quem (qui) eum decuit, inpendit filio. Nam cum predicti fratres peracta processione salutaturi regem accessissent, propter reverentiam filium suum premisit ad salutandum. Puer autem Henricus spiritu sancto repletus, prout divina revelante sibi gratia singulorum merita*

author clearly uses *adventus* to stress the virtues of his protagonist, achieving his goal by a minor modification of the procedure of the entry ritual.

Narrative sources depicting events in Hungary around the middle of the 11th century also include several examples of the staging of the *adventus regis* ritual. These references all relate to the arrival of kings in Székesfehérvár, which at the time served as the coronation city of Hungarian kings as well as their most important place of residence. The oldest account referring to the 1044 battle of Ménfő has already been mentioned several times. In the immediate aftermath of the battle Henry III, accompanied by King Peter Orseolo, arrived in Székesfehérvár where "the Hungarians received him with imperial honour and great splendour" (*cesar imperiali honore et latissimo preparatu ab Ungaris honoratus*).[24] After restoring Peter to the throne Henry returned to the Holy Roman Empire in triumph. However, a year later, in 1045 at Pentecost, he accepted an invitation from Peter and his nobles to return to Hungary. Of this occasion German chroniclers and annalists of the time report that Henry had been received in a royal manner, with great splendour and copious gifts, and treated to a ceremonial feast (*regio more susceptus decenter est et honorifice retentus*;[25] *magno apparatu suscepit et maximis muneribus donavit*).[26]

It was the endeavour to perform an adequate welcoming ritual, as expected of high-ranking ecclesiastical and secular officials, that proved fatal to a group of Hungarian bishops, particularly the first Hungarian martyr, Gerard, the bishop of Csanád:

> When bishops Gerard, Bystrík, Budli, Beneta and the *comes* Zonuk learned of this, they came out of the city gates of Székesfehérvár to meet Princes Andrew and Levente and offer them a solemn welcome.[27]

In this way bishops and the *comes* aimed to show their respect for the members of the Árpád dynasty who were due to succeed to the Hungarian throne. By doing so, they probably intended to demonstrate that they accepted Andrew as the new King of Hungary. However, after celebrating holy mass, the bishops

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noverat, singulis inequaliter oscula distribuit." Legenda sancti Emerici ducis, c. 2, SRH 2, p. 452; see also Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, p. 159.

24 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 77, SRH 1, p. 333.

25 *Annales Altahenses maiores ad a. 1045.*

26 *Herimanni Augiensis chronicon ad a. 1045.* MGH SS 5, p. 125.

27 "*Quo audito Gerardus, Boztricus, Buldi et Benetha episcopi et Zonuc comes de civitate Alba egressi sunt obviam Endre et Leuente ducibus, ut eos honorifice susciperent." Chron. Hung. comp. saec XIV*, c. 83, SRH 1, p. 339.

fell into the hands of the leaders of the pagan uprising that was raging at the time, and died martyr's deaths near Pest.[28]

On the other hand, King Béla I completed a successful *adventus* when he arrived in Székesfehérvár for his coronation in 1060.[29] Three years later the same ceremonial welcome was afforded to Solomon, Béla's rival for the Hungarian throne, accompanied by his protector, the German king, Henry IV. On this occasion the customary procedure was followed throughout:

> King Solomon with the emperor (i.e. King Henry—D.Z.) had no diffi-
> culty reaching Hungary which was without a king at the time, and safely
> entered the royal city of Székesfehérvár. There he was welcomed by the
> clergy and the people of all Hungary in the most respectful manner.[30]

The ceremonial arrival was followed by Solomon's reconciliation with the Hungarians, a ceremonial coronation, magnificent feasts and generous exchanges of precious gifts.[31]

The most detailed description of a solemn ritual of royal arrival in a city in the early medieval period of Hungarian history survives in the chronicle of Thomas, the Archdeacon of Split. He relates the arrival of King Coloman I in the city of Split in 1105. Sometime earlier, in the late 11th century, Ladislas I had tried to seize power in Dalmatia and Slavonia but it was his successor who brought this process to a successful conclusion. The Hungarian King and his army reached the gates of the city of Split and called upon its inhabitants to submit to Hungarian sovereignty peacefully in order to avert an impending military confrontation. The burghers who the chronicler believes had not been

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28 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 83–85, SRH 1, pp. 339–42; *Legenda S. Gerhardi epis-
    copi*, c. 15, SRH 2, pp. 501–3. The causes of the insurrection are outlined in Múcska, "Boj
    uhorskeho štatu", pp. 204–5. Andrew and his retinue received a ceremonial welcome
    in Székesfehérvár during his coronation. See *Simonis de Keza Gesta Hungarorum*, c. 54,
    SRH 1, p. 178.

29 *"... cum triumpho venit in civitatem Albam ..." Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 94, SRH 1,
    p. 358.

30 *"Rex itaque Salomon cum imperatore sine difficultate intravit in Hungariam rege orbatam
    et securus venit in civitatem regiam Albam, ibique ab omni clero et populo totius Hungarie
    honorificentissime susceptus est." Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 97, SRH 1, p. 361.

31 *Annales Altahenses maiores ad a.1063*, pp. 62–64; *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 97,
    SRH 1, pp. 361–2; *Bernoldi Chronicon ad a. 1063*, MGH SS 5, p. 428.

ILLUSTRATION 4   *The ceremonial entry* (adventus regis) *of the German King Henry IV and Solomon, King of Hungary into the city of Székesfehérvár. Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle (14th century).* REPRODUCED BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE ORSZÁGOS SZÉCHÉNYI KÖNYVTÁR.

aware of the Hungarians' true intentions, chose stubborn defiance. After being besieged for some time, with the city environs being pillaged, the inhabitants learned that Coloman was willing to resolve the conflict in a peaceful way. Having conferred among themselves they sent Archbishop Crescentius as their envoy to deliver their offer of peace. Coloman graciously received Crescentius and accepted the conditions for peace. A peace treaty was drawn up and the King along with his nobles solemnly swore to abide by it (*iuravit rex cum suis principibus, omnia firmiter observare*).

One day after the Spalatians demonstrated their submission to the Hungarian king by declaring an oath of loyalty, the new king could at last be given a joyous welcome:

Thereupon the King entered the city and was received with every honour by the clergy and the people. On the same day, he also received supplies from the inhabitants, recorded and handed over charters containing privileges and protections, and subsequently departed the city.[32]

The same procedure was followed when Coloman was solemnly received in the nearby cities of Trogir and Zadar.[33]

Let us dwell a little longer on the chronicle of the Archdeacon of Split, as this work contains a model depiction of the *adventus regis* ritual. Here, too, the main protagonists are the Spalatians on the one hand and the King of Hungary, Dalmatia and Croatia, Andrew II (1205–1235), on the other. This account of public symbolic communication between the king and the inhabitants of a subject city is quite unique in terms of early 13th century Central Europe. At the same time it shows in full glory the royal majesty being duly honoured by his subjects.

In 1217, after long prevarication, Andrew II decided to keep the unfulfilled promise of his father Béla III who had pledged to undertake a crusade to the Holy Land.[34] The King started by hiring the requisite boats from the Venetians and dispatching them to Split harbour. Hungarian and Austrian soldiers, auxilliary contingents and supplies, including a large amount of cattle, were gradually assembled in the city. Temporary quarters were set up in tents around the city's fortifications. On 23 August 1217 Andrew II arrived at the gates of Split in person:

> All the burghers, foreigners and a large number of his soldiers left the city to meet the King, to welcome him singing his praises (*laudes*) in a powerful voice. Then the entire clergy, clad in silk robes on top of their attire, proceeded to the Gate of Pistura carrying crosses and incense and singing jointly (or arranging everything) in a manner worthy of the royal

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32   *"Tunc rex civitatem ingressus, valde honorifice a clero et populo susceptus est. Et ea die procuratione affluenter a comuni suscepta confectisque ac traditis emunitatis privilegiis, profectus est." Historia Salonitana*, c. 17, p. 96.

33   Ibid. An inscription still preserved on the belfry of the Church of St. Mary the Less in Zadar bears witness to Coloman's 1105 visit to Dalmatia: *"Anno incarnationis domini nostri Iesu Christi millesimo CV. Post victoriam et pacis praemia laderae introitus a Deo concessa, proprio sumptu hanc turrim St. Mariae, Vngariae, Dalmaciae, Croaciae construi et errigi iussit rex Colomanus."* CDRCD 1, p. 391. For Coloman's expedition to the cities on the Dalmatian coast and his coronation as king of Dalmatia and Croatia, see Font, *Coloman*, pp. 63–67.

34   Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, p. 91.

majesty. The distinguished King, seeing this solemn procession, immediately dismounted from his horse. Surrounded by a great many of his nobles and protected on both sides by the assembled bishops, he walked on his own feet as far as St Domnius Cathedral. There, after celebrating Holy Mass, he placed his gifts on the altar and proceeded to his lodgings. On the same day the city community presented the King with generous financial aid in a house known as Mata beyond the city walls near the northern city gate. It is said that the King's retinue counted more than ten thousand cavalrymen, not to mention countless ordinary soldiers. At this time the King showed great kindheartedness towards the inhabitants of Split. He went as far as calling upon them to come forward and asking what they would like him to grant them for the public good.[35]

In the end Split did not receive several of the privileges on offer because its prominent citizens preferred their own interests to the general benefit of the urban community. Nor did Andrew succeed in ensuring that his candidate would succeed to the archbishop's seat, which became vacant following Archbishop Bernard's death while the King was staying in the city. Eventually, however, the sole Hungarian royal crusader boarded a ship and set sail for the Holy Land. As a sign of respect the Spalatians sent two galleys to accompany him as far as Durrës.[36]

The solemn *adventus regis* ritual comprised several semantic and communicative levels. First and foremost it provided a unique opportunity for both parties of the ritual procedure to demonstrate their rights and obligations. The inhabitants of Split had to show due respect to their king, which was symbolized by the ceremonial procession of burghers, foreigners and assembled

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35 *"Exierunt autem processionaliter obviam domino regi universi cives, omnesque forenses totaque turba sui exercitus, laudes ei altis vocibus concrepantes. Deinde clerus omnis olosericis super comptas induti vestibus cum crucibus et thuribulis procedentes usque posturium, prout regie magnificentie dignum erat pariter, concinnebant. Ipse vero illustris rex, viso processionis cetu solempni, statim descendit de equo, magnaque suorum principum vallatus caterva, tenentibus eum hinc inde episcopis, qui convenerant, pedes usque ad ecclesiam sancti Domnii processit. Ubi celebrato missarum officio, et data oblatione super altare, ad hospitium secessit. Ea die comunitas exhibuit regi affluentissimam procurationem in domo, que dicitur Mata extra muros aquilonaris porte. Dicebatur autem tunc fuisse in comitatu regio plus quam decem milia equitum, excepta vulgari multitudine, que pene innumerabilis erat. Tunc rex cepit magnam benignitatem erga Spalatenses cives ostendere, ita ut ipse ultro provocaret eos ad petendum a se, quod eis ad publicum cederet comodum." Historia Salonitana*, c. 25, p. 160.

36 *Historia Salonitana*, c. 25, pp. 160–62.

crusaders who went out of the city gates to meet the monarch. The welcome also involved solemn chanting in praise of the king, the *laudes regiae*.[37]

The second part of the welcome consisted of liturgical rites performed by the local clergy, which included specific references to royal symbols. Royal praises—*laudes regiae*—were sung again, as befits the royal majesty (*prout regie magnificentie dignum erat pariter, concinnebant*). The liturgy also involved welcoming rites reserved only for anointed individuals, in this case Hungarian kings. The meanings of all the acts performed would have been clear and unequivocally comprehensible to those who witnessed the events on both sides. Each move, gesture and word would have been fixed long ago and also, undoubtedly, agreed upon and clarified in advance.[38]

Of course, in line with the rules of public communication in the Middle Ages the monarch being welcomed had to give an appropriate response to the symbolic actions performed by the Spalatians. In response to the honour and praise shown him he dismounted from his horse and, accompanied by the lay and clerical elite (nobles and bishops) proceeded on foot all the way to St Domnius Cathedral. This was obviously an expression of royal humility (*humilitas*), in that Andrew II 'descended' to the people welcoming him and walked through the assembled multitude to the church service. This proves that voluntary symbolic acts of humbleness, best expressed by the term *humiliatio-exaltatio*, survived in Hungary for some time after the events at Canossa.[39] The symbolic part of the King's joyous arrival ended with his obligatory participation in the Holy Mass in St Domnius Cathedral and the laying of gifts upon the altar.

Naturally, the protagonists had to present some material evidence of their goodwill and willingness to meet their obligations in practice. On the very same day the Spalatians donated a considerable sum of money for the King's crusade. The chronicler tries to emphasize the generosity of his fellow-countrymen's contribution by citing the countless number of soldiers in Andrew's retinue. The Hungarian king, on his part, was aware that he was expected to repay their generosity adequately, and he was prepared to grant the burghers various privileges and immunities. As we have seen earlier, in this case, performing the ritual in line with established rules also proved beneficial to both sides.

In the 13th century the *adventus*, as well as several variations on the ways prominent prelates or lay deputations were received, are cited with increasing frequency in Hungarian sources. For example, the Legend of St. Elisabeth of Hungary (*De vita et morte miraculisque beatae Elisabeth*) from late 13th century

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37   See Chapter 2. About this ritual in general, see Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, pp. 147–56.

38   Althoff, "The Variability of Rituals", p. 86.

39   See also Althoff, "Humiliatio", pp. 39–51; *Panovnícke vjezdy*, p. 239.

tells us that the Landgrave of Thuringia sent a deputation of his representatives to the court of Andrew II in Hungary "with a large retinue, numerous servants and great splendour" to ask for the hand of his daughter in marriage. The messengers arrived in Bratislava where they were "received joyously and in a regal manner".[40] The deputation that returned to Thuringia with the royal daughter-fiancée received an equally grand welcome.[41] The respect expressed by means of the ceremonial welcome extended to the deputations and was aimed at the Landgrave of Thuringia and the Hungarian King respectively, even though neither was physically present.[42]

A ceremonial arrival and welcome could also be extended to prelates who were due to assume the bishop's office in a particular community.[43] In early 1250 Archbishop Rogerius arrived at Béla IV's (1235–1270) royal court carrying credentials from the pope authorizing him to assume the archbishopric of Split. The Hungarian King was not especially keen on the nomination, as it had been made without his knowledge or approval. Nevertheless, he allowed Rogerius to leave the court in peace and assume the archbishop's rank. "Arriving with twenty men on horseback, chaplains and his *familia*", Rogerius "entered the city on the second Sunday in Lent (20 February 1250). The clergy and the people received him with great joy."[44] After his arrival the archbishop kept a lavish and costly court, and whenever he travelled he was accompanied by great numbers of canons and burghers.[45]

Also worth mentioning is another type of *adventus regis*, whose explicit purpose is the formal and ceremonial welcome of an honoured guest in a foreign country. After his coronation Stephen V (1270–1272) decided to visit his relative Bolesław, Prince of Krakow. One of the reasons for his journey was to pay his respects to the grave of the bishop St Stanislaus. At the same time, it provided an excellent opportunity to renew and (re)affirm the long-standing alliance between the two countries. Stephen arrived in the Krakow region with an extensive and splendid retinue (*in celebri et numeroso comitatu*). The visitor's

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40   Compare *De vita et morte miraculisque beatae Elisabeth Lib. I. cap. 1–2*. In Gombos Catalogus 3, pp. 2342–43; see also *O živote a smrti aj o zázrakoch svätej Alžbety*. In *Legendy stredovekého Slovenska*, p. 147.

41   Ibidem, p. 148.

42   See Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, pp. 4–5.

43   Warner, "Ritual and Memory", pp. 264–66.

44   *"Venit autem cum viginti equitibus, cum capellanis et familia et secunda dominica de quadragesima civitatem ingrediens, cum magna cleri et populi alacritate susceptus est."* Historia Salonitana, c. 46, p. 360.

45   *Historia Salonitana*, c. 46, p. 360. For the extraordinary figure of Bishop Rogerius and his importance in medieval Hungary, see Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, p. 98.

noble rank and the significance of his visit were matched by the ceremonial welcome he received from Bolesław and his wife Kinga (Kunigunda), who went to meet the Hungarian King a full seven miles outside the city. In addition to the princely couple Stephen was welcomed in Krakow by a procession of local clergy, the assembled princely court, precious gifts and a magnificent jousting tournament (*processionum honore ab ecclesiis; curiam indixit; donatum muneribus magnificis; hastarum ludos assidue et varii generis ac multifariam fecit*).[46] After concluding the welcoming rites both monarchs confirmed the agreed peace by a solemn oath on the Bible and the holy cross. On Stephen v's departure the princely couple accompanied them as far as the city of Sącz.[47] What makes this welcome particularly interesting compared with previous examples, is its greater complexity and richness. A new component was chivalric culture, which began to spread to Central Europe in the second half of the 13th century, exemplified by the holding of tournaments. Nevertheless, this was merely a formal *adventus*, the ceremonial welcome of an honoured guest without any hidden symbolic meaning and without asserting any binding constitutional claims.[48]

3   Good and Bad *adventus*

Adventus regis could be performed as a good or as a bad ritual. The 'danger' of rituals consisted in the number of ways in which they could be performed, the flexibility of their application, as well as the variety of ways that their significance could be read in a particular instance.[49] Not only in actual political practice did the ritual constitute a powerful instrument of medieval public communication. It could be transformed into an equally effective and powerful instrument in writing, depending on the presentation and interpretation that contemporary chroniclers ascribed to the events they were depicting.[50]

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46   *Joannis Dlugossii*, Liber VII, pp. 416–17.

47   *"…usque in Sandecz cum Kinga Ducissa consorte sua est prosecutus." Joannis Dlugossii*, Liber VII, p. 417.

48   It should again be stressed that the author of the extract, the Krakow Chronicler Jan Długosz, writing in the 15th century, projected the ritual framework of ceremonial welcoming of his own time onto the description of earlier events. For more on this, see Šmahel, *Cesta Karla IV.*, pp. 260–261.

49   Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual*, pp. 8, 37, 70.

50   Dalewski, *Ritual and Politics*, pp. 8–9.

The first and second *adventus* of Hungarian King Béla IV in the Dalmatian city of Split is an example of a good ritual. The King entered the city for the first time in 1242, seeking refuge in the maritime region of his kingdom as he fled the 'Tatars' (Mongols).[51] The king's retinue comprised all the prominent prelates and noblemen who managed to escape the calamity of the Tatar invasion, including the archbishop, the chancellor (*aule regie cancelarius*), and the bishops and abbots. The lay elite was represented primarily by members of his royal court: the palatine (*comes curialis*), master of the treasury (*magister tavernicorum*), and the master of the horse (*magister agasonum*), together with their families and households.

As Béla reached the city gates, the clergy and the inhabitants all came out to meet him in a procession and received him with the honour that was his due and a demonstration of their deference. The King and his retinue were allocated the requisite number of lodgings. The local *podestà* Gargano ensured that both parties observed customary behaviour. The burghers had to be willing to meet the King's commands and wishes, while for his part Béla was expected to lavish his favour and benevolence on the entire Split community (*regalis clementia*).[52]

A few years later, while on a tour of inspection of the maritime regions of his kingdom Béla IV again found himself at the gates of Split. He chose St Peter's Cathedral in Klobučac as his base in the region as he went about his royal duties, accompanied by a large retinue of courtiers. The King's personal presence provided an ideal opportunity for exercising his legal powers, resolving festering regional conflicts and granting new privileges or donations, or renewing older ones. After discharging these duties he boarded a galley and sailed into Split harbour:

> Then he boarded a galley and arrived in Split harbour. He entered the city with great pomp, adorned with the royal insignia befitting a king, and was received by the clergy and the inhabitants with much jubilation. He spent the day and night in the palace of Nicholas, the son of Duimo, where he was visited by a constant stream of burghers. He received them

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51 Kristó, *Histoire de la Hongrie*, pp. 141–144. See Richard Marsina's introduction to *Tatársky vpád*. ed. Richard Marsina – Miloš Marek (Budmerice, 2008), pp. 9–18.

52 *"Appropinquante autem domino rege ad introitum civitatis, universus clerus et populus processionaliter exeuntes debito venerationis obsequio susceperunt eum…."* *Historia Salonitana*, c. 38, pp. 290–92.

kindly and granted them a hearing, demonstrating to them his kindness and majesty.[53]

The King also managed to gently reprimand (*moderata allocutione*) the Spalatians for electing Rogerius as Archbishop without his knowledge and consent, as mentioned earlier. The Spalatians apologized and pledged never to do such a thing again. Also on this occasion, as a vital part of public communication, the burghers presented the King with several precious gifts while he showed them his goodwill. After that Béla was able to leave the city and return to Hungary free of any concerns.[54]

The following chapter of the Split chronicle contains an outstanding depiction of what is known as a bad ritual. This means that the *adventus regis* did not follow the correct procedure, that basic rules of ritual communication were not observed, or that it fell victim to deliberate manipulation. The main protagonist in this case was Archbishop Rogerius on the one hand and, on the other, the German king, Conrad IV, who was passing through Dalmatian cities on his way to Sicily in 1252. The King was welcomed cordially in most of the cities until he came to Split. This was because Emperor Frederick II, Conrad's father, had been excommunicated by Pope Innocent IV at the Council of Lyon in 1245 and declared to be deposed as emperor, and the punishment also extended to his son Conrad.[55] Archbishop Rogerius, who hailed from Italy, was aware of these facts and their implications for Conrad. As an excommunicated and deposed monarch Conrad could not demand a ceremonial welcome, let alone any associated liturgical rites.

