



## “The King in the Saddle”: The Árpád Dynasty and Itinerant Kingship in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries\*

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The rulers of the Árpád dynasty spent a great deal of time on the road traveling from one royal castle, palace, mansion, monastery, or bishop’s seat to another. The ruler’s travel and personal presence were an important way of exercising power during this period. However, few sources have survived from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, making it difficult for historians to do much research on the travel of the Árpád kings. The Kingdom of Hungary was a large country and it is necessary to determine what was the main power center and where the periphery territories were located. For the most part, the Árpád kings stayed in the central region, where the most important royal settlements, the oldest monasteries, and the first bishoprics were located, and they visited the peripheral parts of the country only sporadically. The king met every year with his faithful magnates, bishops, abbots, and so on, and these important events was included various ceremonies, rituals, banquets, court proceedings, conferences with political elites, and gifts or donations.

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Early medieval monarchs spent a great deal of time traveling from one castle, palace, mansion, monastery, or episcopal seat to another. The presence of the ruler was an important element in the use and maintenance of power in this period. Kings did not have a single main seat. The royal court was constantly on the move. Kings had several centers of power in the territories they controlled, and they frequently moved between them with their courts or entourages (*iter regis*). Medieval monarchs most often traveled for economic reasons, including the use of products and services from royal estates in the individual regions, and also for reasons of politics or power. Their journeys were elements of “highly ritualized” practice, whether they were the consequences of a military campaign, the negotiation of peace treaties, the reconciliation or settlement of disputes,

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important Christian holidays, countrywide assemblies, church synods, or hunts. When he traveled to his estates, the centers of power, or an ecclesiastical center, the king took the main royal roads and their turn-offs, which formed the “road network” of the country. The use and concentration of these roads depended on whether they were located in the central territories or in peripheral areas. The royal roads connected the monarch’s residential palaces, mansions, monasteries, and episcopal seats. Sometimes, the monarch only stopped in these places for short periods of time, but depending on his needs and material provisions, he sometimes stayed for much longer. During these travels and sojourns at individual places the king ruled, made decisions, issued judgments, and met with the political elites of the country (princes, magnates, abbots, bishops). Therefore, the royal presence was nearly always accompanied by various ceremonies and rituals.<sup>1</sup>

### *Itinerant Kingship*

Research on royal travel is closely linked to research on medieval roads, the central and peripheral regions of the given kingdom, the favorite territories of the monarch, the reconstruction of the network of royal estates (including ecclesiastical centers and monasteries), which contained royal palaces or agricultural mansions that served as residences of the king or his family, and the monarch’s right to supplies, hospitality, and services.<sup>2</sup> Historians who focus on the period use the terms itinerant kingship, *Reisekönigtum*, and peripatetic kingship to refer to the “on the road” form of rule of medieval monarchs. This manner of rule, where the king performed his practical duties and symbolic demonstrations of power by occasionally or constantly traveling around his estates, was used, for instance, by the monarchs of the Holy Roman Empire. The movement of the royal court around the country had a number of common elements, but the individual dynasties had different specific expressions that changed over time and were adapted to new circumstances. Not all monarchs traveled with the same frequency, and itinerant kingship was hardly the only manner of rule and execution of power. Unlike military campaigns or other journeys abroad, so-called itinerant kingship refers to the regular visits of the king to more or less the same places at more or less the same time of the year, for example

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1 Brühl, “Remarques”; Perroy, “Carolingian,” 133, 138–40; Nelson, “Rulers,” 105–6, 112–13, 116; Bernhardt, “On the Road,” 303–6; Bachrach, “Exercise,” 393–95; Reuter, “Regemque,” 129, 133–37; Innes, “People,” 397–98, 409, 415–16, 423–27, 434–35; Airlie, “The Palace,” 2–3, 7–8.

