

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE TWO SUCCESSION CRISES IN HUNGARY IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

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The deaths of two kings ushered in two succession crises in the late medieval Kingdom of Hungary.¹ The death in 1290 of King Ladislas IV the Cuman, the penultimate ruler of the domestic Árpáadian dynasty, led to a 20-year-long crisis in which royal power was significantly contested. With three coronations, the Angevin pretender Charles Robert attempted and succeeded in claiming the throne by 1310. Charles' reign was long, but after the death of his equally successful son, King Louis I the Great in 1382, another crisis erupted. Two Angevin pretenders from a lesser branch of the Angevin family were crowned, both ultimately unsuccessful. Charles of Durazzo was crowned as Charles II of Hungary in 1385 but was soon assassinated, while his son, Ladislas of Naples, was crowned in 1403 but never managed to become the sole monarch of Hungary and later had to abandon his rights.

In many ways, the developments of the first succession crisis influenced the outcomes of the second. While the first crisis brought the dynasty of the Angevins to the throne of Hungary, the second crisis saw their disappearance. In both cases, the Apostolic See played a considerable role in the attempts by the Angevins to claim Hungary. The succession crises of Hungary were not separate from other developments in the fourteenth century, notably a conflict between the spiritual and secular powers, which saw the diminishing of papal authority and the development of the Western Schism that shook the basis of the hierarchy of the Church.

Although the role of the papacy in both crises was noted in contemporary medieval chronicles,² research comparing the role of the Church in these two periods in order to find similarities and differences is lacking. My goal is to look into the role played by the Church in the succession crises by examining the links that the Apostolic See created with the various players involved. How was the Apostolic See drawn to support the Angevins? How did the Church intervene

¹ This article is based on: Mišo Petrović, "Popes, Prelates, Pretenders: The Role of the High Clergy in the Fight for the Hungarian Throne during the Fourteenth Century" (MA thesis, Budapest: CEU, 2015).

² *Képes Krónika*, ed. Tamás Tarján and László Geréb (Budapest: Magyar Hírlap – Maecenas Kiadó, 1993), 112; János Thuróczy, *Chronicle of the Hungarians*, ed. János M. Bak (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 59.

and try to decide the outcome of the succession crises? What were the similarities and differences in the approach the Church took to both fights for the Hungarian throne? The first part of this article will look at the basis on which the relationship between the popes and the Angevins developed and was maintained during the crisis periods. Next, I will show what support the popes could offer the respective pretenders. Lastly, I will discuss the role of the local Church, represented by the prelates (mainly bishops and archbishops), in the crises and the relationship of the prelates with both the Angevin pretenders and the Apostolic See.

The Family and the Pope

The relationship between the Apostolic See and the Angevins was formed in 1265 when Charles I of Anjou was invested with the Kingdom of Sicily. This brought certain obligations and benefits to both sides. In most cases, the popes were keen supporters of the Angevins in their political struggles, namely, against rebellious Sicily.³ Rome often depended on Naples, however, as the Papal States were an unstable alliance of various city-states with varying degrees of relationship with the pope as the superior of the Papal States. Naples was important because of the financial, political, and military support it could offer the popes.

Although the alliance was legally safe with the pope being the superior and the Neapolitan king his vassal, the relationship had to be maintained by close contacts between the members of the ruling family and certain popes. Here I will concentrate on the prominent role played by the two ruling queens of the Angevins. Both Mary of Hungary (1257–1323) and Margaret of Durazzo (1347–1412) had considerable influence on the politics of Naples. Mary, wife of King Charles II, was instrumental in first transferring her rights to Hungary to her grandson, Charles Robert, and actively supporting Charles' campaign. Margaret acted as regent of Naples from September 1385, as her husband, Charles of Durazzo, went to claim Hungary and the queen had to face serious problems left in Naples by his death.