When the archbishop learned that Conrad had sailed into the harbour and was about to enter the city, he resolved to prevent the *adventus* from being

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53   "*Tunc ascendens galeam venit ad portum civitatis Spalatensis ingressusque in eam cum multa ambitione, sicut rex regalia gerens insignia, magna cleri et populi exultatione susceptus est. Mansitque die illa et nocte in palatio Nicolai Duimi, cives vero ad ipsum frequenter accedentes valde benigne suscipiebantur et audiebantur ab ipso affabilem se ac serenum eis plurimum exhibendo.*" Historia Salonitana, c. 48, pp. 364–66.

54   *Historia Salonitana*, c. 48, p. 366.

55   *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte. CD Ausgabe Directmedia*. ed. Hubert Jedin (Berlin, 2000) (Digitale Bibliothek Band 35), pp. 5467–8; Cristina Andenna, "*Cesarea* oder *viperea stirps*? Zur Behauptung und Bestreitung persönlicher und dynastischer Idoneität der späten Staufer in kurialen und adligen Diskursen des 13. Jahrhunderts," in *Idoneität— Genealogie—Legitimation: Begründung Und Akzeptanz Von Dynastischer Herrschaft Im Mittelalter*, eds. Cristina Andenna and Gert Melville (Norm und Struktur 43.) (Köln: Böhlau, 2015), pp. 191–93; *Evropa králů a císařů* (Praha: Levné Knihy, 2005), p. 238; *Historia Salonitana*, c. 47, p. 362.

staged in the requisite ritualized form: "Archbishop Rogerius, upon learning that (Conrad) was about to enter the city, locked the church gates and suspended all church services."[56] Then he himself hurriedly departed the city and sought lodgings in a nearby village. Naturally, the king was incensed but decided to proceed and enter the city, where he was welcomed by the Spalatians, if not by the archbishop. However, Conrad could not tolerate being personally insulted and his power being dishonoured. He accepted the offer to lodge at the archbishop's palace and began an inspection of the papers he found there, seeking evidence that the archbishop's treatment of him was unlawful. Since he could find no proof of this and his threats to Rogerius went unheeded, he decided to make use of a favourable wind and set sail for Apulia. Contented, the archbishop then returned to the city.[57]

What we have here are two examples of two different ways of performing and describing the *adventus regis* ritual. The correct model is represented by King Béla IV's two ceremonial arrivals in Split. His first arrival took place under extreme circumstances as the king sought refuge from the destruction inflicted by the Tatars' victory. Accompanied by his remaining secular nobles and prelates he arrived in Split and was welcomed by a procession of local clergy and burghers who showed their respect, demonstrating that they continued to regard him as their sovereign ruler in spite of the catastrophic ramifications of the lost battle.[58] This they demonstrated not only by their due submission but also in material terms—by providing him with lodgings and doubtless also with the necessary supplies and funds. However, since at that moment the King's power was under threat and his military might weakened, he had to take care to treat his loyal subjects with due cordiality and generosity. The sources say that the ritual took place under the supervision of the local *podestà* Gargano, possibly as a mediator, to ensure that everything proceeded harmoniously.

Béla's second *adventus* was staged—in a modified form and using new ritual means of public symbolic communication—after the crisis caused by the Tatar invasion had been partly overcome, at a time when the King was making a conscious effort to reinforce his royal majesty and power. This process had

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56   *"Rogerius archiepiscopus ipsum sentiens, quod vellet ingredi civitatem, fecit claudi ecclesias, et ab omnibus cessare divinis." Historia Salonitana*, c. 47, pp. 362–64.

57   *Historia Salonitana*, c. 47, p. 364.

58   For the use of *adventus regis* as a ritual of legitimization or for the confirmation of the ruler's power, see Dalewski, *Ritual and Politics*, pp. 27–28; Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, p. 216.

to be reflected in the rituals as well.[59] Immediately upon his second arrival in Dalmatia Béla started to discharge his role as supreme judge and the sovereign owner of all property. He deliberately presented himself as the highest authority and most powerful person in the country, the only one whom the population could expect to bring justice and charity.[60]

Béla pursued the same goal once he entered the city of Split itself. The key shift and innovation compared with his first arrival concerns the public presentation of his royal majesty. Béla enters the city "*cum multa ambitione, sicut rex regalia gerens insignia*", with great pomp and in the full glory of the royal majesty, in ceremonial attire, bearing the holy crown on his head and carrying the other royal insignia.[61] At first sight this would seem to be a classic example of *Festkrönung* or *Crown-wearing*.[62] However, in these circumstances we might almost speak of a second 'coronation proper'. After the Tatar disaster Béla IV had to reinforce his power and status beyond any doubt in terms of royal ideology and representation also, and it was to this end that he used the ritual entrance into the city in full splendour with all the associated symbolic trappings and legal ramifications. None of his actions was incidental or purely formal. The King's triumphal arrival marked a fresh return to power, validated and legitimized by the burghers and clergy who had gathered in a procession for the joyous welcome. By the end of the ritual the damage suffered by the Hungarian King through his humiliating flight from the battlefield was expiated and forgotten.

This change of status and the increase of the King's power is also reflected in the chronicler's account. On the first occasion Béla had to be contented with a show of goodwill and generosity, under the strict supervision of the local *podestà*. On his second arrival the Hungarian King was powerful enough to be able to reprimand the burghers and demand an apology and a solemn pledge that in future they would not take important decisions without his knowledge and consent. This is further proof of the flexibility of the ritual, which

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59   Interestingly, our key informant on the king's intentions is one of the main protagonists of these events, Rogerius, the future Archbishop of Split. He gives invaluable information concerning the state of the kingdom and royal power before and after the Mongol invasion. *Rogerii carmen miserabile*. SRH 2, pp. 551–88; Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, p. 98.

60   Erkens, *Herrschersakralität im Mittelalter*, pp. 166–67.

61   For the role of the ruler's attire in rituals affirming status and power, see Leyser, "Ritual, Ceremony and Gesture", pp. 206–8.

62   Jäschke, "Frühmittelalterliche Festkrönungen?", pp. 556–88.

its protagonists could make appropriate use of depending on the immediate situation and requirements.[63]

Our source provides a completely different account of the unsuccessful *adventus* of the excommunicated and deposed king Conrad IV. The central protagonist of this act and, at the same time, one of the main characters in Thomas's chronicle as a whole, is Archbishop Rogerius, who is able to recognize exactly what kind of ritual action is appropriate in a particular situation. A king under papal anathema is not deserving of any ceremonial welcome, let alone liturgical rites. That is why the archbishop orders all the city's churches to be locked shut and all church services to cease. To cap it all, the archbishop then demonstratively leaves the city just before Conrad's arrival, to avoid giving the impression of endorsing or legitimizing subsequent events with his presence. Rogerius thus acts in accordance with the 'rules of the game' of public symbolic communication. His absence demonstrated that he rejected the ritual, challenged it and broke free of its binding nature.[64] As mentioned earlier, liturgical welcomes were reserved for anointed kings and sovereign lords.[65] On this occasion Conrad had to make do with the lay part of the welcoming ceremony performed by the burghers. However, this truncated form must not be overestimated, since several senior (i.e. prominent) burghers—*seniores*, left the city along with the archbishop. Conrad made one last attempt to salvage his unsuccessful and manipulated *adventus* by using threats and legal manoeuvres but none of this affected the 'bad' course and significance of the ritual.[66]

Several conclusions can be drawn from the foregoing. The actual ritual and, even more so, the actual texts describing these practices, clearly distinguish between two versions of the ritual—good and bad.[67] A good ritual is one which, on the level of symbolic communication, conveys an image of a properly functioning society. Both its protagonists and observers play roles that have been clearly defined in advance, their actions are in line with the model or the performative form of the ritual, and its every element serves to

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63   Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, p. 198.

64   Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, pp. 101–2.

65   Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, p. 216; see the headword "Adventus regis," in *Lexikon des Mittelalters I*, pp. 170–1.

66   A parallel to Rogerius's behaviour can be found as early as in the early Middle Ages. In 878 Pope John VIII transferred all the treasures of St. Peter's to the Lateran Basilica, he covered all the altars in the church and ordered its gates to be closed. At the same time, no services were to be held in the Cathedral for several days. This is how the Pope tried to prevent the coronation, after the death of Charles the Bald, of a candidate he considered unworthy of the imperial throne. Buc, "Ritual and Interpretation", pp. 196–7.

67   Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual*, p. 8.

demonstrate unambiguous statements and commitments.[68] By this token they help to sustain the functioning of society in the required manner. A bad ritual, on the other hand, results in conflicts, tensions, wrong actions and is reflected in a manipulated interpretation in written accounts. Both forms point to the real risk in the performance of the ritual concerned: the fact that it was always open to manipulation. Besides, any public (ritual) action could be subjected to various interpretations,[69] whose form depended on the protagonists' motivation, the correct or incorrect performance of the ritual, in particular whether the requisite conditions were met and rules observed.

This demonstrates that what mattered was not simply the correct and adequate performance of the ritual, which was supposed to convey the required message that was beneficial for both protagonists in some way. Equally important was how this event was recorded and interpreted in contemporary documents. On the one hand, the written record of the correct and proper execution of a ritual conferred additional glory on the protagonists and framed their behaviour in terms of the dominant form of political action. On the other hand, if an author wished to stress that someone was unfit for office, had acted in bad faith, or strove to appropriate certain privileges by stealth, the depiction of bad ritual very often served as an instrument that exposed and unmasked such behaviour. Because Béla IV was a legitimate ruler who cared about the welfare of the Dalmatian communities, his *adventus* in Split followed the prescribed scenario, with the consent of the entire receiving community (the people and clergy). Its splendour was additionally enhanced by the performance of the rite of *Crown-wearing*.

It was precisely for this reason that the excommunicated and deposed Conrad IV could not expect the same kind of welcome. His *adventus* turned into a caricature of the correct model, a failed ritual and a public insult to his royal power. The root cause must be sought in the fact that Conrad had broken the rules of public ritual communication since, as a deposed monarch, he was not entitled to different treatment.[70] Thus the chroniclers used the *adventus regis* as a means of expressing both a correct and an inappropriate action in terms of political communication with all the associated symbolic meanings and ramifications.

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68   Leyser, "Ritual, Ceremony and Gesture", pp. 211–13; Warner, "Ritual and Memory", p. 282.

69   Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual*, p. 8; Koziol, *Begging Pardon*, pp. 289–91.

70   Dalewski, *Ritual and Politics*, p. 30. A parallel can be found in the flawed entry of Polish duke, Bolesław II, in Hungary and his meeting with King Ladislas I of Hungary, which failed for the same reason. *Gesta principum Polonorum*, I.28, pp. 98–100. See the chapter devoted to encounters between royalty.

However, we should stress that this phenomenon is primarily present on the narrative level rather than in real acts. It could, therefore, be described as a symbiosis of *ritual-in-text* with *ritual-in-performance*, which was the paramount means of legitimizing and shaping these actions in the political culture of medieval society.[71]

4   Conclusion

As we have seen, sufficient evidence survives in the contemporary sources to enable us to regard the *adventus regis* ritual as an integral part of symbolic public communication in Hungary under the Árpád dynasty. Its structure, the various forms of its execution, and circumstances in which it was used, are not fundamentally different from Western European models and fit perfectly into the framework of welcoming ceremonials across Central Europe at the time.[72]

The same applies to every variant of its performance depending on the status and importance of the figure (*adventus regis, domini, augusti*) whose arrival was being honoured on a particular occasion: the welcome offered to Hungarian kings as sovereign monarchs, welcoming bishops as God's representatives on earth, welcoming of honoured guests as an expression of respect for the royal majesty that was their superior. We were able to identify three basic types of ritual, in terms of societal roles and symbolic importance: the first advent of a monarch and his actual assumption of power over a certain community; the recurrent (virtually formal) *adventus*, whose character mostly tends to be merely ceremonial or affirmative; and the ceremonial welcoming of a foreign ruler that represents only a non-committal show of due respect.

A comparison with sources of mainly Western European provenance or with examples from later centuries allows us to come closer to defining the model or complete *adventus regis*, which consisted of four clearly specified parts. The first stage, referred to as *adventus*, involved the actual appearance of the monarch and his retinue before a certain community (a city, monastery, or residence). This was followed by a solemn procession of the local populace, walking towards the king as he arrived (*occursus*). The next stage was the

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71   Dalewski, *Ritual and Politics*, p. 11; Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual*, pp. 1–12; Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, p. 187.

72   See Andrzej Pleszczyński, "Sobeslaus—ut Salomon, ut rex Ninivitarum. Gesta, rituály a inscenace—propagandistické nástroje boje českého knížete v konfliktu s opozicí (1130–1131)," *Český časopis historický*, 101/2 (2003), pp. 237–39; Dalewski, "Political Culture", pp. 65–85; *Stát, státnost a rituály*.

welcome and reception (*susceptio* or *receptio*). This phase was concluded by the king's entry into the city (*ingressus*).[73] However, as we have seen, the ritual continued with further acts that included the public submission on the part of the burghers, the handing over of precious gifts, renewals of oaths of loyalty, manifestations of royal favour, and the confirmation of existing privileges and the conferral of new ones.[74] These additional symbolic acts often grew more numerous and lavish, particularly in the late Middle Ages.

In written sources relating to the Árpád dynasty the complete set of elements comprising the *adventus regis* rite can be observed only in the case of Andrew II's arrival in Split in 1217. In the remaining cases the chroniclers limited their accounts to certain aspects of it, or sometimes even to a mere reference to the ceremonial reception (*susceptio*). In this respect, too, the Hungarian sources do not differ from their counterparts from Central or Western Europe. The ritual of a monarch's solemn arrival and his ceremonial welcome was commonly witnessed by medieval contemporaries; they were very familiar with it and therefore, in the majority of cases, it did not require a more comprehensive or detailed commentary.

Adventus regis in its particular forms, as it related to specific circumstances, was an integral part of the political reality of Hungary under the Árpáds. It regulated the relations between the king and the community receiving him and demonstrated the fact that his claim to rule a particular community was beyond dispute.[75] It provided an opportunity for displaying his royal majesty, for the renewal or affirmation of good mutual relations, of loyalty and submission of a community to the king, as well as the community's right to be rewarded commensurately for their loyalty. Last but not least, it also demonstrated the efficacy of correctly applying the 'rules of the game' in public political communication. It was generally accepted that concessions in the ritual sphere were usually compensated for in another sphere.[76]

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73   Dalewski, *Ritual and Politics*, p. 35.

74   Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual*, pp. 37–39.

75   *Adventus* had the same meaning in Piast Poland, see Dalewski, *Ritual and Politics*, p. 23.

76   Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, p. 202.

Encounters between Royalty—Greeting Rituals

1   Symbolic Communication during Meetings between Royalty

Perhaps one of the most striking aspects of the present-day world that distinguishes it more than anything else from previous periods of history is the phenomenon of globalized mass communication. This makes it quite hard for us to imagine life in medieval Europe, at a time when nearly everything depended on face-to-face encounters. Personal contact was unavoidable both on the lowest rungs of semi-oral societies, among ordinary people, and in the highest echelons of society. Personal encounters between royalty, the nobility, and the most powerful prelates played a prominent role in political communication in medieval Europe. Meetings were used to negotiate truces, declare wars, close business deals or grant privileges, to display royal majesty and power, cultivate friendships, and swear solemn oaths. All activities of any importance and benefit to society had to be conducted in public, preferably with the direct participation of all the parties involved. In this part of our study we will take a closer look at instances of personal encounters between monarchs who reigned in this period. Accounts of meetings of Hungarian kings with nobles, neighbouring monarchs or the world's most powerful rulers of the time will be used to elucidate the significance of these actions in terms of symbolic communication, focusing also on the symbolism and on the greeting rituals associated with such meetings.

One of the examples historians have most frequently cited in documenting the significance of meetings between medieval rulers is the famous case of Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180) welcoming German king Conrad III (1138–1152)[1] in 1147. Conrad came to Byzantium as a devout pilgrim and, at the same time, as one of the leading commanders of the Second Crusade that was under way. Byzantine courtly ceremonial was much more complex and elaborate than analogous imperial or royal ceremonies in

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[1] Horst Fuhrmann, "Willkommen und Abschied. Begrüßungs- und Abschiedsrituale im Mittelalter," in *Überall ist Mittelalter* (München: C.H. Beck, 1997), p. 32; Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, p. 28; Ingrid Voss, *Herrschertreffen im frühen und hohen Mittelalter* (Köln/Wien: Böhlau, 1987), p. 144.

Western Europe.[2] The Emperor of Constantinople was an immensely revered figure whose subjects were obliged to show him their profound humility. Since the Byzantines traditionally regarded themselves as superior to 'barbarian Franks', when Manuel was about to meet Conrad III, he decided to greet him in the same way he would any vassal noble. This meant that the German King was expected to kiss the Byzantine Emperor's knee, in what was the traditional token of respect for the successor of Constantine the Great. Naturally, as the most powerful ruler of the Latin Europe, Conrad reacted with dismay and defiance. Such treatment would have publicly insulted his majesty and, in a way, would have forced him to demonstrate his subordinate position vis-à-vis the Emperor. Conrad also rejected the suggestion that he should stand on the ground, granting the kiss of peace (*osculum pacis*) to the Emperor who remained on horseback. Representatives of both parties were obliged to enter into difficult negotiations. Eventually they arrived at an original, albeit rather tortuous, compromise. The two monarchs were to ride towards one another on horseback, meet and greet each other with a kiss in their respective horse saddles in the same position and at same height, thereby symbolically demonstrating the parity between the status of the two highest secular representatives of the East and the West.[3]

Another popular story illustrating the significance of ritual meetings between monarchs is an episode recorded in the annals of Flodoard, canon of Reims. In 924 the king of West Francia, Rudolph (Raoul) II met William, Duke of Aquitaine, at the river Loire, which marked the border between their dominions. Naturally, their encounter was preceded by lengthy and complex negotiations between envoys to ensure that the meeting took place in the proper ritual format. Both parties took great care to ensure that the appropriate symbolic procedures were followed, displaying the power and status of both monarchs, and settling the finer details took an entire day. Meanwhile Rudolph and William waited on their respective river banks. As agreed, after crossing the river Loire on horseback, the Duke dismounted from his horse and approached the King on foot. To welcome him, the King granted him the kiss of peace seated in his saddle.[4]

Here we have an almost perfect example of the meeting and greeting ceremony. All the required information is symbolically expressed through individual elements of the ritual. The exacting negotiations between envoys and

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2 See Averil Cameron, "The Construction of Court Ritual: The Byzantine *Book of Ceremonies*," in *Rituals of Royalty*, pp. 106–36.

3 *Arnoldi Lubicensis: Chronica Slavorum*, I.10, MGH SSrG 14, pp. 25–26.

4 *Chronique de Frodoard*. Collection des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France. ed. François Guizot (Paris, 1824), p. 80; Werner Kolb, *Herrscherbegegnungen im Mittelalter* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1988), p. 93.

the lengthy preparations indicate that these were far from spontaneous or arbitrary actions and that every detail of the procedure had been agreed and approved in advance by both parties involved. In the case of the 1147 encounter in Constantinople the main purpose of the meeting was to demonstrate the equal status of the German and Byzantine monarchs. By contrast, the central message of Flodoard's narrative, which both the protagonists and chroniclers strove to convey to the public, was the factual and symbolic superiority of the King of the West Franks over the Duke of Aquitaine, a fact that demanded appropriate ritual expression. The Duke of Aquitaine approaches the King on horseback and then, after dismounting from his horse and standing on the ground, receives a kiss from the King seated on horseback. All these ceremonial devices highlight Rudolph's hierarchical superiority.[5]

Encounters between royalty accompanied by greeting rituals were also quite common in the political culture of medieval Central Europe. Particularly from the turn of the first and second millennium onwards, Hungary, Poland and Bohemia were increasingly drawn into the sphere of interest of the German kings and emperors in particular. This inevitably resulted in personal meetings, which copied the pattern of their western models. Perhaps the best known of these, although rather controversial and difficult to interpret, is the encounter between Emperor Otto III and Polish prince Bolesław I the Brave in Gniezno in 1000.[6] Unusually rich and detailed accounts of this exceptional meeting survive in German (Thietmar of Merseburg, the Annals of Niederaltaich and Hildesheim) and Polish (Gallus Anonymus) sources.[7]

On his arrival in Gniezno, Otto was accorded a lavish reception by Bolesław. Just before setting foot in the city the Emperor changed into penitential robes

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5   Fichtenau, *Lebensordnungen*, pp. 75–76; Kolb, *Herrscherbegegnungen*, pp. 93–94. For further similar examples from the West Frankish environment, see Schmitt, *La raison des gestes*, pp. 13–14.

6   The significance of the meeting and its impact on contemporary Central Europe continues to be a topic of intense debate. It is impossible to say whether it really happened as described in the extant sources. For details, see Daniel Bagi, "Die Darstellung der Zusammenkunft von Otto III. und Bolesław dem Tapferen in Gnesen im Jahre 1000 beim Gallus Anonymus," in *Die ungarische Staatsbildung und Ostmitteleuropa. Studien und Vorträge*. ed. Ferenc Glatz (Budapest: Europa Institut, 2002), pp. 177–88; Gerd Althoff, *Otto III* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), pp. 97–103; Gerd Althoff, "Symbolische Kommunikation zwischen Piasten und Ottonen," in *Inszenierte Herrschaft. Geschichtsschreibung und politisches Handeln im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003), pp. 231–50; Kolb, *Herrscherbegegnungen*, p. 28.

7   *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon*, IV.45–47, MGH SRG NS 9; *Annales Altahenses maiores* ad a. 1000, MGH SSrG 4, *Annales Hildesheimenses* ad. a. 1000, MGH SSrG 8; *Gesta principum Polonorum*, I.6.

and entered the resting place of the martyred St Adalbert barefoot. As a token of friendship he is said to have placed his imperial crown on Bolesław's head and established an archbishopric in Gniezno. He then received abundant gifts from the Piast ruler, who treated him to several days of sumptuous feasting and festivities. The anonymous Polish chronicler is fulsome in depicting the splendour of the reception and the accompanying festivities, emphasizing particularly the expensive feasts, the precious cutlery and the luxurious attire of Bolesław's 'courtiers', as well as the perfectly managed choreography of Emperor Otto's reception and his amazement at being offered extraordinarily precious gifts.[8]

Each of the three encounters described above followed a different course, comprised different elements, and conveyed a very different message to the outside world. Nevertheless, we can discern a certain firm foundation—the core of the ritual, with individual details and specificities of execution adapted to the circumstances of the day.