2 Rösener, “Zur Topographie”; Iversen, “Royal villas.”

the chief religious holidays, the holidays of the patrons of important churches, the countrywide assemblies, hunts, etc. The personal presence of the monarch during his travels to the individual parts of the country was an important channel of communication between the central power and local sites of power.<sup>3</sup>

According to historians, itinerant kingships had these common characteristic elements: a predominantly subsistence economy, the sovereign authority of the monarch, which was fostered through personal relationships, the magical or sacral perception of the ruler (or dynasty), and very often little dependence on the written word in the management of the country. It was in such societies that the ruler constantly traveled through his territory with his court. His personal presence gave legitimacy to his position, emphasized his majesty, and fostered relationships with loyal locals. The extent to which this style of the exercise of power was applied, the frequency of royal visits and the favored territories or places changed during specific periods. To a great extent, this was determined by gradual changes in the form of government, which were related to the conditions within the administrative institutions, new forms of representation of the monarch, changes of dynasties, and the monarch (some traveled more, some less).<sup>4</sup> For instance, the Carolingians traveled the country but routinely stayed in their favorite residences for longer periods of time. From these places, they sent written instructions to surrounding parts of the country. Their arrival and meetings with important figures were accompanied by political rituals that used symbolic expressions during public events, such as important church holidays, countrywide assemblies, etc.<sup>5</sup>

According to the secondary literature, the East Frankish, Ottonian, and Salian rulers traveled much more than the Carolingians. During their reigns, they spent nearly half of their time on the road. They rarely stayed in one place for longer than a few days, though they did sometimes remain for several weeks. As part of the ways they ruled, they also sent instructions in writing and by messenger, but far less frequently than their predecessors. The power and position of these kings were based to a much greater extent on their personal presence and the sanctity of their person. For them, travel was an effective

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3 Peyer, "Das Reisekönigtum," 1–5; Helmarath, "Reisekönigtum," 106–10; Bernhardt, *Itinerant*, 45–75; Reuter, "Regemque," 129–30, 133–44; Bernhardt, "On the Road," 304–6; Ehlers, "Having the King," 1–8; McKitterick, "A King," 146–52, 166–68; Zotz, "Kingship," 316–17, 327–28.

4 Nelson, "Kingship," 389–98, 407–17, 422–30; Nelson, "Rulers," 96–97; Zotz, "Kingship," 317–18.

5 Helmarath, "Reisekönigtum," 110–15; Leyser, "Ottonian," 746–49; McKitterick, "A King," 145–46, 150–53, 166–68; Reuter, "Regemque," 129, 133–36.

way of fostering power and winning loyalty. It was a demonstration of their exceptional position of authority. Through the regular personal appearances of the monarch, the individual parts of the large kingdom were connected. During the newly elected kings' travels around the country (*Königsumritt*), the rulers won approval for their ascendance to the throne, mainly in the most important centers of power and at local assemblies of the nobility, and they also solved disputes and revolts and received honors and oaths of loyalty.<sup>6</sup> Over the course of a year, they ceremoniously arrived on important church holidays or at important meetings in the episcopal seats, monasteries, and cities (*adventus regis*). They publicly demonstrated the sanctity of their royal position through their presence at masses and the symbolic wearing of the crown. In his visits to these places, the monarch executed his political and judicial duties, for example, rewarding people who were loyal to him, participating in rituals of reconciliation, and taking part in the punishment of enemies.<sup>7</sup> The planning and organization of the journeys to the various locations particularly depended on the material possibilities along the selected route. These were provided by the royal estates and the right held by the king to hospitality, provided by the royal church institutions, such as bishoprics and monasteries.<sup>8</sup>

### *Iter Regis and Hungarian Medieval Sources*

The aim of research on travel during an itinerant kingship is not to compile a complete itinerary of the travels of the individual Árpád kings. A reconstruction of the journeys undertaken by the king rather encompasses a description of the events, rituals, and ceremonies connected with his presence in the important ecclesiastical or worldly seats during Christian holidays or during other important events such as the conclusions of peace treaties, rituals of reconciliation, countrywide assemblies, etc. It is equally interesting to observe the changes in the preference for different seats or even whole territories and the construction of new residences or monasteries, which frequently took place during the rule of the individual kings. This text is an attempt to outline possible outcomes of research on the reigns of the Árpád kings in the eleventh and twelfth centuries,

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6 Schmidt, "Königsumritt"; Bernhardt, "King."