Queen Mary claimed the right to the throne of Hungary when her brother, Ladislas IV, was murdered in 1290.⁴ Although her husband, Charles II, maintained contacts with the rebellious oligarchs in Hungary, this yielded no results in the

³ As seen in Steven Runciman, *The Sicilian Vespers: A History of the Mediterranean World in the Later Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁴ Enikő Csukovits, "Introduzione. La dinastia degli Angiò e l'Ungheria," in *L'Ungheria angioina*, ed. Enikő Csukovits (Rome: Istituto Balassi, Accademia d'Ungheria in Roma, 2013), 9.

beginning, as Charles was more interested in Naples. It was Mary who served as a key link in attracting and obtaining the support from both the nobility in Hungary and the Apostolic See. Mary communicated with one of the most powerful Croatian oligarch families, the Šubići, who were interested in the ecclesiastical reform of the dioceses under their rule. Mary had what they needed: contact with Pope Boniface VIII. First, in 1297, Mary persuaded the pope to name her chaplain, Peter, archbishop of Split,⁵ the most important diocese under the rule of the Šubići, and second, in 1298, to establish the diocese of Šibenik, thus pacifying the conflicts among various Dalmatian cities under the Šubići counts.⁶ This strengthened the alliance between Pope Boniface VIII and the Angevins for claiming Hungary and brought strong supporters from within the kingdom firmly into the Angevin camp. As early as 1299 Mary and the Šubići were discussing the possibility of Charles Robert being sent to Dalmatia, which happened in 1300 when Charles landed in Split. In the following years Mary continued to support her grandson financially and by diplomatic means.⁷

Queen Margaret had a different story. She inherited problems following the death of her husband Charles of Durazzo in his failed attempt to seize the throne of Hungary in 1386. From the start Margaret was challenged by the strong barons, French pretenders, and Pope Urban VI. She also had to take care of her two underage children: Ladislav and Joanna. Although she attempted to reconcile with the pope, Urban refused any attempt; he had Charles of Durazzo and all his family excommunicated. Thanks to Margaret's resourcefulness, the Angevins were able to sustain their position in the Kingdom of Naples long enough for a change to occur on the papal throne. The new pope, Boniface IX, soon realized the necessity of an alliance with Naples, granting Ladislav the crown and legitimacy, as well as his full support by sending Legate Angelo as regent for the underage king. Although Ladislav still had to fight for a decade to defeat his opponents, Boniface's decision marked a turn in the tide as it meant that Ladislav had full papal backing. Despite the presence of the papal legate, it was Margaret

⁵ Tadija Smičiklas, ed. *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae: Diplomatički zbornik Kraljevine Hrvatske, Dalmacije i Slavonije*, vol. 7 (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti [JAZU]; Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti [HAZU], 1904–2002), 277–278, May 10 1297.

⁶ Damir Karbić, "Uloga bribirskih knezova u osnutku Šibenske biskupije" [The role of the counts of Bribir in establishing the bishopric of Šibenik], in *Sedam stoljeća šibenske biskupije*, ed. Vilijam Lakić (Šibenik: GK "J. Šižgorić," 2001), 53–62.

⁷ Matthew J. Clear, "Maria of Hungary as Queen, Patron and Exemplar," in *The Church of Santa Maria Donna Regina*, ed. Janis Elliot and Cordelia Warr (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 45–60.

who still held power and remained the main regent until 1393.⁸ She was also active in maintaining contacts with the rebels in Hungary by communicating with Bishop Paul of Zagreb and was constantly apprised of the situation in Hungary. Until 1393, she always co-signed the charters issued by her son, which meant that she was fully informed about the rebellion.⁹

Although the petitions by the rebellious Hungarian oligarchs went through the kings of Naples, the role the queens of Naples played in the Angevin attempts to claim the throne of Hungary should not be underestimated. The queens maintained contacts with the Apostolic See, and the action of both made it possible to acquire the full support of the popes for the young Angevin rulers.

The Pope and Outside Help

How did the Supreme Pontiff attempt to help the pretender obtain the throne? The opportunities and limits of the papacy can be viewed through the pontificates of Boniface VIII and Boniface IX. While both popes supported the Angevin claims to Hungary, the position of the Apostolic See as well as the international situation dictated that they behave differently once the pretender finally decided to sail from Naples and land in Croatia. On the news that their respective pretenders had reached the kingdom, Boniface VIII feigned ignorance while Boniface IX continued to actively support his Neapolitan pretender. Both popes recognized the need to obtain support from the rulers of Germany and counter the support that Germany could offer the opposing pretenders. The role of Germany was essential in both conflicts. Both Boniface VIII and Boniface IX attempted to legitimize the rulers of Germany in attempts to draw them to the Angevin camp.