A precondition for the successful realization and the ritual meaningfulness of these encounters was meticulous advance preparation with each individual element negotiated in detail. This was most commonly done through envoys who ensured that the meeting had the appropriate format reflecting the current political circumstances and balance of power, and the majesty and nobility of the protagonists. Every symbolic act and ritual obligation also had to be clarified in advance to prevent any fallacious interpretation and potential adverse consequences. In essence, meetings between royalty represented an official constitutional act. Any resulting agreements, displays of hierarchical superiority or subordination or, conversely, signs of hostility or disgracing of one's counterpart, could have had grave consequences. This is illustrated by the well-known encounter between Emperor Otto II and the French (then still only) Duke Hugh Capet in 981 or that between the Hungarian king, Ladislas I and the Polish prince, Bolesław II in 1079. In these instances attempts to misuse the ritual were meant to serve as a way of humiliating one of the protagonists.[9] Such meetings were therefore largely planned and negotiated with almost choreographical precision. Spontaneous, or indeed accidental, actions were virtually out of the question, invariably giving rise to indignation and condemnation in the sources and resulting in the ritual being regarded as manipulated and hence failing.

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8   *Gesta principum Polonorum*, I.6.
9   *Richer von Saint-Remi Historiae*, III.85, MGH SS 4, p. 216; *Gesta principum Polonorum*, I.28, pp. 98–100.

Symbolic communication between the protagonists of medieval royal encounters or colloquia (*colloquium*) found its expression in elaborate and intricate greeting rituals. Evidence comes from the chroniclers and annalists of the time, who regularly use the phrase *colloquium celebravit*,[10] showing that these were exceptional, solemn events.

Several factors were simultaneously essential for the event to take a successful course. The first important factor was the venue.[11] As we have seen, meetings on the border of two dominions were of special importance when two equal partners met and their equality had to be duly demonstrated. In this type of meeting we can distinguish between equality dictated by the same hierarchical or functional status of the protagonists (king ↔ prince, prince ↔ prince, pope ↔ emperor), or by a temporary or actual balance of power (king ↔ prince, king ↔ emperor). Rivers that marked the borders between dominions served as liminal settings *par excellence*.[12] Thus the overwhelming majority of meetings took place on islands, bridges or boats anchored in the middle of rivers. However, when protagonists of an unequal hierarchical or power status were about to meet, this could also be symbolically validated through the choice of venue. The superiority of a participant in a colloquium could be demonstrated by conducting the meeting on his territory.

Status and power and the associated superiority (issues of paramount and decisive importance for medieval nobles) could also be communicated symbolically, by means of symbolic gestures. Another ritual means of expression involved the person of higher standing (socially or in terms of power) standing still during the actual greeting, while the other would come towards him. Spatial differentiation played a key role. The king was usually on horseback when greeting and granting the accompanying kiss to his hierarchically lower-ranking nobles; if he was seated on the throne or standing, he would often demand that the guest arriving greet him from the ground (*genuflexio* or *proskynesis*). This was usually the case when a meeting overlapped with ritual reconciliation or the submission of one of the protagonists. In this respect

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10   For example, at the meeting between Louis VIII and Frederick II in 1212 at Vaucouleurs: "*celebratum est colloquium inter eundem*"; the meeting and negotiations between Přemysl II Ottokar of Bohemia and Stephen V of Hungary on an island in the Danube near Bratislava in 1271: "*colloquium . . . celebravit*". Kolb, *Herrscherbegegnungen*, pp. 94 and 147, with references to the sources.

11   Voss, *Herrschertreffen*, pp. 10–87. For the importance of ritual soil and its symbolic role in medieval society, see Le Goff, "Le rituel symbolique", pp. 372–74.

12   For the meaning of liminality and its significance for society and human psychology, see especially Gennep, *The Rites*, p. 27; Turner, *The Ritual Process*, pp. 95–97.

rituals could be combined into polysemous sets of symbols complementing or substituting one another. Nevertheless, kneeling (*genuflexio*) or falling at someone's feet (*proskynesis*), also performed during prayer, were typical elements of encounters between monarchs and popes (or other high-ranking prelates) and of meetings involving the Byzantine emperor.[13] The smallest detail could endanger the course of the meeting and undignified or inappropriate behaviour (or attire) on the part of one of the protagonists could even result in the cancellation of the meeting or a quarrel and criticism.[14]

The time of a meeting played an equally crucial role. The cyclical passage of time in the Middle Ages, marked by important church holidays, was also reflected in the execution as well as the planning of important face-to-face encounters between rulers. The major Christian holidays—Christmas, Easter and Pentecost—were regarded as the most opportune times for meetings between the Pope or bishops and abbots. These festive days, and additionally sometimes the saint's days of major national patrons and other important saints (for instance, St. George's day in the spring, the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in the summer, and St. Martin's day in the autumn) were also used for meetings between kings and their nobles, or between two monarchs. Of course, particularly in the case of visits, in the course of long journeys or during conflicts, the meetings were not limited to the strictly fixed 'felicitous' days but were rather dictated by expediency and efficaciousness.[15] As for the duration of festive meetings, no single blueprint was followed. Narrative sources include examples of royal encounters lasting less than a day but typically they lasted three or eight days (one must, however, bear in mind the ever-present number symbolism of the informants, who were clerics). However, it was not unusual for festivities linked to such meetings to last several weeks.[16] Clearly, no fixed practice existed in this respect.

2   *Osculum pacis*

As mentioned earlier, symbolic communication during encounters between medieval monarchs took place by means of greeting rituals. The one that was

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13   For more detail, see Koziol, *Begging Pardon*, pp. 11–13; Gerd Althoff, "Inszenierung verpflichtet. Zum Verständnis ritueller Akte bei Papst-Kaiser-Begegnungen im 12. Jahrhundert," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 35 (2001), pp. 61–84; Schmitt, *La raison des gestes*, pp. 227–32.

14   Fichtenau, *Lebensordnungen*, pp. 75–76.

15   For this, see Voss, *Herrschertreffen*, pp. 109–117; Kolb, *Herrscherbegegnungen*, pp. 71–73.

16   Voss, *Herrschertreffen*, pp. 118–122.

most important and widely used was undoubtedly the granting of the kiss of peace (*osculum pacis*),[17] though it was not associated exclusively with monarchic greetings. Its polysemous nature and widespread and multiple uses in the political culture of early and high Middle Ages indicate that somewhat greater attention must be devoted to this ritual.

Osculum was used in various forms, on various occasions and with different semantic emphases. The basic form of the kiss of peace, *osculum pacis*, was intended as a universal greeting expressing friendship and good intentions on the part of the protagonists. However, a kiss on the cheek or the lips also formed an integral part of the ritual of vassal commendation, the vassal demonstrating the newly-forged alliance and bond by placing his hands in those of his senior.[18] In certain cases, such as a king granting a kiss to his nobles, an emperor to a king or pope to a monarch, the act could symbolize affection, recognition of status or show of respect for the other person.[19] *Osculum* was also used in rituals of submission and reconciliation. An exchange of kisses between feuding parties during reconciliation or a victor granting the kiss to his vanquished opponent as part of the *deditio* ritual symbolized the ending of the conflict and a return to the normal state of affairs. As a rule this constituted the closing act of the ceremonial. *Osculum* also featured in common liturgical rites as well as festive ones. For example, it had its use in coronations, investitures and legal procedures.[20]

In the Middle Ages the granting of a kiss was not limited solely to the face and lips. Sometimes it involved a 'complete' covering of someone's whole body, as documented in the poet Ermoldus Nigellus's account of Emperor Louis the Pious's reception of Pope Stephen IV in Reims in 816. He reports that the emperor and the Pope exchanged greetings by kissing each other on the eyes, lips, forehead, chest and neck.[21] Another variation involved the kissing of the feet or knees of the monarch. This was particularly widespread in Byzantium but is also known from papal meetings with Western European monarchs and Roman emperors. In Latin Europe people wanting to show their respect for

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17   For the clearest analysis, see Yannick Carré, *Le baiser sur la bouche au Moyen Âge. Rites, symboles, mentalités. XI–XV siècles* (Paris: Le Leopard d'Or, 1992); Klaus Schreiner, "'Er küsse mich mit dem Kuss seines Mundes' (*Osculetur me osculo oris sui*, Cant 1,1). Metaphorik, kommunikative und herrschaftliche Funktionen einer symbolischen Handlung," in *Höfische Repräsentation. Das Zeremoniell und die Zeichen.* eds. Hedda Ragotzky – Horst Wenzel (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1990), pp. 89–132.

18   Le Goff, "Le rituel symbolique", pp. 340–42.

19   Fichtenau, *Lebensordnungen*, pp. 57–60.

20   See the headword "Kuss" in *Lexikon des Mittelalters 5*, pp. 1590–92.

21   Carré, *Le baiser*, p. 13 and his interpretation, p. 185.

their ruler would usually limit themselves to kissing the feudal lord's hand. The kissing of feet was reserved for extreme situations, such as submissions or impassioned pleas for mercy and favour.[22]

The roots of the usage of the kiss in greetings and encounters can be traced back to the culture of Ancient Rome where it was a common mode of communication, gradually finding its way into imperial and later especially Byzantine court protocol. It was also steadily absorbed by the incoming Christian civilisation, partly due to the apostle Paul's famously calling upon the early Christians: "Greet one another with a holy kiss." (Romans 16:16; Corinthians 13:12). With the passage of time *osculum* was adopted by monastic communities and also came to be used in contacts between nobles and kings.[23]

Thanks to its wide use and universal comprehensibility the kiss of peace was quickly incorporated into the political culture and public communication of medieval Europe. Under certain circumstances its granting could be binding in nature. It also served as a means of communication in presenting specific demands, pleas and commitments.[24] The granting of the *osculum* in public signified a demonstration of harmony, friendship and peaceful intent on the part of the protagonists. Hence it was crucial to be quite clear where and when an *osculum* should be granted and to whom. Once a person had granted a kiss of peace to another, he could no longer simultaneously engage in a dispute with him. In case of existing disputes the performance of this symbolic greeting demonstrated reconciliation and an end to the conflict. The same applied in a situation where a conciliatory kiss was refused. A number of extant documents show that this was the case in real-life political confrontations. One of the most notorious examples of the *osculum* being refused concerns bishop Hincmar of Laon who refused to accept a kiss from his coeval, archbishop Hincmar of Reims, because of a dispute which the bishop of Laon was not intending to end in this manner.[25] The same scenario occurred when the monks of the monastery of St. Gallen refused to kiss abbot Craloh on his return to their community.[26] Examples of both forms, i.e. the granting of *osculum* as a sign of reconciliation and its refusal due to the manipulation of the ritual and insult, are also documented in Hungary under the Árpáds (Stephen I ↔ Bolesław I; Ladislas I ↔ Bolesław II).

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22   Schreiner, "Er küsse mich", p. 90; Koziol, *Begging Pardon*, pp. 59, 97.

23   Fuhrmann, "Willkommen und Abschied", pp. 17–24.

24   Koziol, *Begging Pardon*, p. 300.

25   Fuhrmann, "Willkommen und Abschied", p. 22.

26   Althoff, "The Variability of Rituals", pp. 80–81.

3   Research Issues

In the following we will conduct a detailed examination of the use, extent, function and importance of symbolic communication and greeting rituals in meetings between Hungarian monarchs and their counterparts from across the Latin West, as well as the way this was recorded and presented in surviving period sources. Before proceeding further, the key issues and problems must be articulated, so that we can see which of these need to be answered or decoded if we are to succeed.

In each case we need to define who were the meeting's protagonists; what were their motivations and reasons; and what they hoped to achieve by performing this action. Did the protagonists enjoy equal status or were they unequal in terms of hierarchy and power? What was their relationship? Were they allies, relatives or, alternatively, implacable rivals, hiding their true hostile intentions behind a façade of conciliatory talks? Where did the talks or the meeting in question take place? Was it in a liminal, neutral setting? Was it a venue with a particular hidden symbolic subtext? At what point in time did the protagonists meet and how long did their colloquium last? What did their meeting entail and what rituals were performed in its course? What festivities and acts accompanied the encounter? What gestures, words or objects were used in the process? How significant was this meeting in the wider context of the given period?

Ultimately, in examining greeting rituals used in encounters of monarchs we have to distinguish between two basic forms: a genuine meeting and a visit. During each of these formats particular rituals and distinctive rules of the game were observed.[27]

4   Symbolic Communication between Members of the Árpád and Piast Dynasties

Relations between the Polish Piast and the Bohemian Přemyslid dynasty, as well as those between Polish royal dynasties and German kings, have long been a popular subject among European historians. A number of acclaimed monographs and studies have explored specific issues and the subject continues to attract scholarly attention,[28] unlike the relations between the Piasts

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27   Kolb, *Herrscherbegegnungen*, p. 110.

28   Of the most recent works the following must be mentioned: *Przemyślidzi i Piastowie— twórcy i gospodarze średniowiecznych monarchii.* ed. Józef Dobosz (Poznań: Wydawnictvo

and the Hungarian Árpád dynasties. Here we seek to contribute to knowledge in this area by analysing and interpreting the symbolic communication and the use of greeting rituals performed when rulers of these two dynasties met. This will enable us to shed new light on the vibrant and fascinating history of Hungarian-Polish relations in the early and high Middle Ages and to present them as an integral part of interaction and political culture in the Latin Europe of the period as a whole.[29] We will examine the example of three pairs of rulers: Stephen I and Bolesław I; Ladislas I and Bolesław II; and Coloman I and Bolesław III.

4.1   *Stephen I and Bolesław I*

Shortly after being crowned King of Hungary, Stephen I (1000–1038) became embroiled in a military conflict with his northern neighbour Bolesław I the Brave (992–1025) of Poland.[30] Partly at the insistence of Pope Silvester II the two opponents met in Esztergom, probably in April 1001. Their ceremonial meeting combined with reconciliation is well known from the following account in the Hungarian-Polish Chronicle:

> Three months after his coronation Lambert, bishop of Krakow, came to see him [Stephen I] to request permission to remind the King [of his promise] to confirm peace and friendship [with Bolesław I]. Without hesitation, he dispatched him [Lambert] accompanied by Archbishop Astrik of Esztergom and a military commander named Alba, back to his uncle, Prince Bolesław of Poland, asking him to come to the Polish-Hungarian border accompanied by his nobles. [Bolesław] assembled his entire army, came to meet the King near Esztergom, pitching his tents there, on the border of Hungary and Poland...On the following day, soon after sunrise, they met, received the kiss of peace and with their hands clasped together proceeded to Esztergom Cathedral, which had been newly rebuilt in honour of the holy martyr Adalbert, apostle of the Poles and the Hungarians. The Archbishop, wearing his holy vestments,

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Poznańskie, 2006); Andrzej Pleszczyński, *Niemcy wobec pierwszej monarchii piastowskii (963–1034). Narodziny stereotypu* (Lublin: WUMC, 2008); Przemyslaw Wiszewski, *Domus Bolezlai. W poszukiwaniu tradycji dynasztycznej Piastów (do około 1138 roku)* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2008); *Šlechta, moc a reprezentace ve středověku.* eds. Martin Nodl – Martin Wihoda (*Colloquia medievalia Pragensia 9*) (Praha: Filosofia, 2007).

29   Dalewski, "Political Culture", pp. 65–85.

30   On the controversies that continue to surround this meeting and its significance, see Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, p. 28; Györffy, *König Stephan*, pp. 165–73; Kristó, *Histoire de la Hongrie*, p. 48.

with the priests and others, adorned in bishops' robes and infulas, shone as the stars in heaven. King Stephen, adorned with a sacred robe and royal crown, shone as a sun among the stars as he followed behind the procession, towering above all the throng shoulder-high. At the end of the procession they preached the word of God, opening the Holy Roman Curia privileges and reading them out clearly for all those listening to hear, and proclaiming to the crowds of both parties that peace and friendship had been sealed. Everyone consented to this, confirming it with an oath by their own hand. At the end of the officium of the Holy Trinity people began to sing: 'Blessed be the Holy Trinity'. Archbishop Astrik granted the sacred host to the King, the Prince and all the people. After concluding peace (reconciliation) and after the mass ended they returned to their tents where in joy and merriment they spent eight happy days feasting and drinking, accompanied by the lyre and other musical instruments, drums and dancing, harps and violas. After this happy conclusion, lavish gifts were bestowed on all the Polish soldiers, from the highest to the lowliest, as well as the Prince.[31]

The author of the chronicle paints a fulsome and splendid picture of what took place during a meeting of royalty in the early Middle Ages and how ritualized

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31   "*Tribus vero post coronationis sue mensibus elapsis, accedens ad ipsum Lambertus presul civitatis Cracovie licentiam petiit atque de corroboratione pacis et amicitie ad memoriam reduxit. Cum que sine mora presulem Strigoniensem Astriquum et principem militie Albam nomine ad avunculum suum Meschonem ducem Polonie transmisit, rogans ipsum, ut cum magnatibus suis in terminis Polonie et Ungarie conveniret. Qui congregato omni exercitu suo ad regem ante Strigonium venit ibique in terminis Polonie et Ungarie tentoria sua fixit.... Crastina autem die, orto iam sole conveniunt simul et osculum pacis acceperunt, simulque complexu manibus ad kathedralem ecclesiam Strigoniensem, que tunc in honorem sancti martyris Adalberti, Polonorum et Ungarorum apostoli novo opere fabricabatur, pervenerunt. Summo vero pontifice ad officium misse induto cum ministris sacri altaris aliisque pontificalibus campis et infulis ornatis ut stellis in celo nitentibus fulgebant regeque Stephano ornatu sacro vestito et dyademate regio coronato ut 'sole inter stellas perfulgenti', post sacram processionem gradienti, super omnem populum ab humero et sursum eminenti. Facta autem processione verbum Dei predicant, privilegia sancte Romane curie aperiunt, audiente omni populo distincte legunt, utrique populo pacem et amicitiam corroboratam edicunt. Placuit omnibus et iuramento propriis manibus confirmaverunt. Post officium sancte trinitatis incipitur: benedicta sit sancta trinitas. Hostia vero sancta pro rege et principe et pro cuncto populo per presulem Astriquum offertur, pace accepta missa finita ad tentoria sua redeunt, ibique in gaudio et letitia epulis et potibus, in cordis et organis, in tympanis et choris, in cytharis et fialis letos VIII duxerunt dies. Hiis itaque feliciter completis, omnis Polonorum exercitus a maiori usque ad minorem muneribus replentur, duci vero dona offeruntur.*" Chronicon Hungarico-polonicum, c. 7, SRH 2, pp. 310–12.

actions suffused with symbolic messages were used. The account of the Esztergom meeting includes all the constitutive elements familiar from analogous examples of royal encounters, talks, and reconciliations across medieval Europe.[32] The course of the meeting had been planned and agreed in advance through envoys of both parties (*accedens ad ipsum Lambertus . . . licentiam petiit atque de corroboratione pacis et amicitie ad memoriam reduxit. Cum que sine mora presulem Strigoniensem Astriquum et principem militie Albam nomine ad avunculum suum Meschonem ducem Polonie transmisit*). The whole event took place in public, i.e. in the presence of witnesses from the monarchs' intimate entourage as well as more distant subjects (*cum magnatibus suis . . . conveniret; super omnem populum; audiente omni populo; utrique populo*). Esztergom, a city that in those days marked the border between Hungary and Poland, was chosen as the venue for the meeting as it symbolized the equal status and de facto power of the two protagonists (*in terminis Polonie et Ungarie conveniret*). The participants demonstrated the indisputable fact of the superiority—albeit merely symbolic and hierarchical—of the Hungarian King over the Polish Prince by holding the talks on the Hungarian side of the Danube border, in Esztergom.

The dispute between Bolesław and Stephen was caused by a military confrontation over the Duchy of Nitra as well as the royal rank recently granted to the Hungarian monarch. Bolesław had to come to terms with being temporarily denied royal status,[33] and thus also the position of God's anointed representative on earth. However, the legitimacy of the Polish Prince derived from his military rank and power, symbolized by the entirety of his assembled forces, who accompanied him, pitching their tents just outside Esztergom.[34]

Naturally, neither did Stephen let slip this unique opportunity for a public display of his majesty and power. His recent elevation to royal rank had to be constantly affirmed and manifested in public. For this purpose the ceremonial *Crown-wearing* or *Unter-Krone-gehen* was used throughout the Middle Ages.[35] On this occasion Stephen, wearing a ceremonial robe and royal crown (*ornatu*

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32   Kolb, *Herrscherbegegnungen*, pp. 93–115.

33   Scholarship is deeply divided on the events described here and the issue of Bolesław
      I the Brave's royal dignity, in part because of controversy about the reliability of the
      main source, the *Hungarian-Polish Chronicle*. For the most recent interpretations, see:
      Uhorsko-poľská kronika. Nedocenený prameň k dejinám strednej Európy. ed. Martin Homza
      (Bratislava, 2009). Quotation on p. 153; Steinhübel, *Nitrianske kniežatstvo*, pp. 224–28;
      František Hrušovský, *Slovenské dejiny* (Martin: Matica Slovenská, 1940), p. 65.

34   On the essentially sacral nature of the Piast Dynasty and its power see especially Zbigniew
      Dalewski, "*Vivat princeps in eternum!* Sacrality of Ducal Power in Poland in the Earlier
      Middle Ages," in Al-Azmeh and Bak, *Monotheistic Kingship*, pp. 215–30.