7 Leyser, "Ottonian," 732–33, 746–49; Leyser, "Ritual," 196, 201–2; Ehlers, "Having the King," 2–16, 26; Bachrach, "Exercise," 394–95; Reuter, "Regemque," 129–44; Althoff, "The Variability," 71–74, 86–87; Nelson, "Rulers," 96–97, 105–11, 119–20; Roach, "Hosting," 34–35, 42–45.

8 On the bishop's seats, see Schlesinger, "Bischofssitze."

when some of their administrative duties and the symbolic demonstration of their power took place through continuous travel around their kingdom.

Some historians who have studied this period have only briefly stated that, like other monarchs, the Hungarian kings traveled around their kingdom with their court.<sup>9</sup> But they have not considered the precise destinations to which the Árpád rulers traveled, when they traveled, how long they stayed, or what was the intention of their visit was. Similarly, they have also failed to consider whether the Árpád kings stayed for long periods of time only in the central territories or also took more frequent and longer sojourns to the peripheral areas of the kingdom. Although these are very important questions related to research on the journeys undertaken by the kings, in the case of the Kingdom of Hungary, it is difficult to find reliable answers.<sup>10</sup> As far as their frequency and diversity (chronicles, legends, charters, etc.) are concerned, Hungarian sources from the eleventh and twelfth centuries are rather limited in comparison to the sources for other countries.<sup>11</sup> It is difficult to find and compare information about the itinerant kingship of the Árpád kings with itinerant kingship in the surrounding countries, and one is compelled to rely on the isolated mentions from Hungarian medieval narrative and hagiographic sources or law-codes and charters. Very few documents have survived, and this prevents historians from engaging in thorough or penetrating research, so I highlight only some of the main points related to the travels of the kings of Árpád House.<sup>12</sup>

Most of the events described in the Hungarian Chronicle Composition of the fourteenth century take place in the central part of the Kingdom of Hungary. This Chronicle Composition was based on older sources that acquired

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9 Bernát Kumorovitz is one of the few historians to have dealt with this topic in detail. Kumorovitz, “Buda.”

10 Within the framework of itinerant kingship, it would also be appropriate to examine the royal manorial organization and the system of royal servants (*condicionarii*). However, the study is primarily concerned with the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and the greater number of sources on the subject date only from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (see for example Kis, *A királyi szolgálonépi*, 10–86), so this interesting issue is not considered in this text. On this subject, see Györffy, “Zur Frage der Herkunft, 1 and 2,” 39–83 and 311–37. Within the broader Central European context, see Krzemieńska and Třeštík, “Zur Problematik der Dienstleute,” 70–103; Kučera, “Anmerkungen zur Dienstorganisation,” 113–27, and Modzelewski, *Organizacja gospodarstwa*, 5–75.

11 Engel, *The Realm*, xviii; Klaniczay, “The Birth.” Caution must be exercised when comparing historical circumstances in different countries. It is necessary to consider the time period is involved, the different geographical environments, often specific developments, the state of the sources, and the traditions in the scholarship. Wickham, “Problems,” 6–11. See also Veres, “A magyar,” 361–62.

12 Györffy, “A Case”; Hunyadi, “...scripta manent”; Berend, “Historical.”

a coherent textual form, known as the lost *Gesta Ungarorum* or *Gesta Ungarorum Vetera*, sometime within the second half of the eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century. These earliest *Gesta Ungarorum*, however, were heavily rewritten, supplemented and interpolated in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth century. As they were also adapted, depending on the needs of the individual Hungarian kings, a certain degree of caution is necessary when using information from this source.<sup>13</sup> The Chronicle Composition underwent several redactions and not all the information is trustworthy, but the places visited by the Árpád kings, where they spent time and celebrated Christian holidays are certainly not made up. They took place in the real geographic space of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, in localities that were important to the monarchs. Therefore, for research into *iter regis*, we consider the references in this source related to the journeys of the kings, princes and their courts and the information related to the localities and territories that they visited to be reliable information which was probably already included in the earliest version of the lost *Gesta Ungarorum*.