King Albert of Germany was in conflict with Pope Boniface VIII because the pope did not recognize Albert as emperor. After 1296 Albert was in a marriage alliance with King Andrew III of Hungary and this fact could have led the pope to postpone the recognition of Albert. The pope's opposition led Albert to seek support after the death of Andrew. Albert did not oppose the expansion of the Přemyslids into Poland and Hungary as they were his chief supporters in Germany. The situation changed in 1303. First, on 30 April, the pope recognized

⁸ Alessandro Cutolo, *Re Ladislao D'Angio-Durazzo*, vol. 1 (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli Editore, 1969), 135.

⁹ Cutolo, *Re Ladislao I*, 148; Franjo Rački, ed., "Izvadci iz kraljevskoga osrednjega arhiva u Napulju za jugoslovensku poviest," [Charters from the royal archives in Naples relevant for Yugoslav history], *Arhiv za povjestnicu jugoslavensku* 8 (1868): 28–42.

Albert as emperor¹⁰ and on 31 May the pope officially backed Charles Robert as the rightful king of Hungary. The moral authority of the pope, combined with granting the title of emperor, meant that Albert's position was reinforced in Germany, that the alliance with the Přemyslids was deemed unnecessary, and the alliance with Charles Robert and the papacy was the more desirable.

In 1400, Emperor Wenceslas IV of Germany, half-brother of King Sigismund of Hungary, was dethroned by a group of unsatisfied electors, who crowned Rupert, count of the Palatine, as king.¹¹ One of Wenceslas' opponents was also his brother, Sigismund of Hungary, who was aiming for a more influential role in Germany. In 1402, Sigismund imprisoned Wenceslas and had him proclaim Sigismund as the vicar general of the Holy Roman Empire.¹² Pope Boniface IX, who officially supported Ladislas' claim to the throne of Hungary, did not recognize Rupert until November 1403.¹³ The pope and Sigismund avoided any potential conflicts and solved Hungary's ecclesiastical problems to their mutual benefit. In 1402, however, Ladislas' troops invaded Dalmatia and in July 1403 Ladislas himself landed in Zadar. During that year, Boniface IX officially backed Ladislas by granting him tithes from the Church of Naples and appointing Cardinal Angelo to escort Ladislas to Hungary and make the changes necessary to force the Hungarian Church into accepting Ladislas.¹⁴ Boniface IX tried to avoid any potential conflicts with rulers within his obedience so as not to risk the loss of any political or financial support for Rome, yet, in 1403, Ladislas forced the papal hand and the pope set out to find allies to combat Sigismund.

Boniface VIII ruled a unified Christendom, while Boniface IX's reign was limited to those who kept obedience to Rome. This not only dictated the political and financial capabilities of the Apostolic See, but tapped directly into the moral power that Rome enjoyed. The Western Schism meant that Pope Boniface IX had to be careful when dealing with the secular rulers obedient to him. While the actions of Boniface VIII led directly to Albert switching sides and forming an alliance with Charles Robert, the actions of Boniface IX were more directed by forces he did not have the strength or opportunity to control. While Boniface

¹⁰ Renáta Skorka, "With a Little Help from the Cousins: Charles I and the Habsburg Dukes of Austria during the Interregnum," *The Hungarian Historical Review* 2 (2013): 249.

¹¹ Andreas Büttner, *Der Weg zur Krone: Rituale der Herrschererhebung im spätmittelalterlichen Reich*. Vol. 2. (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2012), 447–76.

¹² "Reichsvikar," in Jorg Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund, Herrscher and der Schwelle zur Neuzeit, 1368–1437* (Munich: Beck, 1996), 108.

¹³ November 1, 1403, *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. 2. (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1999), 417.

¹⁴ Cutolo, *Re Ladislao*, 250–58, April 23 1403; Arnold Esch, *Bonifaz IX. und der Kirchenstaat* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1969), 398.