35   Erkens, *Herrschersakralität im Mittelalter*, pp. 166–68; Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, pp. 92–97.

sacro vestito et dyademate regio coronato), proclaimed to one and all his exclusive and superior status (*sole inter stellas perfulgenti*) as well as his victory over Bolesław in the 'micro-duel' for royal status.[36]

Goodwill and openness to reconciliation was manifested by means of symbolic ritual acts accompanying this ceremonial meeting. On the very day after their arrival the two protagonists met face to face and demonstrated their willingness to reconcile by exchanging the kiss of peace (*osculum pacis acceperunt*), thus ruling out any prolongation of the dispute. The monarchs illustrated their concord by joining hands (*complexu* or *complexis manibus*) and by their joint attendance of mass in the cathedral. By participating in the ceremonial procession and the Holy Mass, and accepting of the host from Archbishop Astrik's hands both monarchs aimed to highlight their sincere piety and Christian virtues, the two attributes legitimizing their power in Christian society. This is an unambiguous reference to the sacral nature of royal (or, generally, monarchic) power.[37]

The reconciliation and receiving of papal privileges could not take place without the obligatory public oath (*iuramento propriis manibus confirmaverunt*).[38] The rituals performed were reinforced by subsequent festivities lasting eight days and accompanied by lavish feasting, music and dance.[39] At the end Stephen as the presumed host, as well as a king and hierarchically superior monarch, decided to bestow gifts on the Polish prince and his entire military entourage.[40] In terms of power relations the meeting represented above all an affirmation of the actual political and geographical arrangement between the two countries. The ending of the ongoing conflict by means of ritual reconciliation during a personal meeting of the two monarchs was interactive, guaranteeing certain advantages for both parties.[41] From Bolesław's perspective it ensured that the Duchy of Nitra, though entrusted to Ladislas the Bald, a member of the Árpád dynasty, nevertheless would not revert to the control of the King of Hungary.[42] For King Stephen I, on the other hand, it validated his royal rank and its recognition by Bolesław.

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36 Compare the comments in footnote 33.

37 Erkens, *Herrschersakralität im Mittelalter*, pp. 166–67; Roux, *Le roi*.

38 On the oath and its role in the public communication, see Fichtenau, *Lebensordnungen*, p. 209 and the headword "Eid" in *Lexikon des Mittelalters 3*, pp. 1673–92.

39 No important event in medieval life could be held without a feast. Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, pp. 152–153; Adamska, "Founding a Monastery", pp. 18–20; Christian Rohr, *Festkultur des Mittelalters* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 2002), p. 27; Altenburg ed., *Feste und Feiern im Mittelalter*.

40 Voss, *Herrschertreffen*, pp. 151–65; Kolb, *Herrscherbegegnungen*, p. 103.

41 Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, pp. 26–28.

42 Steinhübel, *Nitrianske kniežatstvo*, p. 228.

Since the authenticity and credibility of the Hungarian-Polish chronicle as a source has often been questioned[43] we cannot regard its account of the meeting between Stephen I and Bolesław the Brave as wholly accurate. However, even if the actual course of the reconciliation might have differed from the surviving account, this kind of ritual encounter could undoubtedly have taken place in 11th century Hungary. Several other accounts in the sources describing further encounters in this period substantiate this assertion, as we shall see in the cases that follow. Therefore the author of the Hungarian-Polish Chronicle is likely to have framed the meeting in the context of ritual actions existing in his time.

4.2   *Ladislas I and Bolesław II*

The second pair of monarchs whose meeting is of interest to us is that between the King of Hungary and later saint Ladislas I (1077–1095) and a member of the Piast dynasty, Bolesław II (prince 1058–1076, king 1076–1079). On this occasion the meeting did (or rather, did not) take place under different circumstances, taking a different course, conveying a different symbolic message and, above all, with different implications for Árpád-Piast relations. An account of the encounter survives in the Chronicle of Gallus Anonymus, also known as the *Gesta principum Polonorum*.[44] The author begins by outlining the historical context of the encounter: on 11 April 1079 the Polish King Bolesław II ordered Stanislaus, bishop of Krakow, to be tortured and, eventually, quartered. Because of this deed Bolesław was deposed and exiled.[45] As a deposed ruler without power and country he sought the help of a relative, the Hungarian King Ladislas I. Gallus points out that Ladislas had been born and raised in Poland and that it was thanks to Bolesław and the assistance of his forces that he was able to banish King Solomon I (1063–1074) and succeed his brother Géza I (1074–1077) on the Hungarian throne.[46] For this reason Bolesław was alleged to have referred to him as 'his king' (*suum regem*

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43   Macartney, *The Medieval Hungarian Historians*, pp. 174; Béla Karácsonyi, *Tanulmányok a magyar-lengyel krónikáról.* (Szeged, 1964); *Żywot św. Stefana króla Węgier czyli kronika węgiersko-polska.* ed. Ryszard Grzesik (Warszawa, 2003).

44   MGH SS 9, pp. 418–78. Recent editions are to be found in *Gesta principum Polonorum*; *Anonim tzw. Gall: Kronika Polska.* ed. Marian Plezia (Wrocław, 2008).

45   More specifically about this conflict see Norbert Kersken, "God and the Saints in Medieval Polish Historiography," in *The Making of Christian Myths in the Periphery of Latin Christendom* (*c. 1000–1300*). ed. Lars Mortensen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculaneum Press, 2006), pp. 178–82; Przemyslaw Urbańczyk – Stanislaw Rosik, "The Kingdom of Poland," in *Christianization*, p. 293.

46   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, SRH 1, pp. 335–36 and 361–63.

appellabat).[47] It has to be pointed out, however, that under a close reading, the extant account appears somewhat incoherent and unclear:

> (Ladislas) did not receive him as a foreigner and a guest, or in the manner an equal is received, but rather in a manner befitting a knight welcoming his lord, or a prince welcoming a king, or a king [welcoming] an emperor . . . However, [Bolesław] entered the foreign kingdom as a refugee, whom not even a common peasant would obey. When Ladislas saw Bolesław approaching in the distance, he hastened towards him as a humble man, respectfully dismounting from his horse and awaited his arrival thus. However, Bolesław showed no consideration for the King's humbleness and allowed his heart to be swollen in accursed pride. 'I am the one who raised this man in Poland and installed him as the king of Hungary,' he said to himself. 'It does not behove him to welcome me as an equal, I may instead kiss him seated on horseback as any other noble.' Noticing this, Ladislas became wrathful and turned off the road. Nevertheless, he ordered the whole country to accord Bolesław respect and hospitability.[48]

What we see here is the exact opposite of the scenario followed in the meeting between Stephen I and Bolesław I. Bolesław's II behaviour contradicts the accepted rules of the game, as he publicly demonstrates his pride and appropriates an honour that is not rightly his. The primary reason for the failure of the meeting is therefore Bolesław's pride (*superbia*) and his shaky grasp of reality. The meeting occurred when the Polish Prince was evidently at the nadir of his power and political influence, at a time when not even the lowliest peasant would have obeyed him (*nullus rusticorum obediret*). Moreover, he arrived in a foreign country where he was entitled to nothing more than a respectful reception as as a visitor or kinsman of the Hungarian King. Yet, relying on his past merits, having helped to raise Ladislas in Polish exile and supported his ascent to the Hungarian throne, Bolesław laid claim to the kind of ritual welcome

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47   *Gesta principum Polonorum*, I.28, p. 98.

48   "*Non eum recipit velud extraneum vel hospitem, vel par parem recipere quisque solet, sed quasi miles principem, vel dux regem, vel rex imperatorem recipere iure debet. . . . Nam cum regnum alienum fugitivus introiret, cumque nullus reusticorum fugitivo obediret, obviam ire Bolezlauo Wladislauus ut vir humilis properabat, eumque propinquantem eminus equo descendens ob reverentiam expectabat. At contra Bolezlauus humilitatem regis mansueti non respexit, sed in pestifere fastum superbie cor erexit. Hunc, inquit, alumpnum in Polonia educavi, hunc regem in Vngaria collocavi. Non decet eum me ut equalem venerari, sed equo sedentem ut quemlibet de principibus osculari. Quod intendens Wladislauus aliqauntulum egre tulit et ab itinere declinavit, ei tamen servicium per totam terram fieri satis magnifice commendavit.*" *Gesta principum Polonorum*, I.28, pp. 98–100.

intended for a legitimate sovereign lord, obstinately trying to demonstrate his superiority.

As we can glean from the sources that are rather vague on this point, Ladislas decided, in spite of his cousin's refugee status and effective loss of power, to show Bolesław—perhaps as an older and honoured guest—his respect and, above all, humbleness (*humilitas*)[49] by dismounting from his horse and awaiting the latter's *osculum* on the ground. The established rules dictated that at that moment Bolesław should have responded by also jumping off his horse and exchanging the kiss of peace on a physically and symbolically equal level. By breaking these rules he precipitated Ladislas's departure and thus the failure of the friendly meeting. Ladislas had to respond in order to avoid an insult to his royal majesty and his power being disgraced in his own country (as was customary on such occasions, a number of Hungarian nobles, prelates as well as ordinary people would have been present). Receiving the *osculum* from a deposed and exiled ruler on horseback while standing on the ground could have had easily foreseeable repercussions for his authority. The only way of maintaining his honour was by rejecting the kiss and putting an end to the ritual.

However, Gallus goes on to report that, in spite of this unpleasant intermezzo, the two protagonists eventually did meet and were reconciled as brothers (*postea vero concorditer et amicabiliter inter se sicut fratres convenerunt*).[50] Bolesław's attempt to manipulate the ritual nevertheless did leave a mark in the hearts of the Hungarians precipitating, if we are to believe Gallus Anonymus, his rapid and ominous end.[51]

Demands presented in this way fit perfectly with the symbolism of medieval royal meetings, as shown by the example of Conrad III and Manuel I Komnenos. Their greeting was intended to demonstrate the equality and current standing of the two protagonists and this effect was achieved by the kiss of peace being granted in a physically and symbolically equal way, with both protagonists mounted on horseback.[52] Likewise, the hierarchical superiority of King of the West Franks, Rudolph II, over William, Duke of Aquitaine, as well as his greater de facto political power, were demonstrated by the granting of an *osculum* involving an obvious demonstration of the King's hierarchical superiority: the King remained on horseback while the Duke stood on the ground.

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49   Althoff, "Humiliatio", pp. 39–40, 50.

50   *Gesta principum Polonorum*, I.28, p. 100.

51   A comparison could be made with the fate of count Vid who illegitimately aspired to ducal power in the Duchy of Nitra (*Chron. Hung. comp. Saec. XIV*, c. 122, SRH 1, p. 392) or the sad episode of German King Conrad IV's failed *adventus* into Split (*Historia Salonitana*, c. 47, pp. 362–64).

52   *Arnoldi Lubicensis: Chronica Slavorum*, I.10, MGH SSrG 14, pp. 25–26.

William was able to participate in this without suffering any disgrace since the scenario accurately reflected real political and power relations.[53] Further examples could be cited showing that this type of ritual communication was a widespread and universally accepted part of the political culture in the early and high Middle Ages.

As we have seen and as supported by further evidence, the same applies to Hungary under Árpád rule. The 'organisers' of the 1073 meeting between the Hungarian King Solomon and the (then) Duke of Nitra, Géza I, also laid great emphasis on detail.[54] The two key parties in an ongoing dynastic conflict, accompanied by eight members of their retinue, met exactly on the border between the royal part of Hungary and the Duchy of Nitra on an island in the middle of the Danube at Esztergom (*navigaverunt in insulam civitati proximam ad colloquendum*). In this case, it was appropriate to demonstrate parity between the King and the Prince because the meeting took place in the context of an exceptional conflict situation (thus presenting an opportunity to modify the customary peacetime ritual).[55] Since neither protagonist was effectively able to prevail over the other, this fact had to be incorporated into the protocol of the talks.

An emphasis on an appropriate display of due respect in general and humility in particular is also evident in sources depicting other meetings from the Árpád era and, more generally, from Central Europe. We might mention again Coloman's colloquium with Prince Břetislav II of Bohemia at Lučské pole in 1099,[56] or the peace talks between Coloman and the German king, Henry V, near Bratislava in 1108.[57] Similar actions were emphasized in several encounters between Béla II and his Bohemian brother-in-law Soběslav I in the first half of the 12th century.[58] By contrast, displays of pride, arrogance or inappropriate demonstrations of one's own power in meetings resulted in chaos and mostly ended in disgrace or even the military defeat of one of the protagonists. This was precisely why the meeting between Coloman's successor Stephen II and Prince Vladislav I of Bohemia at the border river Olšava failed in 1116.[59]

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53 *Chronique de Frodoard* a. 924, p. 80.

54 *Chron. Hung. comp. Saec. XIV*, c. 112, SRH 1, p. 378.

55 Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, p. 198.

56 *Cosmae chronicon Boemorum*, III.9, MGH SSrG NS 2, p. 169.

57 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 150, SRH 1, p. 430. The Hungarian chronicler wrongly dates the meeting to 1113. The correct date, 1108, is confirmed by contemporary German sources: *Ottonis episcopi Frisingensis Chronica sive Historia*, VII.13, MGH SSrG 45, p. 520; *Chronica regia Coloniensis ad. a. 1108*, MGH SSrG 18, p. 48.

58 *Canonici Wissegradensis*, FRB 2, pp. 216, 220, 227, 230.

59 *Cosmae chronicon Boemorum*, III.42, MGH SSrG NS 2, pp. 215–17; *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 153, SRH 1, pp. 434–37.

Symbolic communication and greeting rituals used in encounters between rulers of the Piast and Árpád dynasties, as recorded in accounts by Gallus Anonymus and in the Hungarian-Polish chronicle, fit the pattern of public communication in medieval Central and Western Europe. We can, of course, see that certain aspects were changed and the means of expression were adjusted depending on the actual circumstances. However, the essence of the rituals remained unchanged, regardless of geographical and chronological differences. This provides further evidence of the universality and effectiveness of ritual communication in medieval society.

4.3   *Coloman I and Bolesław III*

For medievalists concerned with symbolic communication in meetings between royalty the interaction between the Hungarian king, Coloman I the Learned (1095–1116) and Bolesław III Wrymouth (1102–1130) provides an excellent case study. Three encounters between these two rulers are documented in narrative sources in greater or lesser detail. Each of these meetings followed a different course and had a different format and significance. The exact chronological sequence of the events have been the subject of lively debate among historians, who have offered conflicting and not wholly persuasive arguments. However, rather than the precise chronology, what really matters in studying ritual communication between monarchs is, once again, what happened in the course of the meetings and how it was interpreted by the sources.

Coloman and Bolesław III Wrymouth probably met in person for the first time between 1105 and 1106. According to our main source, the Gallus Anonymus Chronicle, their colloquium was initiated by the Polish Prince who designated the exact date and place in advance (*diem et locum colloquii collocavit*). However, Coloman, who was known as the most erudite king of his time (*super reges universos suo tempore degentes litterali scientia erudito*), hesitated to attend the meeting fearing that he would be betrayed. His distrust stemmed from the fact that at that time his brother Álmos, with whom Coloman had been involved in a protracted dynastic conflict, was resident at Bolesław's court.[60] This called for the deployment of envoys. After extensive talks on both sides a compromise was eventually reached. Coloman and Bolesław III met face to face and at the end of the talks swore eternal brotherhood and friendship (*perpetuis fraternitatibus et amiciciis confirmatis*).[61]

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60   Hóman, *Geschichte*, pp. 376–78; Font, *Coloman*, pp. 21–24.

61   *Gesta principum Polonorum*, II.29, p. 172.

It is very likely that what swayed Coloman was Bolesław's promise to no longer provide sanctuary to Prince Álmos. The latter subsequently left Poland and tried to seize control of the castle of Abaújvár. A year later, in 1107, following the failure of this attempt and his inevitable submission and reconciliation with Coloman, Álmos lost all hope of Polish support for ever because that year Coloman and Bolesław met again and swore an oath confirming that should either of them come under attack from the German king, Henry V, the other would immediately attack Bohemia (which was ruled by Henry's ally Svatopluk). This did indeed happen in 1108: when Henry V attacked Hungary and tried to seize Bratislava, Bolesław III launched a military campaign against Bohemia, laying waste to Czech lands.[62]
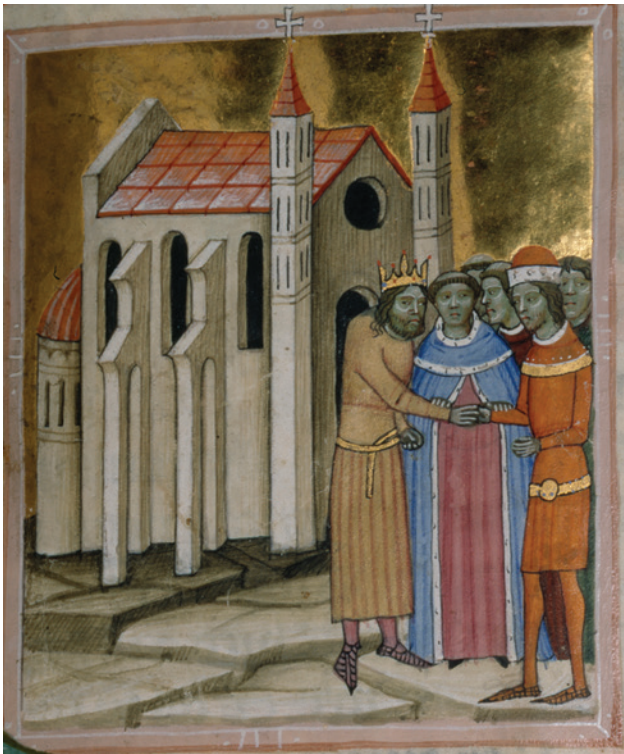
ILLUSTRATION 5   *The meeting of King Coloman I and his brother Duke Álmos in Dömös. Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle (14th century).*
REPRODUCED BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE ORSZÁGOS SZÉCHÉNYI KÖNYVTÁR.

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62   *Gesta principum Polonorum*, II.45–46, p. 202; Font, *Coloman*, p. 23.

However, it is the third encounter between Coloman and Bolesław III that is of greatest interest. This took place during the Polish monarch's visit to Hungary in the course of his penitential pilgrimage to the monastery of Somogyvár and St Stephen's grave in Székesfehérvár in 1113. During his Lent sojourn in Hungary the Árpád and Piast monarchs met several times. Bolesław's Hungarian pilgrimage is a truly exceptional example of events being potrayed against a highly symbolic backdrop, and its relatively detailed depiction provides historians with an opportunity to study several monarchic rituals simultaneously. They include, first and foremost, encounters between royalty and the associated greeting rituals. However, they also contain an equally clear account of a ceremonial reception of an honoured guest (*adventus regis* or *adventus domini*). Bolesław's actions are an extremely valuable example of ritualized monarchical penance (*poenitentia publica*) performed in public, quite unique in early medieval Central European context. At the same time they enable us to study the use of the model of royal humiliation (the *humiliatio—exaltatio* ritual).[63]

The background to the events was the Polish Prince's desire to atone ritually for the crimes he had recently committed, specifically the harsh punishment he had meted out to his half-brother Zbigniew, his long-term rival for the Polish throne. Zbigniew had been taken prisoner, tortured and maimed: the Prince had ordered him to be blinded, thus depriving him of the opportunity to rule Poland. This act had aroused great enmity and anger among the Polish nobles and the ordinary people, forcing Bolesław to atone for his sins by doing ceremonial penance. This was the purpose of *poenitentia publica* in the Middle Ages, i.e. demonstrative public penance, an action reserved for atoning for the gravest transgressions (*scandalum*) against the social order ordained by God.[64] In the words of the contemporary chronicler:[65]

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63   Althoff, "Humiliatio", pp. 39–51.

64   De Jong, "Power and Humility", pp. 29–52; Sarah Hamilton, *The Practice of Penance 900–1050* (Woodbridge: Royal Historical Society, 2001), pp. 174–190. Cf. Levi Roach, "Public rites and public wrongs: ritual aspects of diplomas in tenth- and eleventh-century England," *Early Medieval Europe*, 19/2 (2011), pp. 182–203.

65   It is very likely that Gallus Anonymus was an eyewitness to these events. It is also thought that he was a monk at Somogyvár monastery and that he came to Poland in Bolesław's retinue on his way back from the Hungarian pilgrimage. This is also suggested by his excellent knowledge of Hungarian matters. We can therefore consider Gallus to be a reliable source of information for Hungarian history in the 11th and 12th centuries. See *Anonim tzw. Gall: Kronika Polska*, p. xi; Dalewski, *Ritual and Politics*, pp. 2–4.

...in great piety (Bolesław) embarked on a pilgrimage to St Giles and St Stephen the King, and also to attend a colloquium, a fact of which only a few were aware. Throughout this whole period he fasted, limiting himself to bread and water...Furthermore, throughout his pilgrimage he was so devoted and conscientious in washing the feet of the poor and handing out alms that no man in need had left him without receiving help. To whichever bishopric, abbey or provostry the Prince of the North came, the local bishop, abbot or provost or indeed Coloman, the king of the Hungarians, came towards him in a ceremonial procession to mark the occasion. Bolesław himself bestowed gifts upon churches in all the places visited but on distinguished places he bestowed nothing but gold and precious fabrics.[66]

Throughout Hungary Bolesław was ceremonially welcomed by bishops and abbots, who ensured he had all the necessary provisions and exchanged gifts with him. Coloman left his servants with the Prince, to keep him informed whether or not Bolesław was received with all the honour that was his due. Those who discharged their duty properly were designated as the King's friends and gained the King's favour.[67]

Decoding the information contained in the events described above and interpreting them correctly in the context of ritual public communication is no easy task. Issues such as public penance, the symbolic significance of generosity and of voluntary displays of humility are dealt with elsewhere in this work. Here we will focus primarily on issues relating to the ceremonial arrival, the forms of welcome, and the messages this conveyed.