We know that the Hungarian kings traveled, we know some of their favorite places, where they built palaces and mansions, but the available sources only provide a rough outline of where the rulers of the Árpád dynasty traveled and where they stayed most often.<sup>14</sup> In the Chronicle Composition or in some Hungarian medieval legends important seats are not mentioned so often (e.g. Esztergom, Székesfehérvár, Veszprém, Óbuda, Visegrád)<sup>15</sup> and only a few references to royal palaces,<sup>16</sup> hunting or agricultural mansions,<sup>17</sup> monasteries and collegiate chapters appear.<sup>18</sup> Although very few sources from the eleventh and

13 The source value of individual chapters of the Chronicle Composition, which relate to the period of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, is still the subject of historical research. See Gerics, *Legkorábbi gesta*, 63–70; Györfly, *Krónikáink*, 3–10, 183–88; Szócs, “A 14. századi krónikaszerkesztmény,” 59–64, 87; Thoróczkay, “A magyar krónikairódalom,” 23–26, 30–31; Veszprémy, “Korhúség és forrásérték,” 809–10; Bak and Grzesik, “The Text,” 7–16.

14 Kumorovitz, “Buda,” 12–16; Veres, “A magyar,” 355–58, 363–64.

15 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 13, 268; Cap. 23, 281; Cap. 28, 290; Cap. 64, 313–14; Cap. 66–67, 316–18; Cap. 112, 378; Cap. 124, 394; Cap. 133, 407; Cap. 170, 462.

16 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 92, 353–54; Cap. 98, 363; Cap. 146, 426; *Legenda sancti Gerhardi episcopi II*, Cap. 5, 487–88. See also Syn. Szab., 41, *DRMH I*, 59; *AA, His. Iero.*, Liber II, Cap. 3–4, 64–65.

17 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 85, 343; Cap. 93, 357; Cap. 96, 360; Cap. 113, 378; Cap. 114, 379; Cap. 121, 388; Cap. 144, 423; Cap. 148, 427–28; *Legenda sancti Gerhardi episcopi II*, Cap. 5, 487–88. See also *AA, His. Iero.*, Liber II, Cap. 3, 64–65; Cap. 4, 66–67.

18 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 88, 345; Cap. 93, 357; Cap. 139, 416; Cap. 141, 420; Cap. 148, 427–28; *Legenda maior sancti Stephani regis*, Cap. 8, 383; Cap. 9, 385; Cap. 6, 381; Cap. 10, 385; *Legenda minor sancti Stephani regis*, Cap. 3, 395; Cap. 4, 396; *Legenda S. Emerici ducis*, Cap. 2, 452; Cap. 3, 453; *Legenda Sancti Ladislai regis*, Cap. 5, 519; Cap. 8, 522–23; *Legenda sancti Gerhardi episcopi II*, Cap. 9, 493; Cap. 12, 498; Cap. 15, 503.

twelfth centuries have been preserved, the kings may have regularly visited other locations, as evidenced, for example, by some documents from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. However, it should not be forgotten that the topography of power changed over the centuries as individual monarchs abandoned or less frequently visited traditional seats and built new residences in other places.<sup>19</sup>

From the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century come two itineraries by Károly Ráth and Béla Sebestyén, in which they also recorded the journeys and stays of the kings of Árpád.<sup>20</sup> Their compilers acquired information from narrative sources, royal charters (often also forged) or literature, and it is not possible to verify the credibility of some of the data without mentioning the source. Only a few royal charters have survived from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, some of which were not drawn up by the royal chancellery, but were only sealed by the monarch at a later date. Some of them are either forged or interpolated and their form is often known only from later copies. Only very rarely is the place of issue mentioned in these documents and great caution is therefore needed when using unique information from these oldest documents about the places where the Árpád rulers stayed.<sup>21</sup>