VIII directed European politics, Boniface IX had to deal with his insecure position in Rome, threats coming from the antipope in Avignon, and the constant financial constraints of the papal curia. This meant that Boniface IX had to take sides openly in conflicts, which led to the weakening of the papal position in Christendom.

The support coming from Germany proved crucial for the success of Charles Robert. Albert received the necessary papal backing and the papal decision to support Charles Robert gave a moral pretext for Albert to break his alliance with the Přemyslids and turn against the Bohemians, which ended in failure instead of success. Even though the pope recognized Rupert, the conflict between Rupert, Ladislav, and Sigismund dragged on until 1409/10 as Rupert stayed the contested emperor until his death in 1410, while Ladislav decided to focus on Italy.

The Pope and the Prelates

During each succession crisis the Apostolic See and the prelates behaved differently. In the first crisis, opposition by the prelates caused the Apostolic See to adapt a more cautious approach by undermining the Hungarian Church's unified opposition of the Angevins. During the second crisis, the prelates often led the opposition successfully or supported royal power, while Rome was mostly disinterested or not involved.

The Apostolic See attempted to support an Angevin pretender favorable to Rome by controlling the clergy of Hungary and replacing its opponents with those loyal to Rome and Naples. The local Church, if united behind a certain pretender, would have been able to resist the pope's attempt. This is why the popes attempted to replace unfavorable prelates with those loyal to them by either waiting for the diocese to become vacant, declining to confirm a candidate elected by the cathedral chapter or transferring opposing prelates. Various circumstances that developed during both succession crises limited the popes to using certain methods and the level of opposition from local forces varied.

In a letter, Paul Šubić ban of Croatia informed Pope Boniface VIII that Croatia had been a papal fiefdom since the time of King Demetrius Zvonimir (r. 1075–1089). According to the letter, Zvonimir had received the crown from Pope Gregory VII in 1076, which meant that the pope had the power to confirm the legitimate king of Hungary. This view was shared by the whole of Hungary; in the words of Paul, "except the clergy and some others."¹⁵ The coalition of

¹⁵ *Paulus banus et Comes Breberiensis, Georgius item comes, ad Bonifacium VIII Romanum Pontificem, mittunt nuncios. Regna Dalmatiae et Croatiae eius esse a Zvonimiri Regis temporibus, ac Papa Gregorio*

the Hungarian prelates brought King Andrew III to the country from his native Venice and had him crowned. This coalition, led by archbishops Lodomer of Esztergom and John of Kalocsa, rejected papal intervention in 1290/91 when Legate John was sent by Pope Nicholas IV to investigate the situation in the kingdom and to work in favor of the Angevins.¹⁶

Thanks to the Šubići, who travelled constantly to Rome and Naples in the 1290s, Pope Boniface VIII was fully apprised of the situation in Hungary. The pope recognized that one way to support the Angevins was to obtain the support of the Hungarian Church. Boniface could refuse to recognize the prelates he did not appoint or wait for an opposing prelate to die and then try to control or appoint a prelate loyal to the papacy.

In 1297 Boniface rejected Archdeacon James of Split as the new archbishop of Split and instead appointed Peter, chaplain of Queen Mary of Naples. In 1298, following the death of Lodomer, the cathedral chapter of Esztergom elected Gregory of Bicske, the bishop of Győr and royal vice-chancellor, but some members of the chapter immediately contested his election. Despite the complaints, the pope did not remove Gregory, but appointed him procurator of the diocese with additional powers, which meant that Gregory became the archbishop in all but name. The reasons for the papal decision were soon visible as Gregory immediately became the strongest opponent of King Andrew III.¹⁷

The Apostolic See's control of the Church became easier when King Andrew and Archbishop John of Kalocsa died in 1301. The pope sent Legate Niccolò Bocassini to investigate the situation in the Kingdom of Hungary and attract support for Charles Robert. Among other prelates, Niccolò was probably able to attract the support of Bishop Michael of Zagreb, a key supporter of Andrew. Before he died, Archbishop John of Kalocsa had crowned the pretender from the Přemyslid dynasty, Wenceslas of Bohemia, as king. This further complicated

VII Hungariae item, ob coronam D. Stephano missam, ac per eum sedi Apostolicae oblatum Regnum. Quare nec alium, horum Regnorum legitimum regem esse posse, nisi qui a Romano Pontifice inauguretur. Nunciant totius Hungariae hunc sensum esse, clero solum excepto, ac quibusdam exiguis. Baltazar Adam Krčelić, *Povijest Stolne crkve zagrebačke* [History of the Church of Zagreb] (Zagreb: Institut za suvremenu povijest, 1994), 114.