A key factor emphasized by the chronicler is Bolesław's voluntary humility (*humilitas*), his willingness to do goodly deeds of penance and to participate in all church rites and charitable deeds. While it is difficult to find analogous

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66 "...*et iter peregrinacionis ad sanctum Egidium sanctumque regem Stephanum occasione colloquii, paucissimis hoc rescientibus, summa devotione consumavit. Omnibus quippe diebus illius quadragesime, sola contentus panis et aque refeccione ieiunaret...In pedibus etiam pauperum abluendis, in elemosinis faciendis ita devotus et studiosus per totam viam illius peregrinacionis existebat, quod nullus indigens ab eo misericordiam querens sine misericordia recedebat. Ad quemcumque locum episcopalem, vel abbaciam, vel preposituram dux septentrionalis veniebat, episcopus ipsius loci, vel abbas, vel prepositus et ipse rex Vngarorum Colummannus aliquociens obviam Bolezlauo cum ordinata processione procedebat. Ipse autem Bolezlauus ubique semper aliquid per ecclesias offerebat, sed in illis locis principalibus nonnisi aurum et pallia proferebat.*" Gesta principum Polonorum, III.25, pp. 276–78.

67 *Gesta principum Polonorum*, III.25, p. 278.

actions in Central European sources dating from the early and high Middle Ages, they are by no means exceptional in the European context of monarchic acts of penance. Suffice it to mention the penance of Emperor Otto III in Rome in 999, or his journey to Gniezno one year later.[68] Emperor Henry IV, too, had to atone for his sins as a supplicant in penitential robes on his famous pilgrimage to Canossa in the winter of 1077.[69] The best analogy from the early Middle Ages in Bohemia is the penance of Prince Soběslav I in 1131.[70]

The chronicler's vague wording concerning the colloquium between Bolesław and Coloman at the beginning of the pilgrimage, of which only few people had been informed (*paucissimis hoc rescientibus*) is slightly bewildering. It is hard to tell why this otherwise solemn and public act took place in the presence of a small circle of people (if indeed, it did not take place in private). Was the meeting and a potential agreement kept secret because only a few years previously Coloman had disposed of his brother Álmos and his son Béla in the same way as Bolesław?[71] Could the Hungarian king have been concerned that Bolesław's public penance for a deed he himself had committed might incite local unrest? Or, although the sources offer no evidence for this, did perhaps Coloman participate in Bolesław's penitential rites in the same capacity? Unfortunately, due to the paucity of the sources it is impossible to give a definitive answer to these questions, not least because the blinding of the pretender to the throne was laden with different significance and had different ramifications in Hungary and in Poland. While the blinded Zbigniew lost his claim to the Polish throne, Béla II in Hungary succeeded in claiming it. The outrage that Zbigniew's blinding caused among his supporters and in Piast society as a whole also seems to be very different from what is known from the Hungarian sources. The Árpád dynasty resorted to blinding much more frequently and also, apparently, with greater 'ease'.[72] Thus Álmos's blind son Béla II the Blind

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68   *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, II.24, MGH SS 34, p. 208; *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon*, IV.45, MGH SRG NS 9, pp. 182–84; Sarah Hamilton, "Otto III's Penance: A Case Study of Unity and Diversity in the Eleventh-Century Church," in *Unity and Diversity in the Church*. ed. R.N. Swanson (Oxford: Boydell and Brewer, 1996), pp. 83–94; Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, p. 112.

69   *Bertholdi Annales ad. a. 1077*, MGH SS 5, pp. 288–90; Sarah Hamilton, "Penance in the Age of Gregorian Reform," in *Retribution, Repentance, and Reconciliation*. ed. Kate Cooper (Oxford: Boydell and Brewer, 2004), p. 47.

70   *Canonici Wissegradensis*, FRB 2, pp. 208–9; Pleszczyński, "Sobeslaus—ut Salomon", p. 239.

71   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 150, SRH 1, p. 430; *Cosmae chronicon Boemorum*, III.43, MGH SSrG NS 2, p. 218.

72   See Dalewski, "Political Culture", pp. 80–81; for blinding as a tool for settling dynastic conflicts in the Middle Ages, see Geneviève Bührer-Thierry, "'Just Anger' or 'Vengeful Anger'?

was able to ascend to the Hungarian throne in 1132 as a legitimate ruler despite being thus maimed.[73] Other authors suggest that during their secret meeting Bolesław III asked Coloman to intercede on his behalf with regard to his (also only hypothesized) excommunication.[74]

Either way Bolesław did meet Coloman for a personal colloquium and on this occasion (or rather, occasions) the latter gave his honoured guest a ceremonial welcome.[75] This, of course, included the inevitable exchange of precious gifts. As can be seen, this is the exact opposite of what happened when Bolesław II met Ladislas in 1079. Sources thus allow us to decode a simple equation that sums up what the author deemed to be the requisite rules of royal communication in the Middle Ages. Bolesław II, who had shown pride (*superbia*) and craved an honour that was not his due (*exaltatio*) is denied a ritual meeting and respectful greeting, and his attempt to manipulate the ritual and break the rules of public communication led ultimately to his demise. On the other hand, we have the example of Bolesław III, who demonstrated humbleness, humility and ardent piety throughout, and sought to atone for his sins (*humilitas, humiliatio*). Hence he was received kindly by the Hungarian King, bishops and abbots, being given a solemn welcoming ceremony, tokens of affection and, last but not least, precious gifts. Upon completing his pilgrimage Bolesław III was exonerated by the Diet of Gniezno and reintegrated into the ruling society by the ruling class.[76] Both cases involve the concept of *humiliatio—exaltatio*.[77] While Bolesław II's pride is punished and results in his downfall, Bolesław III is rewarded for his humility by his return to the throne and the absolution of his sins. As in the earlier case, we can also observe the reciprocity of ritual actions. Gallus Anonymus reports that those of Coloman's servants who had shown proper respect for Bolesław and received him in an appropriate manner, were rewarded by the King's favour or even given rewards in kind.

The Punishment of Blinding in the Early Medieval West," in *Anger's Past. The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*. ed. Barbara Rosenwein (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 75–91.

73   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 160, SRH 1, p. 446.

74   *Gesta principum Polonorum*, p. 277, ref. 3.

75   In the same way, Frederick I Barbarossa was ceremonially welcomed in every Hungarian city and bishopric on his way to the Holy Land in 1189. *Historia de expeditione Friderici*, MGH SSrG NS 5, p. 26.

76   *Gesta principum Polonorum*, III.25, pp. 278–80.

77   Althoff, "Humiliatio", pp. 39–51.

5   Symbols and Rituals in the Hungarian Kings' Encounters with the Crusaders

Chroniclers living in the West and depicting events in the past and present, did not in general regard the life and institutions of Central and Eastern Europe as a particularly interesting topic. One of the few events that made a mark on historical literature at the beginning of the second millennium was the first King of Hungary, St Stephen, and his conversion to Christianity, his zealous dissemination of the faith and its implications for Western Europe. One of the greatest benefits of his conversion for Italy and England, as well as the emerging kingdom of France, was the opening up of a new route for Christians travelling to the Holy Land on dry land.

Although this route was longer, it was safer than the unpredictable sea passage. As the French chronicler Rodulfus Glaber (d. 1047) aptly remarks:

> Thus afterwards almost all those wishing to travel to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem from Italy and Gallia abandoned the usual route via the sea, undertaking their journey through the King's (Stephen's) land. He rendered this route safe for everyone, welcoming as his brethren everyone he beheld, granting them generous gifts. As a result of these deeds many people, nobles and peasants, travelled to Jerusalem.[78]

In terms of our examination of the forms of symbolic communication and the use of ritual in conveying a required message in the course of encounters between royalty it is significant that several contingents of the first three Crusades between 1096 and 1189 opted for the 'Hungarian route'.[79] This affords us an opportunity to observe displays of public interaction between the Hungarian kings on the one hand and their counterparts (counts, dukes, kings and the emperor) on the other. They provided Hungarian kings with unique opportunities to meet their counterparts from distant lands in person, while

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78   "*Tunc temporis ceperunt pene uniuersi, qui de Italia et Galliis ad sepulchrum Domini Iherosolimis ire cupiebant, consuetum iter quod erat per fretum maris omittere, atque per huius regis patriam transitum habere. Ille uero tutissimam omnibus constituit uiam; excipiebat ut fratres quoscumque uidebat, dabatque illis immensa munera. Cuius rei gratia prouocata innumerabilis multitudo tam nobilium quam uulgi Iherosolimam abierunt.*" *Rodvlfi Glabri Historiarvm libri qvinqve*. Rodulfus Glaber: The Five Books of the Histories. ed. John France (Oxford, 1989), III.2, p. 96.

79   For a detailed assessment of these expeditions and Hungary's role in them, see Veszprémy, *Lovagvilág*, pp. 78–103; Runciman, *A History of the Crusades; The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*. ed. Jonathan Riley-Smith (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

at the same time displaying their royal majesty and virtues, recorded in great detail by contemporary local and, notably, foreign historians.

5.1   *The First Crusade* (1096)

The first time a Hungarian king met a monarch or noble leading a Crusader army was in 1096, during the First Crusade to the Holy Land. The then Hungarian ruler Coloman I had dealings with several waves of this campaign and experienced the varied structure and composition of these armies. Since Hungarian chroniclers were prejudiced against Coloman, their accounts of the events relating to the first crusade are rather patchy, and sometimes presented in a rather biased, negative way.[80] It is much easier to reconstruct the events based on contemporary chronicles and annals of German, Italian and French provenance. Their credibility is further enhanced by the fact that their authors or, in some cases, informants participated directly in the Crusades.

The first Crusaders to pass through Hungary in the spring and early summer of 1096 were more of a disaster than welcome visitors. Contemporary chronicles admit that these campaigns were poorly organised, lacked discipline, and had naïve leaders and that, rather than raising hopes for the liberation of the Holy Land, they sowed fear and plundered along the way.[81] The first of the two French Crusades led by Walter Sans Avoir and Peter the Hermit were given permission to pass through Hungary and proceeded without any clashes until they crossed the Hungarian-Byzantine border at the fortress of Zemun and Belgrade, respectively.[82] Every Crusade of knights and peasants that followed ended in brutal bloodshed, requiring military intervention on the part of King Coloman. The crusade led by the priest Gottschalk was crushed by the Hungarians at Székesfehérvár,[83] while the army of Folkmar of Orleans, which had massacred Jews on its passage through Europe, suffered defeat at Nitra.[84]

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80   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 143, SRH 1, pp. 421–22.

81   *Bernoldi Chronicon ad. a. 1096*, MGH SS 5, p. 464; *The Historia Vie Hierosolimitane of Gilo of Paris and a Second Anonymous Author* (hereafter cited as *Historia Vie Hierosolimitane*). ed. C.W. Grocock – J.E. Siberry (Oxford, 1997), pp. 24–26; Compare Jana Chmeľová, "Uhorsko a križiacke výpravy od konca 11. storočia do druhého desaťročia 13. storočia," *Historica*, 46 (2005), pp. 15–58.

82   Albert of Aachen: *Historia Ierosolimitana*. History of the Journey to Jerusalem. (hereafter cited as *Historia Ierosolimitana*) ed. Susan B. Edgington (Oxford, 2007), pp. 8–18; *Ekkehardi Chronicon universale ad.a. 1096*, MGH SS 6, p. 208.

83   *Historia Ierosolimitana*, pp. 46–48; *Annalista Saxo ad. a. 1096*, MGH SS 6, pp. 729–730; *Ekkehardi Chronicon universale ad.a. 1096*, MGH SS 6, p. 208.

84   *Annalista Saxo ad. a. 1096*, MGH SS 6, p. 730; *Cosmae chronicon Boemorum*, III.4, MGH SSrG NS 2, p. 164.

King Coloman refused to let the next Crusader contingent led by Count Emich of Leiningen into Hungary, blocking off their route at Moson. After several weeks under siege, the king suddenly launched an attack, taking the Crusaders by surprise and almost totally routing their army on the spot.[85]

It was not until after these turbulent events that the most powerful Crusader army, led by French and Lotharingian nobles, arrived in Hungary, with the Duke of Lorraine, Godfrey of Bouillon, his brother Baldwin and Godfrey of Esch-sur-Sûre at its helm.[86] In the autumn of 1096 they encamped at Tulln, where they learned of the calamities that had befallen the earlier campaigns. After a long conference the Lotharingian nobles eventually decided to dispatch to Coloman a delegation of 13 men led by Godfrey of Esch, who had on previous occasions held talks with the King Coloman at his court. They demanded an explanation from the king of the events relating to the massacre of the previous crusades and insisted on free passage through the country and provisioning with adequate supplies. Coloman received the delegation and during the eight days they spent at his court[87] tried to find a way of ensuring that the calamities of the previous months would not be repeated. Following a long conference with his nobles the King took the decision to send the envoys back with his own delegation and an invitation for Godfrey of Bouillon to meet him in person for a colloquium at Sopron (*colloquium teneamus*). The Lotharingian Duke was aware of the importance of the situation and knew that a face-to-face meeting and arriving at some appropriate compromise was the only way to secure smooth passage for the Crusade. Even though some of his men suspected a ploy, he eventually decided to set out for the agreed venue, along with a retinue of 300 men:

> (Godfrey) set out to meet the King at the agreed place and, having left the men of his entourage behind here and there, he summoned only Garnier of Grez, a very noble man, his kinsman Reinhard of Toul and Peter, to accompany him as he crossed the bridge above a swamp. There he found the King, greeted him and kissed him amicably with humble respect. Then

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85   *Historia Ierosolimitana*, pp. 52–58; *Ekkehardi Chronicon universale ad.a. 1096*, MGH SS 6, p. 208. For these expeditions and their significant impact on the Kingdom of Hungary and the Duchy of Nitra especially, see Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, pp. 122–24, 140–41; Steinhübel, *Nitrianske kniežatstvo*, pp. 293–94; Kosztolnyik, *From Coloman*, pp. 26–28.

86   Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, p. 147.

87   The precise location of Coloman's court is uncertain. The source gives only Pannonia (*in loco qui dicitur Pannonia*), but in all likelihood Pannonhalma or Székesfehérvár was meant. *Historia Ierosolimitana*, p. 64.

they held various discussions regarding friendship and Christian reconciliation until the acceptance of peace and love progressed to the extent that the Duke was convinced of the King's goodwill. Thus he took twelve from among his three hundred companions and proceeded with them to Pannonia along with the King. . . . The Duke thus entered Pannonia and was received with respect by the King himself and his nobles. They were served everything that is required in good faith and in quantities appropriate at court and at a king's table, as behoved a nobleman of such high birth. Then, in the course of eight days, the King held several meetings with his nobles who gathered to see such a fabled monarch . . .[88]

A detailed account of Godfrey's arrival at Coloman's court and their second meeting has been recorded in another contemporary source, known as the *Historia vie Hierosolimitane*, whose two authors, Gilo of Paris and the Poet of Charleville, wrongly locate Coloman's court in Szombathely (Roman Sabaria). They probably confused St Martin's birthplace with Pannonhalma, the location of the most important monastery in Hungary dedicated to the saint. Their account depicts the highly ceremonial *adventus* and the solemn encounter of the two rulers:

As the agreed day arrived this city shone in splendour, the rich Sabaria from whence your holy native son Martin radiated throughout the world. The pious King arrived in this place with assembled bishops, his nobles, ordinary people and the holy clergy, who all gathered together carrying candles, crosses, gospels, holy relics and precious objects from churches to welcome them [i.e. Godfrey, Baldwin and other nobles]. [Coloman] kissed them on arrival and led them to the cathedral, accompanied by joyful exclamations and the sound of hymns, aggrandizing their splendid

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88   ". . . *ad regem profectus est in loco presignato, et utrinque hinc et hinc omisso comitatu suorum, dux, solummodo Warnero de Greis uiro nobilissimo et propinquo eius Reinardo de Tul et Petro euocatis, pontem qui paludi inminet ascendit, in quo regem reperiens benigne eum salutauit, et humuli deuotione osculatus est eum. Dehinc diversa inter se colloquia habuerunt de concordia et reconciliatione Christianorum, quosque ratio hec pacis et dilectionis adeo firmiter processit, ut se dux fidei illius credens, duodecim ex trecentis susciperet cum quibus cum rege in Pannoniam . . . descendit . . . Dux itaque Pannoniam ingressus honorifice ab ipso rege et primatibus suis susceptus est. Cui benigne et copiose omnia necessaria parata sunt de domo et mensa regis que tam egregium principem decebant. Dehinc rex per dies octo plurimum conuentum suorum habens, qui etiam ad uidendum tam nominatissimum principem confluxerant . . ." Historia Ierosolimitana, pp. 64–66.*

and hospitable reception in a royal manner and confirming their treaty
by the exchange of hostages.[89]

Protracted negotiotions finally resulted in finding a way of allowing the almost
40,000-strong Crusader army to pass through Hungary. Coloman permitted
them free passage through the country and the sale of supplies at fair prices
while Godfrey, on his part, had to promise that the Crusaders would not harass
the local population and would hand over to the King some distinguished hos-
tages, with his own brother Baldwin at their head. The treaty was sealed by the
monarchs and their nobles by swearing an oath. The crusader army could thus
safely embark on their passage across Hungary along the Danube, while King
Coloman with a powerful army proceeded on the opposite bank of the river. At
the fortress of Zemun the pilgrims boarded boats and crossed the river form-
ing the border. At this point Coloman in his royal majesty approached Duke
Godfrey of Bouillon and returned Baldwin and the other hostages. He parted
graciously with the two Crusade commanders and as a token of friendship
bestowed on them various gifts and granted them the kiss of peace (*dilectione
commendato duce fraterque eius in donis plurimis et osculo pacis*).[90]

The meeting between Coloman and the leaders of the chivalric contin-
gent of the First Crusade (represented by Duke Godfrey of Bouillon) thus
consisted of three phases. The first was a face-to-face meeting on Hungary's
border (at Moson) on a bridge above the swamps, with only a few accompany-
ing persons present. The personal acquaintance of the two protagonists, an
expression of goodwill and the willingness to come to an agreement and the
exchange of the kiss of peace formed the basis on which they could build. The
second phase took place at King Coloman's court (probably at the monastery
of Pannonhalma or in Székesfehérvár). It involved a ritual welcome and litur-
gical procession along the lines of the *adventus regis* (*hospitio celebri regaliter
amplificauit*), and finally a second meeting between the two protagonists, the
granting of the *osculum*, the exchange of gifts and hostages, joint attendance
at a holy mass, feasting, talks, and the conclusion of a treaty. The final compo-
nent is *profectio*, whereby the guest is solemnly accompanied on his way out of

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89   "*Dicta dies uenit, locus alma Sabaria fulsit, qua Martine, tuus sacer ortus in orbe reluxit. Huc
      rex deuotus cum coetu pontificali, cum ducibus, populo, sacri et agmine cleri, cumque faris,
      crucibus, librisque euangeliorum, relliquiis sacris et honoribus ecclesiarum, obuius accurrit,
      uenientibus* [*oscula*] *figit, cum iubilo ac ymnis intra sacraria ducit, hospitio celebri regaliter
      amplificauit, obsidibus pactum sumptisque datisque sacrauit.*" Historia Vie Hierosolimitane,
      p. 50.

90   *Historia Ierosolimitana*, pp. 66–70.

the country—very rarely recorded in Hungary—followed by farewell and the departure of one of the protagonists.[91]

5.2   *The Second Crusade (1147)*

Earlier in this chapter we mentioned the complex negotiations and detailed bargaining that preceded the ceremonial encounter and greetings between the German king, Conrad III and the Byzantine emperor, Manuel I Komnenos. However, it seems that during his passage through Hungary Conrad did not pay much heed to issues of protocol and appropriate behaviour. This is certainly true of his troops, who caused strife and pillaged rural areas. In addition, they used threats of violence to demand large contributions for their journey from the local populace. This was possibly because Conrad had only recently emerged from a military confrontation with the Hungarian King, and having suffered defeat at the hands of Géza II, was thus in effect passing through enemy territory.[92]

However, of greater interest for our purposes are the events surrounding the passage of another commander of this Crusade, King Louis VII of France (1137–1180). Domestic Hungarian sources report that his welcome by King Géza II and their meeting followed the lines of what was expected at royal colloquia, as described above. Their meeting involved a grand reception for the illustrious guest, the bestowment of lavish gifts and a splendid feast at the royal court. Indeed, Louis VII became godfather to Géza's son, the future King Stephen III.[93]

A more interesting picture of the meeting can be gleaned from French chronicles, particularly that of Odo of Deuil, who actually witnessed the events depicted first hand. As a member of the King's intimate retinue and official chronicler of the Second Crusade he undoubtedly had access to every relevant detail and his account can thus be regarded as authentic. Odo says that Géza came out to meet the King of France on the bank of the Danube (perhaps at Esztergom). The two monarchs encamped on their respective river banks and contemplated their next steps. Allegedly out of fear and respect, Géza refused to cross the river to greet the honoured crusader guest. Since, however, he was

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91   *Historia Vie Hierosolimitane*, p. 50.

92   Kosztolnyik, *From Coloman*, pp. 130–31; *Ottonis et Rahewini Gesta Friderici I. imperatoris*, I.33, MGH SSrG 46, pp. 51–53; *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 165, SRH 1, pp. 453–57; *Annales sancti Disibodi*, MGH SS 17, p. 27.