According to the register of royal charters compiled by Imre Szentpétery, 192 documents have been preserved from the period 1000–1200. Of this number, approximately 48 were forged or not very reliable, and only 17 documents (including forgeries) mention the place of issue. These were Győr, Székesfehérvár (3x), Óbuda (2x), Pécs, Szeged, Somogy, Zadar, Vác, Nitra (Nyitra), Esztergom (2x), Eger, Veszprém and Csepel-sziget.<sup>22</sup> According to György Györffy, 73 royal charters were issued between 1000 and 1131, of which 23 were forgeries and only three of them have the place of issue. They were Sóly (near Veszprém) and the already mentioned Győr and Somogy. Of the forgeries that have been made after 1526, these were Óbuda (2x), Szeged and Zadar (Zára).<sup>23</sup> In the selection register of charters from 1001–1196 by the same author, only Székesfehérvár was as the place where the royal document was issued. Other non-royal charters, issued in the presence of the monarch in 1134, 1146 and 1152, mention locations such as Oradea (Nagyvárad), Szentendre (near Óbuda)<sup>24</sup> and Şemlacu Mare

19 Jong and Theuws, “Topographies.”

20 Ráth, *A magyar*, 1–13; Sebestyén, *A magyar*, 13–17.

21 Szentpétery, “A datum,” 127; Györffy, “Die ungarischen.”

22 *RA*, vol. 1/1, 1–58; *CDSI*, vol. 1, no. 63<sup>+++</sup>, 60; no. 72<sup>+++</sup>, 69; no. 74<sup>+</sup>, 73; no. 85<sup>++</sup>, 82; no. 90, 86; no. 99, 93.

23 *DHA*, vol. 1, 19–424; appendix, 435–37.

24 *ÁMTF*, vol. 4, 696–97.

(Mezősomlyó).<sup>25</sup> In these cases the king (his chancellery) issued, confirmed or sealed the charter when he was staying in the main royal and episcopal residences, royal castles, Dalmatian towns, collegiate chapters or other favorite places near important seats.<sup>26</sup> Because of their small numbers, these mentions are not very representative if one is seeking to learn more about how often the Árpád rulers visited individual sites during this period.<sup>27</sup>

We only have information about the movements of the royal court from rare mentions in narrative sources and charters—if they include their place of issue, which was not common practice in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. According to the precious few references, we have information that the Hungarian kings nearly always stayed in important seats, monasteries and royal castles of *medium regni* or in its vicinity. These sources, however, may give the impression that monarchs always spent their time in the central part of the kingdom. But these sources are not a representative sample, they only record several important events from the times of the Árpád dynasty (coronations, meetings of rulers and funerals). From the few mentions we do know where the ruler was in a particular year, month or day, but we know almost nothing about most of the trips and sojourns of the Hungarian kings. Like the majority of medieval monarchs, the Árpád rulers stayed mostly in the chief center of power of the kingdom where had the best opportunities for travel in this area - a dense road network, plenty of royal estates (palaces, mansions, castles), which provided them with accommodation and supplies for the “court on the road,” royal monasteries or episcopal seats, etc.<sup>28</sup>

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25 *ChAH*, 49–50, 58, 61, 84–85; Györffy, “Die ungarischen,” 263–64. On private medieval charters certified with the royal seal, see Veres, “A magyar,” 364–69.