¹⁶ Pál Engel, *The Realm of St. Stephen: A History of Medieval Hungary, 895–1526* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 110; Bálint Hóman, *Gli Angioni di Napoli in Ungheria* (Rome: Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1938), 82–4.

¹⁷ Šandor Szentgyörgy, *Borba Anževinaca za prijestolje ugarsko-hrvatsko do prve krunidbe Karla Roberta* [The Angevin struggle for the throne of Hungary-Croatia until the first coronation of Charles Robert] (Zagreb: C. Albrechta, 1893), 31–2, 34–5; see also Skorka, “With a Little Help,” 243–44.

things as Charles Robert's opposition in the kingdom was backed by some of the clergy. With the death of John and the papal appointment of Stephen as the new archbishop, Rome controlled all three archbishoprics in the kingdom: Esztergom, Kalocsa, and Split. This meant that it became easier to obtain the full support of the Hungarian Church for Charles Robert.

These newly appointed prelates were expected to work in favor of Charles Robert. Gregory of Esztergom was active in opposing King Andrew from the start of his term. In May, 1303, the pope officially recognized Charles Robert as king and released everyone from their oaths to Wenceslas. From that point on most of the Hungarian prelates switched to the Angevin side. Gregory, archbishop of Esztergom, stayed in Rome because he was unpopular in Hungary. Most of the pro-Angevin work was done by two people probably perceived as the most influential members of the clergy in Hungary. Michael, the new archbishop of Esztergom, had been a supporter of the late King Andrew and his support for Charles carried a great deal of weight; Stephen was the archbishop of the second most important diocese in the kingdom. Michael and Stephen delivered the papal decision their to suffragans in the kingdom.¹⁸ Following the papal proclamation, Peter of Split, through the threat excommunication, forced the councils of the Dalmatian cities to officially accept Charles.¹⁹

The situation in the succession crisis of 1382 to 1409 was slightly different. Bishop Paul of Zagreb was the first to stand up in favor of Charles of Durazzo, the Angevin pretender from Naples. Paul led his family, the Horvati, to resist Queen Mary and even invited Charles to come to Hungary, which the king accepted. This was all happening in the period when conflict erupted between Pope Urban VI and Charles of Durazzo. Although on good terms at first, after Urban invested Charles with Naples the two came into conflict. Even though Charles had initially secured his throne by defeating Urban, the pope excommunicated Charles and his entire family.²⁰

This is why the papacy did not intervene in any way in the rebellion in the Kingdom of Hungary during the rule of Pope Urban. The prelates played a key role in fermenting the revolt against Queen Mary. If one can believe the words of the chronicle, it was Bishop Paul who persuaded Charles to come to Hungary. In a speech, Paul stressed that Charles was the legitimate ruler, it was his blood right

¹⁸ CDC VIII, 49–50, June 11, 1303.

¹⁹ CDC VIII, 60–2, August 22, 1303.

²⁰ István Petrovics, "Hungary and the Adriatic Coast in the Middle Ages: Power Aspirations and Dynastic Contacts of the Arpadian and Angevin Kings in the Adriatic Region," *Chronica* 5 (2005): 71–72.

to succeed to the throne, and that Charles could not trust Pope Urban VI as the popes only sought their own gain.²¹

Paul, who Queen Mary viewed as the leader of the opposition, appears to have been the key person in the rebellion.²² Even after Charles' death, Paul often travelled to Naples to report on the development of the revolt in Croatia as well as to receive fresh orders. He tried to persuade Queen Margaret that she should abandon Naples in favor of Hungary, where support for Ladislas' rule was higher. His mission almost succeeded, but was thwarted by the rebellious Neapolitan barons, supporters of Duke Louis II, and Venice, at the time allies of King Sigismund, Queen Mary's husband.²³ Soon Urban died, and the new pope, Boniface IX, changed the papal policy toward the Angevins, making their rule in Naples more secure.