93   "*egregius rex Francorum . . . a rege Geycha honorabiliter susceptus est. Apud quem aliquamdiu conmoratus conpaternitatis vinculo regi Geyche sociatur et tali dilectione modo (dilectionis nodo) internexo multis muneribus a rege Geycha honeste conducitur . . .*" *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 166, SRH 1, p. 458.

keen on a meeting with such a prominent monarch, he dispatched his envoys to Louis, sending lavish gifts and his humble request for a colloquium on his side of the Danube.[94]

The King of France decided to accede to his request and crossed the river, accompanied by several bishops and nobles. The two monarchs greeted each other joyously, exchanging kisses and ardent embraces, which symbolized their friendship and mutual willingness to forge an alliance. Géza then vouchsafed the French pilgrims free passage through Hungary during their future journeys to Jerusalem. He bestowed on the departing Louis lavish gifts of horses, vases and fabrics.[95]

Their relationship soured only when the Hungarian king learned that Louis's entourage included Boris, the unrecognized son of the late King Coloman I, who for many years had tried, and failed, to claim the throne of Hungary. And given that it was also Coloman who was responsible for the blinding of Géza's father Béla II and grandfather Álmos, one can only imagine the indignation with which the King's received the news that Louis's entourage included Boris.

Géza immediately dispatched a delegation demanding that Boris be handed over to him in fetters. Afraid of the Hungarian presence in the camp, Boris rose in the middle of the night and tried to make his escape. However, he was captured by French soldiers who, assuming that he was a thief, brought him before Louis beaten up and half-naked. Boris realized the gravity of his situation and that he had only one chance of saving himself. Therefore he resorted to an old, familiar means of ritual communication:

> At that moment he fell at the King's feet and even though he had no command of our language and the King did not have an interpreter at hand, by using his language and certain words we are familiar with, and by repeating his name, made us understand who he was. He was thus temporarily given appropriate clothing and the hearing of his case was postponed to the next day.[96]

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94   *Odo of Deuil: De profectione Ludovici VII in orientem.* ed. Virginia Gingerick Berry (New York, 1965), p. 34.

95   "*Deinde post oscula, post amplexus, statuunt pacem, firmant amorem et ut securi deinceps per Hungariam nostri peregrini transirent. Quo facto rex noster Hungarum laetum dimisit. Prosequuntur eum regia munera equorum, vasorum, et vestium . . .*" Odo of Deuil: De profectione Ludovici VII, p. 34.

96   "*Ipse vero regi prostratus, licet ignorarem linguam nostram et rex tunc interpretem non haberet, quaedam tamen verba nota barbaris vocibus inserens et suum nomen saepius iterans, quis esset aperuit. Mox igitur honeste induitur et in crastinum reservatur.*" Odo of Deuil: De profectione Ludovici VII, p. 36. A similar account is given by the Hungarian

When they reached Louis, Géza's envoys forcefully reminded him of the generosity the Hungarian king had recently shown him, and of their friendship reinforced by the godfatherly bond. However, Louis had little choice, bound as he was by the unwritten rules of medieval political communication. As we saw in several examples in the preceding chapters, the performance of public prostration had great significance and, more importantly, grave consequences in the symbolic communication of the day. Falling at someone's feet in this manner, putting oneself unconditionally at the mercy and under the control of another (usually more powerful and influential) nobleman or prelate as part of the supplication or submission ritual, was binding on both parties.

As in the case of King Andrew's prostration before his brother Béla I at Várkony, of King Géza I before the abbots and bishops at Szekszárd, of the banished Peter Orseolo before Henry III in Regensburg, and Prince Álmos before Coloman at Abaújvár, this, too, was an extremely powerful and effective instrument of petitioning. The French king was obliged to grant mercy to the supplicant and reject Géza's request for his extradition by explaining that a king's feet were akin to a temple and that seeking refuge in this way was tantamount to seeking asylum in church (*ad pedes regis quasi ad altare se prostravit*).[97] On this occasion Boris escaped at the last moment, in spite of Géza's impassioned pleas and lavish gifts. The French King decided to grant sanctuary to Boris, whom he treated as a pilgrim on his way to the Holy Land and thus inviolable. After consulting with his bishops and nobles he decided to leave Hungary with Boris.[98]

What is interesting in our context is the way Boris chose to deal with his almost hopeless predicament. He made use of a widespread and universally accepted means of ritual communication—that of prostration combined with impassioned supplication. Not even his lack of command of his potential protector's language could affect the effectiveness and binding nature of this action. Thus the story of Boris, as depicted by an eyewitness, Odo of Deuil, furnishes further proof of the power of a ritual that knew no cultural or linguistic barriers.

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chronicler: "*Qui vero cum talia audisset, statim ad pedes regis Francorum se prostravit vitam ab eo et veniam rogaturus, ut eum absque lesione extra regnum cum eo ire permitteret.*" *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 166, SRH 1, p. 459.

97   *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, c. 166, SRH 1, p. 459.

98   *Odo of Deuil: De profectione Ludovici VII*, pp. 36–38.

5.3   *The Third Crusade* (1189)

Probably the best documented reception and encounter is that held in 1189 between King Béla III (1172–1196) and Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa (1152–1190) during the Third Crusade. The old Emperor designated Bratislava or, more precisely, the city's environs, as the place for assembling the army that was to accompany him on his last great campaign. Several surviving narrative accounts as well as period charters allow us to reconstruct Barbarossa's Hungarian itinerary in some detail.[99] The Emperor arrived outside Bratislava (*apud Brezpurc*) on 24 May, as recorded in a charter issued in the camp outside the city four days later.[100] Since this was at Pentecost, the Emperor summoned a court assembly (*generalem curiam*) and began to muster his forces.[101] It was at this point that envoys of King Béla III arrived, welcoming him respectfully on the king's behalf and granting him free passage across the country (*ubi epis-copi et ceteri optimates terre, nuncii scilicet regis Ungarie, magnifice venerunt obviam imperatori, ipsum ex parte regis ad introitum regni sui benigne et alac-riter invitantes*).[102] Barbarossa set out for Esztergom:

> When the Emperor approached the city of Esztergom, which is the capital city of Hungary, the King hastened towards him solemnly and in person, accompanied by a thousand horsemen, showing him not only devoted hospitality but also complaisance. During the four days the Emperor spent there, the nobles decided that the great confusion sown by such an enormous and restless army made it necessary to swear a binding and inviolable oath of peace. The Queen gave the Emperor the gift of a magnificent tent and shelter lined in scarlet and rugs tailored to match the width and length of the tent, as well as a bed furnished with a lavishly ornamented cushion and a precious cover, and an ivory armchair with a cushion that stood in front of the bed. It is impossible for these pages to convey the full splendour of these embellishments. Furthermore, to ensure that no conceivable delight was lacking, a small white hunting dog ran up and down the rug [in the pattern—D.Z.].[103]

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99   The emperor arrived in Hungary on 24 May 1189 and crossed the border near Belgrade on 28 June. *Das Itinerar Kaiser Friedrich Barbarossas (1152–1190)*. ed. Ferdinand Opll (Wien/Köln/Graz: Böhlau, 1978), pp. 231–32.

100   MGH DD F I 4, pp. 299–300; *Historia peregrinorum*, MGH SSrG NS 5, p. 130.

101   *Ottonis de Sancto Blasio Chronica*, c. 32, MGH SSrG 47, p. 46.

102   *Historia peregrinorum*, MGH SSrG NS 5, p. 131; *Historia de expeditione Friderici*, MGH SSrG NS 5, pp. 17–18.

103   "*Cum autem domnus imperator in civitatem venisset que Grane dicitur, que Ungarorum est metropolis, rex ei in propria persona cum mille militum comitatu sollempniter occur-rit omnique devotione se non solum hospitalem, sed etiam offitiosum exhibuit. Inperatore*

Queen Margaret then asked the Emperor to act as an arbiter and help end the long-running feud between King Béla and his brother Géza, whom he had incarcerated. Through the emperor's intercession Béla did indeed release his brother and, moreover, gave him a considerable number of soldiers to accompany Barbarossa on his passage through Hungary.[104] At the same time, arrangements were made for the marriage of Béla's daughter to the Emperor's son Frederick.[105] Subsequently the King of Hungary entertained the Emperor at Esztergom Castle, organizing a four-day-long hunt on the summer estate of Queen Margaret on the island of Csepel in the Danube. From there they proceeded to Buda where tournaments were held, followed by another hunt in the Pilis hills. Béla III decreed that the Emperor be received in every city and bishopric with a solemn procession and in great splendour (*Sollempni quoque processione et magno apparatu in civitatibus et episcopatibus domnum imperatorem suscipi mandavit*).[106] The crusaders reached the border river of Morava via Slankamen. Here the King parted from Frederick, furnished him with large quantities of food and bestowed more gifts on him, this time consisting of four camels heaped with precious goods. The emperor, for his part, left the King all the boats he had used to sail down the Danube from Regensburg.[107]

Emperor Frederick Barbarossa's sojourn in Hungary has been recorded primarily through depictions of ceremonial welcoming acts and festivities of various kinds, focusing mostly on welcoming rites, either performed by the King of Hungary in person, his high-ranking nobles and prelates and, last but not least, inhabitants of cities and bishoprics located along the Emperor's route through Hungary.[108] By contrast with previous encounters these accounts document

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autem quatuor diebus ibidem moram faciente, ex consilio principum propter nimiam tumultuantis exercitus insolentiam stabilis et firma pax in exercitu sub iuramento firmata est. Regina autem dedit domno imperatori tentorium optimum et domum desupter de scarlatto et tapete iuxta latitudinem et longitudinem ipsius domus et lectum culcitra et operimento precioso magnifice ornatum, sedemque eburneam cum cussino lecto prepositam, que quantis ornatibus exculta fuerint, presentis pagine depromere nequit inopia. Et ne quid excogitatis deesset delitiis, albus et parvus venatorius super tapete discurrebat caniculus." Arnoldi Lubicensis: Chronica Slavorum, IV.8, MGH SSrG 14, pp. 129–130.

104   *Arnoldi Lubicensis: Chronica Slavorum*, IV.8, MGH SSrG 14, p. 130.

105   *Chronica regia Coloniensis ad. a. 1108*, MGH SSrG 18, p. 144.

106   *Historia de expeditione Friderici*, MGH SSrG NS 5, p. 26.

107   *Arnoldi Lubicensis: Chronica Slavorum*, IV.8, MGH SSrG 14, p. 131; *Historia peregrinorum*, MGH SSrG NS 5, p. 131; *Historia de expeditione Friderici*, MGH SSrG NS 5, p. 26. See also Ferdinand Opll, *Fridrich Barbarossa. Císař a rytíř* (Praha/Litomyšl: Paseka, 2001), pp. 173–74.

108   The ceremonial *occursus* is mentioned in all the sources. Cf. "*Rex Hungarorum Bela nomine in occursum cesaris letus procedit . . . hic exercitum Christi hospitaliter recepit,*

chivalric tournaments and hunts lasting several days, which constituted a royal ritual in their own right, as well as being a very popular joint royal pastime. These unusually detailed accounts repeatedly emphasize generosity, as manifested by the exchange of precious and extremely valuable gifts.[109] An event of this importance also provided an excellent opportunity for settling disputes (the release of the King's brother from imprisonment) and forging dynastic bonds (the engagement of royal offspring).

6   The Role and Significance of Royal Encounters in the Middle Ages

In the preceding pages we focused primarily on the course of royal encounters, ritual greetings and solemn welcomes. The following section, based on several examples relating to Hungarian kings, will illustrate the significance of these encounters, the degree of their binding force and their importance for their contemporaries and, above all, their function in political communication in medieval Europe.

Personal encounters between monarchs were, as a rule, the most reliable way of maintaining contact among royalty, settling of long-standing disputes, and concluding or confirming peace or familial treaties. Peaceful contacts were, of course, much more expedient, if for no other reason than because military campaigns would have been financially very demanding and dangerous, and personal contacts between crowned rulers were also preferred since written agreements were not widely used or because their binding force was limited (especially in the early Middle Ages).

An almost textbook example of this kind of 'standard' royal encounter, regardless of its chronological or geographical context, survives from the late Árpád period.

> Also in the same year, Ottokar, King of Bohemia and Duke of Austria, celebrated a colloquium with Stephen, King of Hungary, on an island between Bratislava and Potenburg. In this place they drew up and sealed a concord of eternal peace and sincere friendship, confirming this by

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ovanter occurrit, benigne prosequitur et operum exhibitione devocionis testatur fervorem."
Ex Ricardi Londoniensis itinerario peregrinorum, c. 20, MGH SS 27, p. 200; "... *et in octava pentecostes occurrit eis rex Ungariae cum regina*..." *Chronica regia Coloniensis ad. a. 1189*, MGH SSrG 18, p. 144.

109   *Ottonis de Sancto Blasio Chronica*, c. 32, MGH SSrG 47, p. 46.

means of an oath in the presence of bishops, prelates and barons representing both sides.[110]

This account refers to the meeting of the Hungarian king, Stephen V, and the Bohemian ruler, Přemysl Ottokar II in the summer of 1271. In this way Stephen, who had only recently succeeded his late father Béla IV on the throne, tried to renew or reinforce the peaceful coexistence with his powerful Bohemian neighbour, in part because he was not strong enough for a direct military confrontation. Be that as it may, we have been left a depiction of a standard royal encounter, which typically included a personal colloquium, demanding that before the start of the talks the two protagonists demonstrate their goodwill, amicable intentions and willingness to remedy mutual relations (referred to as *amicicia, amicitia*).[111] This was followed by negotiating the conditions which (especially from the 13th century onwards) would be written down and sealed by means of charters. The binding nature and inviolability of the treaty necessitated a ceremonial validation, a purpose that, throughout the Middle Ages, was served by the swearing of a solemn oath. Everything took place in public, before witnesses representing the highest echelons of society and the kings' closest entourage (nobles and prelates). The setting of the meeting is also significant: an island in the middle of the river Danube, i.e. exactly on the border between Hungary and Austria.

However, royal colloquia in the Middle Ages also served another purpose. Encounters between monarchs were an opportunity to indirectly assert certain claims or demands, with one of the protagonists playing the role of mediator. King Béla II the Blind had his own share of troubles with Boris, the persistent pretender to the Hungarian throne, who enjoyed the support of the Polish Prince Bolesław III Wrymouth. Béla decided to put diplomatic pressure on Bolesław, choosing the German King and Holy Roman Emperor Lothar III as the most suitable partner. Since Béla did not enjoy a particularly high status in political terms and was not bound by any ties of friendship to the emperor, he decided to secure his favour by using the good services of

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110 "*Item eodem anno Ottacharus rex Bochemorum, dux Austrie, colloquium in insula sita infra Presburch et Potenburch cum Ungarorum rege Stephano celebravit; ibidem perpetuem pacis concordiam et sinceram amiciciam sigillis et privilegiis sub forma iuramenti coram episcopis, prelatis, baronibus ex utraque parte asistentibus confirmantes.*" *Continuatio Vindobonensis*, MGH SS 9, p. 703.

111 See also Kolb, *Herrscherbegegnungen*, p. 147; Gerd Althoff, "*Amicitiae* [Friendships] as Relationships Between States and People," in *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings*. eds. Lester Little – Barbara Rosenwein (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1998), pp. 191–210.

Soběslav I, Prince of Bohemia, who was his kinsman and trusted ally. Thus in 1134 a delegation led by Bishop Peter of Alba Iulia, a city in present-day Romania, left Hungary for Prague bearing great gifts (*magnis cum muneribus*). Soběslav granted Béla's wish and met Lothar at the castle of Altenburg (*cum imperatore Lotario pro colloquio convenit*),[112] probably in the presence of several prominent men of the Empire:

> Since, as usually happens in matters of this kind, a deputation of some-one from a lower rank to a higher-ranking person achieves little or nothing at all unless a mediator is present, the above-mentioned bishop went to Bohemia to see Prince Soběslav, to secure the success of his mission with the help of his mediation and intercession. Soběslav thus went to see the Emperor in this matter. On his arrival he was received respectfully by the Emperor and secured a benevolent and complete granting of his request, that is, that in the matter of the Hungarian King and Polish Prince the Emperor would act according to Soběslav's wishes. The gifts the Hungarians presented to the Emperor were as follows: two appropriately equipped white horses, whose saddles were worth 26 gold talents, and many other gifts. The above-mentioned Bishop of Alba Iulia, having fulfilled his mission in accordance with his wishes, and having received many precious gifts from the Emperor and his wife, returned home in joy.[113]

Although here, too, we see traditional components of royal encounters (precious gifts, ceremonial reception), it is another passage in the quoted text that is of importance. In some cases it was essential to enlist the good services of a powerful and influential person, who had a greater chance of eliciting a favourable response from the addressee of the petition. In this instance, two main circumstances spoke in Béla's favour. First, he was on very good terms with his

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112   *Canonici Wissegradensis*, FRB 2, p. 218.

113   "*Sed quia, ut solet in talibus negotiis fieri, parum aut nihil legatio minoris apud maiorem proficit, nisi mediator intersit, praefatus episcopus ad Sobieslaum ducem in Bohemiam venit, quatenus eo mediatore ac intercessore lagatio sua proficua fieret. Hanc igitur ob causam dux Sobieslaus profectus est ad imperatorem. Quo postquam pervenit benivole ac honorifice ab imperatore susceptus est, omnemque petitionem benigne consecutus est, videlicet ut de rege Ungarorum et duce Polonorum secundum voluntatem ducis Sobieslai imperatoria voluntas procederet. Dona autem Ungarorum imperatori oblata haec sunt: duo albi equi decenter fallerati, quorum sellae XXVI marcas auri in se continebant, et alia quam plurima. Praedictus ergo Petrus, Albae civitatis episcopus, optata legatione potitus, insuper ab imperatore ac ab eius contectali multis muneribus pretiosis donatus, laetus repatriavit.*" *Canonici Wissegradensis*, FRB 2, p. 218.

brother-in-law Soběslav. Secondly and more importantly, the good graces of Emperor Lothar enjoyed by Soběslav derived from a prudent political decision on the part of the Bohemian Prince who, to general surprise, after emerging victorious from the battle at Chlumec in 1126, voluntarily submitted to the vanquished Lothar (then still only King) and concluded a peace treaty with him. Soběslav was able to secure considerable advantages from this act. Since the Emperor knew that it was only Soběslav's generosity that had saved him from a disgraceful insult to his power and majesty, in the following years he showed increased consideration and generosity towards the prince of Bohemia.[114] That is why Béla approached Soběslav and that is why his mission to the Emperor succeeded in obtaining a decision favourable to the Hungarian king. Further proof that we are, in fact, dealing with yet another rule of medieval political communication, is that the Canon of Vyšehrad himself prefaces his account of the event with the words: *sed quia, ut solet in talibus negotiis fieri, parum aut nihil legatio minoris apud maiorem proficit, nisi mediator intersit.*[115]

To conclude this chapter we shall explore one more important and well-known encounter. Although it is outside the chronological framework of this study (having taken place in 1304, three years after the extinction of the Árpád dynasty), it can be used to illustrate and support our previous argument. Petr Žitavský, one of the authors of the Chronicon Aulae regiae (also known as the Zbraslav Chronicle) gives the following account of a 1304 meeting between Wenceslas II, King of Bohemia, and his son, the then Hungarian King Ladislas (V). Upon his arrival in Hungary, just before the actual encounter of the two Kings took place, Wenceslas II decided after careful consideration that the meeting should follow the established order in every particular. He therefore asked that his royal son be attired in ceremonial robes and decorated with the royal insignia (*Nolebat autem rex pater, sagacitate usus, regem videre filium nisi sub diademate et omnibus indumentis regalibus regni Ungarie solempniter insignitum*).[116] Only after a welcoming speech was delivered did the Bohemian and Hungarian monarch meet in person on precious rugs in the presence of several prominent nobles. Not even paternal love and desire to see his son

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114   *Ottonis et Rahewini Gesta Friderici I. imperatoris*, I.21, MGH SSrG 46, p. 35; Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, p. 222, ref. 50; Dalewski, *Ritual and Politics*, pp. 71–72.

115   *Canonici Wissegradensis*, FRB 2, p. 218. A parallel scenario, though with a different outcome, can be seen in the case of the knight Beneda, who tried to regain the favour of King Vratislav II of Bohemia through the intercession of Bishop Benno of Meissen in 1088. See *Cosmae chronicon Boemorum*, II.40, MGH SSrG NS 2, pp. 143–45 and Dalewski, "Political Culture", pp. 65–66.

116   *Chronicon Aulae Regiae*, FRB 4, p. 85.

after such a long time could jeopardize the need to conduct the royal meeting in line with the appropriate rules and to display Ladislas's majesty in public (*Crown-wearing*).[117] In this manner the Bohemian King sought to strengthen the legitimacy and authority of his son, which was contested by the majority of Hungarian nobles.[118]

One fact recorded on this occasion is of particular importance. The Austrian chronicler Ottokar aus der Gaal gives a detailed account of the preparations and trajectory of this meeting in his Rhymed Chronicle. With regard to the Hungarian crown being placed on the head of the ceremonially-attired Ladislas he informs us that this was permitted only on major church holidays, no more than three times a year.[119] The Styrian or Austrian Rhymed Chronicle was written only about ten years after the events it depicts and is based on eyewitness accounts; it can therefore probably be regarded as an authentic source. However, this is the only source referring to three days specially designated for the ceremonial wearing of the royal crown (almost certainly the traditionally most important Christian holidays of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost). The author complements his narrative by adding that Wenceslas II had to undertake protracted negotiations with the Hungarian nobles in order that they might permit his son to wear his crown during their meeting. This suggests that the Hungarian king's access to coronation insignia was limited. Unfortunately, the information in the Austrian Rhymed Chronicle is not corroborated by any other source from the Árpád period and it is thus impossible to prove that this was a norm before the 14th century.

János M. Bak is of the view that this was a deliberately planned spectacle on the part of Wenceslas II. Organising a public meeting accompanied by *Crown-wearing* would have provided him with the most straightforward opportunity to secure the Hungarian royal insignia. The unique use of a relic as part of the royal insignia is also fascinating. Since the orb that traditionally formed a part of the Hungarian regalia was not available at the time, Wenceslas substituted it with the relic of St Stephen's right hand (the *szent jobb*), which Ladislas held in his own right hand throughout their meeting. Bak believes that this, along with the choice of the name Ladislas and of St Ladislas's Day for the day of their meeting, was part of a set of deliberate rituals alluding to Wenceslas's/

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117   The scene is similarly interpreted by Dana Dvořáčková-Malá, "Dvorský ceremoniál, rituály a komunikace v dobovém kontextu," in *Všední a sváteční život na středověkých dvorech. Dvory a rezidence ve středověku III* (*Mediaevalia Historica Bohemica 12*, 2009). (Supplementum 3) (Praha: Historický ústav AV ČR, 2009), p. 45.