Paul's rebellion led to a phenomenon characteristic in Hungary in the period of the second succession crisis, but completely unknown in the first: The appearance of "contested prelates." The secular rulers tried to control the diocese directly by influencing the election of the new prelate or opposed the current prelate by having a person loyal to the ruler appointed as prelate. The Western Schism made this possible; the popes did not want unnecessary conflict with the king and, also, every appointment brought gold to the Roman curia. After Paul's rebellion, the Hungarian rulers were careful to choose whom they would appoint to the diocese of Zagreb and the pope confirmed the royal nominees. It also meant that deposed bishops could refuse the decision by the king and by the pope, as Paul continued to style himself the bishop of Zagreb even though he was deposed in 1386 and another prelate (John Smilo) was appointed instead.

Even with the change in Rome when Boniface IX replaced Urban VI and an alliance was formed with Ladislas, the Apostolic See remained out of the conflict in Hungary. The rebellion, led by a coalition of barons and prelates, often reignited despite being quelled by Sigismund several times. Prelates played a certain role in the succession crisis, but until 1403 the rebellions were not carried out in collusion with Rome.

²¹ For Paul's speech see Krčelić, *Povijest Stolne crkve zagrebačke*, 166–167.

²² Mary's biographer, Lorenzo, described the bishop of Zagreb as the "head of all evil." Ilona Ferenczi, "Poetry of Politics: Queen Mary of Hungary in Lorenzo Monaci's *Carmen* (1387)," MA thesis (Budapest: CEU, 2008), 35.

²³ Šime Ljubić, *Listine o odnošajih između južnoga Slavenstva i Mletačke Republike* [Charters about relationship between South Slavs and the Venetian Republic], vol. 4 (Zagreb: JAZU, 1874): 261–262, 10 February 1389.

Yet Rome was certainly informed about the situation in the kingdom as persecuted prelates found shelter there. Sigismund exiled Archbishop Peter Matafaris of Zadar in 1397.²⁴ He was soon followed by John III of Zagreb, who the king forced to resign following the conflict with the diocese of Zagreb. Although it has been assumed that John participated in a rebellion that was brewing in the kingdom in that year, it is difficult to prove. Like Peter, John found shelter with Pope Boniface IX and the pope later had John installed as the archbishop of Kalocsa. It is not likely that Sigismund would have accepted the appointment of a person who had already rebelled against the king to the second most important church position in the kingdom.²⁵

The true test came in 1403 when Boniface IX was forced to support Ladislav openly by intervening in the Hungarian Church. Legate Angelo tried to implement the old papal tactics of moving undesirable prelates out of the way by transferring them or replacing them with prelates loyal to Rome. The archbishop of Kalocsa, John, was again named bishop of Zagreb in an attempt to oust the strongest supporter of King Sigismund, Bishop Eberhard of Alben.²⁶ Due to the resistance of King Sigismund and his prelates, this tactic failed and did not significantly help Ladislav. Sigismund proclaimed a royal decree, the so-called *placetum regium*, limiting the influence of Rome in the kingdom. Sigismund ousted most of the prelates disloyal to him, while Eberhard, who had remained faithful to Sigismund during the problematic period of 1403, created a list of rebels that the king used to reward and punish the nobility.²⁷

Conclusion

Because of the help by the Apostolic See, Charles Robert was successful. Despite having the backing of the Holy See, Ladislav of Naples failed. The success of first pretender and failure of the second depended on their connections with the Holy See and papal help.

²⁴ Mladen Ančić, “Od tradicije “sedam pobuna” do dragovoljnih mletačkih podanika: Razvojna putanja Zadra u prvome desetljeću 15. stoljeća [From the tradition of the “seven rebellions” to voluntary Venetian subjects: The development of Zadar in the first decade of the fifteenth century],” *Povijesni prilozi* 37 (2009): 51.

²⁵ Petrović, “Popes, Prelates, Pretenders,” 103.