118   For more about the context, see Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, p. 324.

119   *Ottokars Österreichische Reimchronik*. MGH Dt. Chron. 5/2, p. 1090.

Ladislas's kinship with the local Árpád dynasty, of which he regarded himself as the legitimate heir. It was, therefore, unequivocally a legitimizing ritual, moreover one that enabled Wenceslas II to get hold of the insignia, which he and his son subsequently brought to Prague.[120]

7   Conclusion

In the foregoing we have tried to identify the symbolic behaviour associated with royal encounters, primarily as reflected in the greetings rituals, comprising a number of means of expression. Perhaps most frequent of these was the granting of the kiss of peace (*osculum pacis*) and displays of due respect. We stressed the importance of personal contact between monarchs for the functioning of medieval society. Face-to-face encounters and talks were often the most effective means of resolving problems in mutual relations, of ending conflicts and forging future alliances.

As we have seen, royal encounters also served the purpose of expressing essential information in a ritual manner. They could be used to demonstrate parity in power relations or in hierarchy (Conrad III and Manuel I; Coloman I and Bolesław III) or else as a public and binding display of the superiority of one of the protagonists (Stephen I and Bolesław I; Ladislas I and Bolesław II).

We have observed ritual communication through two types of encounters. The first involved colloquia between rulers of the Árpád and Piast dynasties. This enabled us to demonstrate how royalty sought to end conflicts or demonstrate friendship (Stephen I and Bolesław I), note the way inappropriate behaviour could disrupt the course of a meeting, sometimes resulting in an open rift (Ladislas I and Bolesław II), and, last but not least, we saw the use of personal encounters at various stages of personal relationships, best illustrated by the events during the penitential pilgrimage to Hungary (the case of Coloman I and Bolesław III).

The second category relates to the encounters of the Hungarian kings with Crusade leaders. These were mostly merely courtesy meetings, aimed at demonstrating goodwill and showing respect for the monarchs being received. That is why they involved splendid welcomes, feasts and festivities, exchanges of precious gifts, the organization of tournaments and hunts lasting a day or longer.

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120   János M. Bak, "Sankt Stefans Armreliquie im Ornat König Wenzels von Ungarn," in Bak, *Studying*, pp. 175–88; see also Bak, "Holy Lance", pp. 62–63.

Throughout the period under consideration, until the late Middle Ages, we can clearly identify continuities in how the form of the meetings evolved and how the associated rituals were used. The rituals followed a model established by tradition, modified by various innovations and additions to suit particular circumstances.

Concluding Reflections: Ritual Communication as a Coherent System

In the foregoing we have demonstrated the role that rituals played as a means of symbolic public communication in medieval Europe, focusing on Hungarian sovereigns and their immediate entourage. The role of rituals can be observed in several spheres of public life in early and high medieval societies.

The first domain is that of power rituals, whose purpose was to demonstrate the royal majesty and the sacrality of anointed rulers. The absence of established state structures and of an administrative power apparatus as we know it today was the reason why royal power had to be constantly demonstrated and affirmed in symbolic ways. Ritualized forms of interaction between monarchs and their environment (nobility, prelates, the people) were the most suitable tool for this purpose. The types of rituals we have explored include festival crownings (*Festkrönung*), public crown-wearing, royal praises (*laudes regiae*), the ceremonial handing over of arms, court festivities and symbolic celebrations of royal virtues by means of penitential and compassionate rites. The kings would celebrate all the important religious, social or family holidays with appropriate pomp, and these events provided excellent opportunities for demonstrating their majesty and power. Equally important is the unifying, binding character of these festivities, invariably involving feasts (*convivium*). Rituals of unity helped to forge, reinforce and confirm bonds, friendships and alliances between monarchs.

The frequent use of rituals is characteristic of periods of unrest and uncertainty. Constant conflict between Hungarian kings and their immediate as well as more distant neighbours as well as dynastic strife within the house of Árpád provided fertile ground for the occurrence of a great variety of ritualized ways of settling disputes. Reconciliation, submission and supplication rituals involved various symbolic means of expression including the frequent use of gestures, ritualized acts, and displays of appropriate emotions (prostration, weeping, humbleness). Specific rituals basically adhered to the same model although in particular cases they could be modified to suit the given situation and circumstances. This is a clear indication of their flexibility, which ensured their frequent use.

In two instances we were able to study a particular ritual in greater detail. The first was the *adventus regis* ritual, one of the most ancient and widespread

monarchic rituals in use throughout medieval Europe. Its basic structure consisted of a joyful, ceremonially arranged, and solemn welcome for a monarch from representatives of a community, the handing over of gifts or keys to a city, expressions of due respect and often also of submission. These were usually followed by a joint entry into the city and associated events such as feasts, festivities, the granting of privileges, and holding of tournaments. However, accounts of the ideal form of a royal entry that included all four basic elements (*adventus, occursus, receptio/susceptio, ingressus*) are very rare. In this respect *adventus regis*, as reconstructed from surviving sources relating to Hungary under the Árpád dynasty, did not deviate from ritual patterns known from other parts of Central and Western Europe. There were several variations, depending on the time and place of the ritual, but these did not affect the common ritual core. We were able to identify three basic types of this ritual, depending on their social role and symbolic importance: the initial arrival of a king, when he actually took possession of a particular community, a repeated (more or less formal) *adventus* whose character was mostly ceremonial or confirmatory, and a ceremonial welcome for a foreign sovereign, which represented merely a non-committal demonstration of due respect.

Several examples of personal encounters between monarchs enabled us to study another important category of ritual, namely greetings rituals and symbolic communication between the Árpád kings and their contemporaries. The most commonly found element of these was the granting of the kiss of peace (*osculum pacis*) and displays of due respect. However, the significance of royal encounters was not purely symbolic. They were a public expression of the state of mutual relations between their protagonists which had also to be reflected in the rituals associated with these encounters. Demonstrations of equality, as well as displays of superiority on the part of one of the protagonists also had their specific form. Inappropriate behaviour and failure to observe traditional symbolic acts often resulted in conflict and strife.

1   The Role of Ritual

It is also worth emphasizing that while we regard ritual communication as an important type of action in the actual political life of medieval societies, it was by no means the only one. Rather, it coexisted with and complemented traditional forms of communication, both oral and written. Nevertherless, we acknowledge that it represented only one of several options for settling disputes or achieving desired political goals. Whenever possible, the protagonists always sought to achieve their goals first by force or military means. They resorted to ritual when all other avenues had been exhausted. Thus, rather

than constituting a strictly defined and prescribed law, the complex of ritu-
als and symbolic forms of communication represented what might be called a
set of unwritten rules shaped by tradition, of which royalty were able to make
practical use while being able to adapt them to specific circumstances. It was
their flexibility and multifunctionality that ensured the rituals' longevity and
prevented them from becoming devoid of meaning.[1]

An issue we have explored repeatedly is the relationship between the
accounts of rituals surviving in written sources and their actual performance
in practice. We have seen that rituals could also serve as instruments of
authorial manipulation or partisan depiction of required events. By depict-
ing a correct (or incorrect) performance of a ritual, medieval authors were
able to express their view of individual protagonists and present them in
the desired light. Just as good and virtuous monarchs performed rituals fre-
quently and in the appropriate manner, evil and dishonest kings, in their
turn, misused rituals and their behaviour frequently had negative reper-
cussions (good and bad rituals).[2] This narrative technique, as used by the
authors of (predominantly) the Hungarian sources is displayed in several of
the examples cited. It was manifestly deployed in the account of the events
surrounding the failed festival crowning of Samuel Aba by Bishop Gerard in
1044;[3] in the ritual sequence performed in the course of the dynastic conflict
between King Solomon and Dukes (or Kings) Géza and Ladislas (1063–1083);[4]
and in the portrayal of two different ways of performing the *adventus regis*
ritual at Split (1242 and 1252).[5]

Even if indvidual details of a surviving account may not have adhered
strictly to the facts, the way they depicted the ritual framework within which
the events occurred certainly had to conform to contemporary custom. Only
by setting their narratives within universally known and applied frameworks
could their authors have expected to be believed by their readers. That is why
it is the ritual patterns of symbolic communication, rather than the historical
authenticity of individual events that lend themselves to examination.

This fundamental distinction is not always made in historical studies of
medieval hagiography and literature. Historians commonly cite sources brim-
ming with accounts of miracles without questioning their credibility, and by
doing so they actually make the mistake of writing about how contemporary
authors depict history (i.e. historiography) rather than about history (i.e.

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1 Althoff, "The Variability of Rituals", pp. 71–87.

2 Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual*, pp. 1–9.

3 Cf. page 43.

4 Cf. pages 44 and 75.

5 Cf. pages 130–131.

actual events). Hence, interestingly, it is rituals and those medievalists who try to demonstrate their use in the politico-social realities of the Middle Ages that tend to be fiercely criticized and rejected although, as a matter of fact, rituals are no less constructs or invention than are, for example, stories of saints or literary narratives filled with Biblical and traditional cultural patterns—which are not subjected to so much scholarly interrogation.

Nevertheless, in a number of instances we have found evidence to show that the ritualized events as depicted do indeed reflect actions as they were performed. The Canon of Vyšehrad makes a convincing argument that the request for the good offices of the Bohemian monarch to intercede with the Emperor followed established rules.[6] The credibility of rituals associated with Coloman's meeting with Břetislav II is vouchasfed by the chronicler Cosmas, as the informant personally witnessed their encounter.[7] Chronicles also explicitly mention the fact that kings were often obliged to act in ways that were not to their advantage, provided the supplicant presented his request in the appropriate ritual manner.[8] The universal character of symbolic ritual language is further evident from the account of the French chronicler Odo of Deuil, eyewitness to Boris's prostration before Louis VII.[9]

There is evidence that ritual communication was still used in the late Middle Ages and the early modern period. Most rituals originating in the early Middle Ages or even earlier, the late Greco-Roman period, carried on unchanged, following the same trajectory and serving the same function. There is no question that a substantial number of (more credible) accounts survive from the 15th and 16th centuries and these can be used to corroborate the propositions put forward in respect of the early and high Middle Ages.[10]

2   The Acquisition of Ritualized Communication—Lernprozess

While the primary focus of the present study is on Hungary under the Árpád dynasty, we have often deliberately explored rituals and communication between Hungary and her neighbours. This has given us a broader perspective

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6   Cf. page 175.

7   Cf. page 60.

8   Cf. page 112.

9   Cf. page 168.

10   Many sources from the late Middle Ages refer to antiquity and the long tradition of specific customs and rituals. See Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, "Much Ado About Nothing? Rituals of Politics in Early Modern Europe and Today," in *Annual Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* (Washington, 2011), pp. 9–25.

on the functioning of political communication and enabled us to identify a number of common features, since our thinking is based on the premise that both in terms of the actual performance and written accounts we are dealing with a conscious and purposeful learning process and emulation of patterns and models from neighbouring countries (*Lernprozess*).[11] This learning process was driven by an exchange of cultural patterns and ritualized processes between the centre and the periphery, in this case most frequently embodied by the relations between the German Empire and Hungary, or relations between the various Central European countries.

This assimilation process proceeded along several channels and by various means. From the earliest days of the Christianized monarchy a large number of visitors had been arriving in Hungary from abroad: St Stephen's wife Gisela came from Bavaria, Gerard, Archbishop of Csanád, from Italy, St Adalbert from Bohemia. Soldiers of German, Italian or indigenous Slav origin (such as Vecelin, Hont and Poznan) lived in Hungary, as did many clergymen and monks (based in the monateries of Tihany and Somogyvár) and, from the 13th century onwards, many German colonists inhabited Hungary's cities. All of them brought to Hungary their distinctive ways and mentalities, including patterns of ritual behaviour found in their home countries, often passing on these forms of communication to their new environment through everyday interactions. Furthermore, a considerable number of Hungarian hagiographical and historical texts were penned by foreign authors for whom this was doubtless a way of disseminating their ideas.

Rituals were also absorbed through the Hungarian kings' personal experience. Most of them spent time at foreign royal courts. For example, kings Peter Orseolo and Solomon, and Prince Álmos became thoroughly acquainted with the courtly ceremony of the German court, where they often themselves took part in rituals of reconciliation, submission, and supplication. Kings Andrew I, Béla I, and Ladislas I spent long periods in Poland, in close vicinity of the Piast royal court. Coloman, Andrew II, and Béla IV made frequent visits to Dalmatia and Croatia from where records of royal praises (*laudes regiae*) and ceremonial welcomes (*adventus regis*) addressed to these kings survive. Ladislas I visited Kievan Rus at the time (or shortly after) the Ruriks incorporated the cult of dynastic saints and all the ceremonies associated with it (the *translatio* of Boris and Gleb in 1072) into their political arsenal, an experience that Ladislas was able to draw on after his return to Hungary in 1083, when he canonized the first saints of the Árpád dynasty, Stephen and Emeric.[12] These endeavours

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11   Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, pp. 30, 191, 200.

12   Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, p. 133; Oleksiy Tolochko, "Problems of the Rurikids and Sacral Legitimisation," in Al-Azmeh and Bak, *Monotheistic Kingship*, pp. 249–68.

primarily served the purpose of reinforcing Ladislas's legitimacy. Béla III acted similarly in 1192, under the influence of the years he had spent at the Byzantine imperial court where, as the designated heir to the imperial throne, he would certainly have been exposed to the complex system of courtly ceremonies and imperial rituals. More distant influences may have played a role in the case of Andrew II, who had been on a crusade to the Holy Land, as well as Andrew III, who was of Italian origin. All these rulers were exposed to rituals and rules of political communication and subsequently incorporated these instruments into public communication in Hungary.
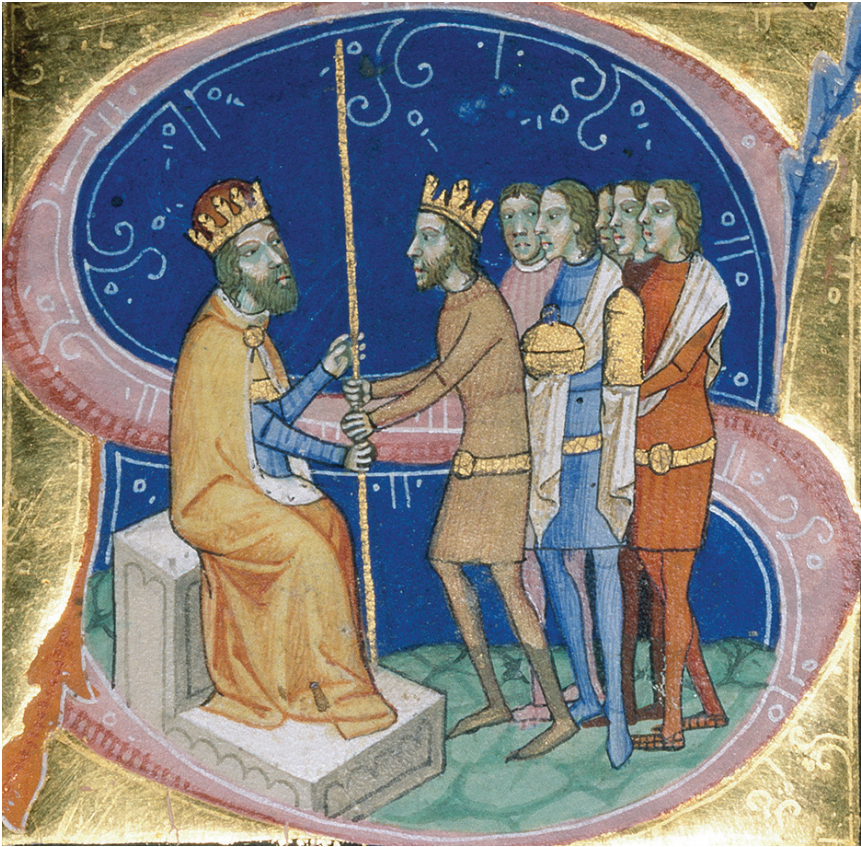
ILLUSTRATION 6   *King Henry III receives the golden lance from Peter Orseolo. Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle (14th century).*
REPRODUCED BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE ORSZÁGOS SZÉCHÉNYI KÖNYVTÁR.

Nor should we forget the influence of foreign queens, who would arrive in Hungary with a large retinue. They included Gisela, the sister of Emperor Henry II mentioned earlier; Judith, a sister of Henry IV; Adelaide, the daughter of Rudolf, Duke of Swabia; the Rurik Princess Anastasia; the Piast Princess Adelaide; Agnes of Châtillon, first wife of Béla III; Margaret of the House of Capet, second wife of Béla III; Constantia of Aragon; and the Byzantine Princess Maria Laskarina, consort of Béla IV, among others.

Patterns of ritualized behaviour and the use of political (symbolic) rules of communication were disseminated in a way similar to dynastic cults, the adoption of the notion of the holy dynasty (*beata stirps*) and the notion of royal sanctity, which Gábor Klaniczay demonstrated for Hungary.[13] These patterns and rules were gradually incorporated into the public communication of Hungarian rulers of the Árpád period. A similar process occurred throughout Central Europe.[14]

3 An Outline of the Developments in the Later Middle Ages: Urban Rituals and Written Culture[15]

Although this book focuses primarily on the high Middle Ages, late medieval rituals—specifically the relationship between urban rituals and written culture—are also deserving of attention. Particularly promising are the archival materials on Slovak and Hungarian cities, which have yet to be studied in detail. Nevertheless, the cases documented so far allow us to identify close links between urban rituals on the one hand and, on the other, the figure of the Hungarian kings and monarchic rituals associated with them.

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13 Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, especially pp. 132–34.

14 "There is no doubt that Polish, Czech, or Hungarian rulers of the High Middle Ages were well aware of the meaning of the ritual of submission and reconciliation, and understood its significance in the public life of the Empire. Close links between the Piasts, Premyslids or the Árpáds and various political circles in Germany most certainly facilated the incorporation of German norms of political behaviour into their political life. The widespread incorporation by rulers of Central European monarchies of various political and ideological policies developed in Germany, as well as of many types of ceremonial behaviour, fostered favourable conditions for the spread of ritualised forms of resolving political disputes and restoring order in Poland, Bohemia and Hungary." Dalewski, "Political Culture", pp. 170–71.

15 The paragraphs that follow derive from my article Dušan Zupka, "Communication in a Town: Urban Rituals and Literacy in the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary," in *Uses of the Written Word in Medieval Towns. Medieval Urban Literacy II*. eds. Anna Adamska – Marco Mostert (*Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy 28*) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), pp. 341–73.

In 1105, while touring Dalmatian cities as their sovereign ruler, King Coloman demanded ceremonial recognition of his sovereignty. The submission ritual of the city of Split was performed for the purpose outlined above.[16] The extant account provides an apt example of the communication between an urban community and its ruler, and the brief passage illustrates all three kinds of communication used in the Middle Ages: oral, written, and symbolic.[17] The Spalatians first dispatched an envoy to discuss their submission verbally, in person; this was followed by the drawing up of a document; and finally the agreement was sealed by a series of ritualized actions: solemn oaths, the *deditio* ritual, and finally, an *adventus regis* staged for the King.

Also of interest is the relationship between ritual and written culture (literacy),[18] represented primarily by the use of written documents in the medieval societies of Europe. So far, scholars have identified three basic forms of this correlation. First, the use of written documents in rituals; second, the depiction and interpretation of rituals in written accounts; and third, the pictorial representation of both the rituals and written documents.[19] The submission of Split mentioned above is a case in point, illustrating the use of a written document in a ritual procedure and the way the ritual is depicted in Archdeacon Thomas's account. The third form is quite rare since very few illuminated manuscripts survive from medieval Hungary. The *Illuminated Chronicle* and the *Angevin Legendary* are rare exceptions, albeit ones that portray the events in a considerably distorted and biased way and, what is most significant, after a considerable passage of time.

Like today, communication in the Middle Ages was an essential element of social behaviour, indispensable to the functioning of society. Forms of communication are closely linked to the use and spread of literacy. In this context, we have to decode information in the guise of gestures, rituals and ceremonies, as well as the symbolism of colours, clothing, smells and even tastes. Communication by means of the senses—vision, hearing, and touch—was as important as written communication.[20] These instruments co-existed along-

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16   Compare pages 62 and 125–6.

17   Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale*, p. 19.

18   Compare Mostert, "New Approaches to Medieval Communication?".

19   Christoph Friedrich Weber – Christoph Dartmann, "Rituale und Schriftlichkeit," in *Spektakel*, pp. 51–55. A very interesting study of the importance of charters for ritual communication and political authority can be found in Geoffrey Koziol, *The Politics of Memory and Identity in Carolingian Royal Diplomas. The West Frankish Kingdom (840–987)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012).

20   Anna Adamska, "The study of Medieval Literacy: Old Sources, New Ideas," in *The Development of Literate Mentalities in East Central Europe*. eds. Anna Adamska – Marco

side traditional literally forms, contributing to the communication network of medieval Europe. Study of this process enables us to observe a variety of literate mentalities in day-to-day life, legal procedures, administration, and ceremonial acts as well as the pragmatics of written culture. Equally interesting is the relationship between written and oral culture, as well as that between written and ritualized communication.