²⁶ Ferdo Šišić, ed., “Nekoliko isprava s početka 15. stoljeća [Several charters from the beginning of the fifteenth century],” *Starine* 39 (1938): 209–211, June 24 1403.

²⁷ Andrija Lukinović, ed., *Povijesni spomenici Zagrebačke biskupije: 1395–1420* [Historical monuments of the bishopric of Zagreb], vol. 5 (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost: Arhiv Hrvatske, 1992), 286–288, June 19 1406.



The Role of the Church in the Two Succession Crises in Hungary

Queens Mary and Margaret maintained close contacts with the popes. Mary helped secure the support of both the Šubići and Pope Boniface VIII. Mary enabled her grandson Charles Robert to obtain the invitation to legitimize his attempt to claim Hungary, while Margaret helped Ladislav receive official recognition by the pope. Margaret's resistance to Pope Urban VI led her ultimately to be victorious and preserve the throne for her son, Ladislav of Naples. The queen outlived Urban and saw a change on the papal throne as the newly elected Boniface IX immediately backed Ladislav and helped him strengthen his rule over Naples.

The position of the popes in Christendom dictated the relationships that Boniface VIII and Boniface IX developed with the Angevins. Boniface VIII's behavior derived from his belief in the superiority of spiritual over secular power, with the pope as judge over all rulers; Boniface IX was in a difficult political and financial situation. Boniface VIII ruled over a unified Christendom and his actions were deliberate and gradual. In the period of Boniface IX the Church was dominated by the Western Schism, the moral power of the popes suffered and this also reflected on the prelates. The behavior of Boniface IX was a result of the Western Schism, the threat by the anti-pope from Avignon, and the fact that he only had a few supporters.

The popes tried to attract international support, namely, from Germany, Hungary's neighbor. Both Boniface VIII and Boniface IX approached German rulers. The popes withheld support for the elected German kings, Boniface VIII for Albert and Boniface IX for Rupert, until the time came to try to obtain help for the Angevin pretenders, in which cases the papal recognition of the German kings as rulers was closely connected with the pretenders' attacks on Hungary. Albert's assistance proved to be invaluable as he helped Charles Robert push back the Přemyslids, but Rupert's help was limited as he was restricted by combating the opposition in Germany. Albert ruled a unified kingdom; when Rupert's rule was opposed by the deposed king, Wenceslas, and his supporters in the kingdom, it limited Rupert's support for the Angevins.

The true test of the papal-Angevin alliance came when the pretenders sailed to Dalmatia to claim the throne. Boniface VIII advised caution and did not back Charles Robert officially, but summoned a hearing in which he proclaimed Charles Robert as king. Boniface IX put aside the pretext of legal action and sided openly with Ladislav, even going as far as granting the king the tithes of the Church and sending a legate to accompany Ladislav, thus showing that the Holy See backed Ladislav politically, financially, and in religious matters.

The close proximity of the Hungarian high clergy to the royal power led the key prelates of the kingdom to work actively in favor of their candidates and

openly resist influences from Rome. In both crises, the important prelates came from Zagreb, which lay in a strategic position connecting Croatia with Hungary and thus was a transit point between Naples and the throne of Hungary. Prelates were often appointed on the ruler's recommendation and the links they had with the royal power were stronger than with Rome as the rulers reinforced their links through granting privileges, lands, and positions in the kingdom.

Pope Boniface VIII recognized the potential resistance from the prelates and carefully avoided negative reactions from Hungary. The pope targeted vacant dioceses or those where the prelates were newly elected and needed his confirmation. These prelates needed legitimacy and depended fully on Rome. This is where Boniface IX made a mistake. He targeted already confirmed prelates, mostly those he had personally recognized earlier. Both Boniface VIII and Boniface IX had legal backing for their decisions, but Boniface IX did not have the support of the prelates, who could view the papal decisions as unjust. Boniface VIII avoided resistance from the prelates by seizing the opportunity and removing the prelates gradually. Boniface IX took no such move until he was forced to do it by Ladislas' landing in Zadar in 1403. Hence, the reasons behind the success of the first pretender to the Hungarian throne and the failure of the second can be seen fully by contrasting the actions of Boniface VIII and Boniface IX.