Communication in the Middle Ages formed a rich complex that encompassed all types of human interaction. People used words, signs, letters, and gestures to communicate their ideas to other members of society. The urban environment provided an ideal platform for conveying ideas, messages, and information. Public, symbolic, and ritualized communication was a universal means of conveying ideas and making statements in ways that were universally comprehensible regardless of the recipients' ethnic or linguistic background or level of literacy. In studying these rituals we must focus on every element of the communication process: the sender of information, the message, its recipient and the specific medium of a particular type of communication.[21]

Urban festivities or ceremonies are not easily definable as a ritual category since they overlap with several adjoining types of ritual communication. Their only common feature is the fact that they take place in an urban enviroment and that they involve the (more or less active) participation of the city's inhabitants. The urban environment provided a stage for a wide range of monarchic rituals, religious and church ceremonies as well as rites of passage performed by city dwellers.

Forms of communication and presentation of the urban way of life, as they evolved over the centuries in medieval Europe, represented a multifaceted conglomerate of public actions, grand festivities, allegorical dramatic

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Mostert (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 21–22; *Oral History of the Middle Ages: The Spoken Word in Context.* ed. Gerhard Jaritz (Krems/Budapest: CEU Press, 2001); Mostert, "New Approaches to Medieval Communication?", pp. 18–19.

21   From the vast literature on the subject see for example Henri Pirenne, "L'instruction des marchands au moyen-âge," *Annales E.S.C.*, 1 (1929), pp. 13–28; Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (London: Dover Publications, 2013); Charles Phythian-Adams, "Ceremony and the Citizen: The Communal Year at Coventry, 1450–1550," in *The Medieval Town. A Reader in English Urban History 1200–1540.* eds. Richard Holt – Gervase Rosser (London/New York: Longman, 1990), pp. 238–64; *Symbolic Communication in Late Medieval Towns*; Andrew Brown – Graeme Small, *Court and Civic Society in the Burgundian Low Countries c. 1420–1530* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); Kipling, *Enter the King*, Arnade, "City, State, and Public Ritual", pp. 300–318; Althoff, "The Variability of Rituals", pp. 71, 86; Mostert, "New Approaches to Medieval Communication?", pp. 18–21.

performances, and displays of urban law and tradition.[22] In medieval Hungary, along with the advent of urban communities,[23] urban rituals were used as a means of communication between burghers from the 13th century onwards, and particularly between the 14th and 16th centuries.

The most elaborate and widespread ritual used in Hungarian, but also other European, cities was *adventus regis*, the ceremonial entry of the monarch into a city, most often on the occasion of a major political or social event. As we have seen, this ritual was invariably accompanied by additional secular or ecclesiastical ceremonies. Prominent among these were ubiquitous religious processions marking the day of a city's patron saint or some other major event. Commemorating key events from the city's history also played an indispensable role. The founding of a community, the securing of city privileges, victory in a famous battle, or the securing of the city's freedom—all these provided perfect opportunities to demonstrate the spirit, pride, and traditions of a city to all those around. Nor should we forget specifically urban rituals such as the election or inauguration of a mayor or city council, the public reconciliation of conflicts, the ceremonial drawing up or destruction of charters, or the ritual punishment and execution of those who had disrupted the peace in the city, a frequent occurrence in the Middle Ages.[24]

It is evident that from the late Middle Ages onwards all the key monarchic rituals in Hungary took place within the city walls. Unfortunately this is not reflected in pragmatic urban literature. In fact, these activities are mentioned only sporadically. The rare exceptions are articles surviving in the collection of urban laws from Buda, the *Ofner Stadtrecht*, and in financial records from

22   *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*. eds. Barbara Hanawalt – Kathryn Reyerson (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), pp. ix–xviii.

23   Compatre Erik Fügedi, "Die Entstehung des Städtewesens in Ungarn," in *Kings, Bishops, Nobles*, pp. 101–18; Richard Marsina, "O národnostnej štruktúre stredovekých miest. (K 600. výročiu výsad pre žilinských Slovákov)," *Historický časopis*, 29/5 (1981), pp. 681–96.

24   Volker Honemann, "Herrscheradventus in städtischer Perspektive: Der Einzug des Königs Matthias Corvinus in Breslau 1469 und seine Darstellung in der Chronik des Peter Eschenloer," in *The Mediation of Symbol in Late Medieval and Early Modern Times*. ed. Rudolf Suntrup (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2005), pp. 145–162; Thomas Zotz, "Die Stadtgesellschaft und ihre Feste," in Altenburg ed., *Feste und Feiern im Mittelalter*, pp. 201–13; Anna Adamska – Marco Mostert, "The 'Violent Death' of Medieval Charters: Some Observations on the Symbolic Uses of Documents," in *Ecclesia—cultura—potestas*. (Kraków: Societas Vistulana, 2006), pp. 699–709.

Bratislava.[25] More frequent references to these events can, however, be found in narrative sources of the period.

Contemporary narrative sources depict society almost exclusively from the point of view of the sovereign and the nobility. Hungary's history, too, is viewed from the perspective of kings and their actions. Records describing the urban environment were written in a similar vein. Urban rituals are all closely linked to the monarch himself or his immediate entourage (barons and prelates). Rituals, as well as the city itself, are interesting only insofar as they relate to an event in a sovereign's life and contribute to his glorification. As a result, documentation of urban rituals in Hungary is strongly influenced by royal, monarchic and courtly ideology.

This type of festivity included such rituals as welcoming a monarch entering the city, a community's submission to its rulers, ceremonies relating to royal coronations as well as funerals, weddings and baptisms of prominent burghers or local nobles, and public ceremonies such as ennoblements, or the granting of donations. Under the influence of a belated wave of courtly culture and chivalric ideals, Hungarian kings and nobles were extremely keen on all kinds of tournaments, chivalric contests and horse races. Rituals were also frequently used to demonstrate the authority of a government or the reinforcing of its legitimacy. In late medieval Hungary a specific ritual evolved in relation to the omnipotent and omnipresent Holy Crown, obviously building on the early and high medieval festival crowning (*Crown-wearing*) ceremonies.[26]

4   Monarchic Power and Its Representation

As we showed above, Hungary, Poland, and Bohemia in the Middle Ages exhibited so many identical features, social and structural similarities, as well as cultural and historical analogies, that it is justified to refer to a cultural and historical region of Central Europe.[27] Of course, this region existed within a

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25   *Das Ofner Stadtrecht. Eine deutschsprachige Rechtssammlung des 15. Jahrhunderts aus Ungarn.* ed. Károly Mollay (Budapest, 1959); *Magyarországi városok régi számadáskönyvei.* ed. László Fejérpataky (Budapest, 1885), pp. 41–59.

26   For more details and evidence from contemporary sources, see Zupka, "Communication in a Town"; Daniela Dvořáková, *Rytier a jeho kráľ. Stibor zo Stiboríc a Žigmund Luxemburský. Sonda do života stredovekého uhorského šľachtica s osobitým zreteľom na územie Slovenska* (Budmerice: Rak, 2003), pp. 203–17, 290–91.

27   For details, see Nora Berend – Przemysław Urbańczyk – Przemysław Wiszewski, *Central Europe in the High Middle Ages: Bohemia, Hungary and Poland, c. 900–c. 1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Gábor Klaniczay, "The Birth of a New Europe about

specific context, closely linked and strongly influenced by its Germanic, Slavonic, Byzantine, and nomadic neighbours. Similarly, the evolution of royal power and its reflection share a number of analogous features although each of the countries mentioned also had its own specific elements. One need hardly say that the same applies to Hungary under the Árpád dynasty.[28]

In Hungary the origins of a monarchic state intimately linked to the spread of Christianity go back to the last quarter of the 10th century and the 11th century under the reign of Prince Géza and, first and foremost, the country's first king and later patron saint, Stephen I. Royal ideology is demonstrated by *Libellus de institutione morum*, a text from around 1015 (formally ascribed to Stephen I). This work, conceived as a Mirror for Princes, emphasizes the close links between the power of royalty and of the bishops, and the close interaction between politics and religion, enumerating the moral virtues ascribed to an ideal ruler.[29] The Hungarian kings had the privilege of appointing bishops and the obligation to provide materially for churches; they routinely participated in synods and, in addition, initiated the writing down of the earliest law books in the country.

The powerful cult of dynastic saints was used in Hungary in 1083 and 1192 to legitimize the kings who reigned in those years (Ladislas I and Béla III respectively). Stephen and his successors built their centralized royal power by means of Christianization and the integration of territories associated with this process, as well as by matrimonial alliances in foreign policy and an emphasis on laying the economic and administrative foundations of royal power (royal residences, castles, creation of counties).[30] Instruments which Stephen and his successors on the Hungarian throne used to strengthen their royal power included the passing of laws, enshrining the duty to pray for the monarch, harsh punishments for crimes against the royal majesty, as well as an emphasis on self-presentation through architecture and art (for example, the burial grounds of Stephen and Emeric in Székesfehérvár, of Andrew I in Tihany, and of

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1000 CE: Conversion, Transfer of Institutional Models, New Dynamics," in *Eurasian Transformations, Tenth to Thirteenth Centuries: Crystallizations, Divergences, Renaissances*. eds. Johann P. Arnason – Björn Wittrock (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2004), pp. 99–130.

28   For the following paragraphs, see in detail: Dušan Zupka, "*Rex eris, si recte facias: si non facias, non eris*. Panovnícka moc a jej reprezentácia v stredovekej strednej Európe (10.–13. storočie)," *Forum Historiae*, 8/2 (2014), pp. 202–26.

29   *Libellus sancti Stephani regis de institutione morum ad Emericum ducem*. In SRH 2, pp. 611–27. Előd Nemerkényi, "The Religious Ruler in the Admonitions of King Saint Stephen of Hungary," in Al-Azmeh and Bak, *Monotheistic Kingship*, pp. 231–47.

30   For more details see Berend – Laszlovszky – Szakács, "The kingdom of Hungary," in *Christianization*, p. 319.

Ladislas I in Oradea). Just like the Ottonian emperors, members of the house of Árpád made a point of founding monasteries and bestowing gifts upon them. Hungary is inextricably linked with the symbolism of the coronation insignia: the crown, the coronation mantle, orb, sceptre, sword, and lance, which in the course of centuries acquired enormous symbolic significance in constitutional and national aspirations, and thus played a key role throughout Hungarian, and later specifically Magyar, history.

The authority of Hungarian kings evolved over many decades, but from the 13th century, and especially from the reign of Andrew II onwards, had to take into account the existence of a powerful nobility (as illustrated by the Golden Bull of 1222, its renewal in 1231 and subsequently the so-called third Golden Bull of 1267). Although Béla IV tried to restore the royal majesty and monarchic authority by a series of administrative, legal as well as symbolic and ceremonial actions, from the second half of the 13th century Hungarian royalty had to contend with powerful opposition from the Hungarian nobility (illustrated by the introduction of the coronation oath and the obligation to convene diets). Only the Angevin dynasty succeeded in establishing a central royal authority after protracted bloody battles with the Hungarian nobility.

Building on the ideas of Greco-Roman philosophy, medieval society gradually developed its own system of values. These consisted of the four cardinal virtues described in the works of Plato, namely justice, temperance, courage, and prudence, to which Christianized medieval society added the main virtues of St Paul: faith, hope and charity (*caritas*). Thus a complex of seven virtues came into being, which played a fundamental role in shaping the notion of the ideal monarch and thus defining his sphere of action in terms of these moral requirements. In this context certain qualities that were supposed to dominate royal behaviour were often emphasized. In line with St Augustine's definition these included *pax* (peace), *ordo* (the proper functioning and order of the world), and *iustitia* (justice), complemented naturally and almost automatically by *pietas* (piety). The latter comprised further subcategories, such as *clementia* and *misericordia* (mercy, leniency, forgiveness). These virtues could occur in various alternative constellations, for example, *prudentia, fortitudo, iustitia, temperantia* plus *caritas* or the iconographically documented system of *iustitia, pietas, prudentia, sapientia* (+ *ius, lex*). The monarch (king or Roman emperor) was perceived as the embodiment of all the positive virtues.[31]

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31   Compare, Zupka, *Rex eris, si recte facias*; Robert Antonín, *Ideální panovník českého středověku* (Praha: NLN, 2013), pp. 17–18; Lenka Karfíková, "Augustín a jeho dvojí vklad do dějin politického myšlení," in *Politické myšlení raného křesťanství a středověku*. eds. Vilém Herold – Ivan Müller – Aleš Havlíček (Praha: Filosofia, 2011), pp. 74–122. For Alcuin

In the millennium between the year 500 and 1500 the perception of medieval monarchs, as shown earlier, passed through several phases, which related to the way the monarch was perceived by educated persons or intellectuals who, over this period, had constructed several ways of interpreting his status. The ruler's role, function, importance, legitimacy, his qualification or justification to be the sovereign, evolved over time and in line with the dominant criteria defining his office (princely, royal or imperial) at any given time. However, the preeminent quality, which had been steadily attached to the person of the king, was that of *ordo*, which might be rendered as the guiding principle for the proper functioning of the world and Christian society. Thus the monarch played the role of the one who maintains the world order, as the guarantor of proper historical development and, at the same time, as the image or the representative of the Eternal King—God on earth (*rex imago Dei, Christus Domini, Vicarius Christi*). Royal majesty had to be constantly demonstrated and paraded in order to reinforce the sovereign's authority and to constantly emphasize his sacral character and divine predestination to rule.

There was no shortage of opportunities to display royal majesty. Those best known today include the designation of a monarch, his consecration, enthronement and inauguration into office, and the closely related recurrent rituals, such as festival crownings (*Festkrönung*), the singing of *laudes regiae*, demonstrations of royal majesty and public wearing of the crown and other royal insignia. These came to the fore particularly in moments of crisis or their immediate aftermath, when the legitimacy and restoration of the required *ordo* had to be publicly demonstrated.

Based on St Augustine's ideas, according to the ideal of monarchic power *ordo* engendered **pax**, i.e. peace. Peace, in turn, was symbolized by the ideal of the king as conciliator and peacemaker—*rex pacificus*. Thus understood, the monarch represents the peacemaker, the one who puts an end to conflict and chaos in the world while at the same time being the guarantor of peace and thus contributing to the restoration of harmony and the balance of power in the world; in a word, restoring the required *ordo*. The central ceremony demonstrating this quality of the ruler was *reconciliatio*, reconciliation, which occurred in several ritualized forms, each with its precisely defined repertoire of requisite symbolic gestures. The most frequent forms were those of *deditio* and *supplicatio*. Enormous significance was ascribed to a ruler's capacity

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of York, see *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde. Band 7* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1986), p. 607; the pictorial representation can be found on the beautiful miniature of the Monte Cassino evangeliary of Emperor Henry II (1002–1024). For this, see Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, p. 127 and figures.

to establish, maintain and, in case of a crisis restore, peace. Failure to fulfil this task could have fatal consequences and result in the ruler being deposed and replaced. *Pax*, whether understood in the sense of the ancient Roman *Pax Romana*, or the Christian *Pax Christiana*, was an essential precondition of a peacefully functioning and evolving medieval society.

Contemporary sources presented the medieval ruler as one who possesses attributes or characteristics such as *pater iustitiae, lex animata, legibus solutus, rigor iustitiae, rex iustus*, and so forth. The constant emphasis on justice (*iustitia*), right (*ius*) and law (*lex*) derives from the understanding of the king as legislator, judge, and preeminent executor of justice. This quality, like all the others, was conferred on him by his status as God's representative on earth. From the 12th century onwards especially, and later under the reign of Frederick II, the notion of justice played a leading role in the understanding as well as the execution of monarchic power. The sovereign was expected to resolve disputes, right wrongs, and protect the innocent, but also to pronounce strict and just judgement and to order ritual executions, which had a preventative as well as purgative and psychological character. A monarch who meted out just punishment thus strengthened his authority and demonstrated his status in Christian society.

There were also other means of demonstrating *iustitia*. Monarchs played the role of arbiters in arguments, settled local disputes as well as dynastic conflicts at home and abroad, granted privileges, issued charters and laws, presided over synods, and represented the highest legal authority for all their subjects. Particularly in the early and high Middle Ages, when monarchs did not have permanent residences and travelled up and down their dominions, they played the role of just rulers wherever they happened to be.[32]

The medieval Western ruler's character is inextricably intertwined with the Christian religion. The Pauline system of Christian virtues of faith, hope, and charity (*fides, spes, charitas*) found its expression in qualities every ruler had to respect and actively represent if he wished to retain his legitimacy and the divine blessing. These included piety (**pietas**), and the closely related qualities of mercy (**misericordia**) and leniency (**clementia**).[33] Medieval rulers

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32   We know that even at the end of the 12th century all 72 counts of Hungary were obliged to welcome and look after the king at least once a year. *Pramene k vojenským dejinám Slovenska, I/2*. eds. Vladimír Segeš – Božena Šeďová (Bratislava: VHÚ, 2011), pp. 45–46.

33   *"pietate affluentem"* in *Gesta principum Polonorum*, I. 27, p. 441; *"iuste iudica sed non sine misericordia"* in *Cosmae chronicon Boemorum*, I. 33, MGH SSrG NS 2, p. 58; *"ineffabilis clementiae"* in *Thietmari Merserburgensis Chronicon*, VI. 54, MGH SSrG NS 9, p. 342.

demonstrated their piety through charitable Christian deeds, the dispensing of alms, and the supporting of liturgical ceremonies. Monarchical *pietas* was demonstrated not only through moral but especially by material support for church institutions. Kings were the founders of monasteries and churches, they built cathedrals, supported monastic orders and were zealous propagators of Christianity, later also of cults of saints, especially dynastic saints. The medieval king was first and foremost *rex Christianus* (in some cases even *rex Christianissimus*).[34]

5 Quality, Role, and Ritual: Towards a Conceptual Framework

Rituals, symbols, and gestures as a form of public communication were the best tool by which medieval rulers could convey their power and its significance in the context of the prevailing culture and ideas. We have devised a simple formula as a key to interpreting the depiction of individual rituals. Briefly put, each ritual (ceremony, rite) corresponded to one (or several, semantically related) quality (virtue, feature, symbol), which, in turn, was linked to a certain public role (function, active performance, role in society).

The qualities described above, a ruler's public performance, and the related symbolic means of communication represented a vast complex within the public political communication system of medieval society. Individual qualities and virtues complemented and influenced each other, often acting in parallel. For easier orientation we have explored them individually. Now, by way of conclusion, we can summarize our findings bringing together evidence from narrative sources that depicted the de facto actions of medieval princes and kings with theoretical notions of monarchic power in the Middle Ages. A clear structure emerges, comprising three pillars. It is evident that certain basic qualities (virtues)[35] related to certain corresponding public functions and active forms of executing power, reflected in relevant symbolic rituals and ceremonies:

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34   King Stephen I was called *princeps Christianissimus* in one of the first legends written for his canonization in 1083. *Legenda maior sancti Stephani regis*. SRH 2, p. 383.

35   On political virtues see István P. Bejczy, "The concept of political virtue in the thirteenth century," in *Princely Virtues in the Middle Ages, 1200–1500*. eds. István P. Bejczy and Cary J. Nederman (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 9–32.

Quality, *virtus*	Role, active performance, function	Ritual, ceremony
Ordo	maintainer of world order, *vicarius Christi, Christus Domini*	*consecratio, coronatio, inthronisatio, adventus regis, salutatio*
Pax	peacemaker, resolver of conflict, guarantor of peace	*reconciliatio, deditio, supplicatio*
Iustitia	judge, executor of justice	passing judgement, ritual executions, *purificatio*
Pietas (*Clementia, Misericordia*)	piety, alms-giving, charitable deeds	liturgy, piety rituals, *humiliatio*

In the medieval states of Central Europe from the middle of the 10th to the early 14th century the king appears in a variety of roles: as king (prince) assuming office, as arriving, meting out punishment, as merciful and humble, as celebrating and manifesting his majesty, and so forth. His actual political and social performance varied depending on the requirements and circumstances of the day but was always anchored in the world of ideas governing Christian society and its ethical and moral context.

This analysis is based on several premises, including the conviction mentioned earlier that the accounts of events in period sources were not just rhetorical exercises on the part of their authors or idealized projections of society shared with a closed circle of the intellectual elite within medieval society. The actions depicted in the sources largely reflected the actual state of affairs in the society of the time of their composition. Similarly, we believe that the distribution of models, concepts, and patterns of behaviour within the system of virtues and monarchic qualities listed above followed certain principles and was publicly manifested through power rituals.

In conclusion it is worth reiterating how hard the very concept of ritual is to pin down. As we have shown, scholars in the humanities have used the concept to explore a very broad and variegated range of symbolic phenomena. While there are often more differences than common features between two rituals, it is nevertheless possible to understand and study such actions as identical phenomena. For ritual is not a real material thing that can be directly observed or whose existence is verifiable. It is a purely theoretical concept and an analytical category that enables us to depict, observe, decode, and subsequently interpret certain forms of public and symbolic communication in medieval

European societies. Furthermore, historians studying rituals of the past do not have the privilege of direct access and have to rely instead on laborious deciphering and disentangling of the meaning of rituals from a variety of contemporary accounts. People who lived in the Middle Ages were not familiar with the present-day academic notion of ritual, nor did they refer to these actions by this name. Nevertheless, due to their shared features, roles, and importance, they made sufficient use of them to enable us to designate these actions as rituals.

It is, of course, not possible to prove the authenticity of every single ritual that survives in contemporary accounts. In many cases it is simply impossible to decide whether what we are dealing with is a record of an actual event or a purely idealized portrayal crafted by chroniclers with certain specific intentions. This, however, does not prevent us from acknowledging the existence, indeed the frequent use, of rituals (particularly power rituals) in actual political struggles of medieval rulers. This is borne out by the staggering number of rituals depicted in narrative, diplomatic and iconographic sources. The power, importance and possibilities of using the ritual (as the phenomenon is understood today) must have been quite obvious and comprehensible both to the medieval protagonists of these events and to those who recorded their occurrence. The large number of cases studied, their comparison with those in neighbouring countries, and a precise identification of the role of rituals within the political reality of Hungary under the Árpád dynasty enable us to regard them as an integral part of symbolic public communication in medieval Central Europe.

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