26 See Györffy, “Die Anfänge”; Györffy, “Die ungarischen.”

27 In documents from the first of the half thirteenth century, there are more references to places where kings, queens, or other family members stayed. Often, there were, in addition to important seats such as these, places that are not mentioned at all or only exceptionally in previous periods. For example, *Insula Bubalarum*, Isle of Hares, Erked, Szatmár (today’s part of Satu Mare), Verőce, Segesd, Tekov (Bars), Krupina (Korpona), Hrhov (Görgő), Sárospatak, Zvolen (Zólyom), Bereg, Šariš (Sáros), and many others. These sites may have been visited by the Árpád rulers as early as the twelfth century, or even earlier, but some of them may have become favorite places of the rulers only during the thirteenth century. *RA*, vol. 1/1, no. 296, 97; no. 431, 139; no. 458, 147; no. 467, 150–51; no. 483, 155; no. 485, 155–56; no. 500, 159; no. 528, 167; *RA*, vol. ½, no. 604, 185; no. 638, 195; no. 645, 197; no. 731, 220; no. 732–25, 218; no. 727, 219; no. 758–59, 226–27; no. 765, 229; no. 777, 233; no. 790, 237; no. 793, 237–38; no. 813, 243; no. 818, 244–45; no. 934, 287–88; no. 744, 223; no. 991, 308; *RA*, vol. 1/3, no. 1165, 357; no. 1220, 374; *CDSI*, vol. 2, no. 199, 132; no. 200, 133; *RD*, no. 1, 21–22; no. 12, 27; no. 32, 36; no. 39, 40; no. 49–52, 46–48.

28 See Font, *Koloman*, 49–50; Veres, “A magyar,” 368–69, 373–81. For details on royal roads in the Kingdom of Hungary, see Szilágyi, *On the Road*, 18–24, 53–62, 76–84, 86–98, 101–3, 107–20, 186–96.

*The Central Region and the Peripheries*

In the secondary literature on the regular journeys undertaken by the rulers of the Kingdom of Hungary, we need to indicate what should be considered the central territory and what was the periphery.<sup>29</sup> It is also important to consider where the centers of power were and whether they underwent change. For example, with regards to the travels of rulers from the Holy Roman Empire (Ottonians) around the country, Eckhard Müller-Mertens identified four types of geopolitical regions or zones: the core/central regions, the remote regions, the transit zones, and the zones of proximity, depending on their importance and the frequency of the king's visits.<sup>30</sup> The central regions were those where the king spent the most time and where the greatest level of material support, in the form of royal estates, could be found. They were the most important centers of power, where people from other parts of the country gathered when they went to see the king. The central regions could change or new ones could spring up (in which new residential palaces were sometimes built), depending on the popularity of a specific area with an individual monarch or a successor.<sup>31</sup>

Hungarian medieval sources most frequently mention the presence of the kings in the *medium regni* or in its vicinity. The most important royal and ecclesiastical centers were located there, along with the highest number of monasteries, which led to the densest road network. This contributed to the founding of the first bishoprics in these centers. The remote regions were those where the king's power and presence was limited (mostly border or peripheral territories). There was a lack of material resources to allow a longer stay by the monarch, and also fewer royal centers of power, so the kings only visited them sporadically and under exceptional circumstances. The deficiencies in these territories were, to a certain extent, compensated for by the royal monasteries that were gradually built in them. An example of this, in the Kingdom of Hungary, was Transylvania, which, in the narrower sense, is always considered to be a territory, an administratively distinct unit, in the available sources. They

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29 Bartlett, "Heartland"; Remensnyder, "Topographies," 195–97; Guarini Fasano, "Center," 74–75, 95–96. See Veres, "A magyar," 358–63.

30 Müller-Mertens, *Die Reichsstruktur*, 101–24, 133–48. See Bernhardt, *Itinerant*, 60–63, 65–67; Bernhardt, "On the Road," 307–8.

31 Leyser, "Ottonian," 746–49; Airlie, "The Palace," 263–64, 275–76; Innes, "People," 410–12, 419–22, 426–27; Bartlett, "Heartland."

were also wooded, hilly or frontier regions (*confinia*),<sup>32</sup> which had originally also served as royal forests (hunting areas).<sup>33</sup>

In the time of the Árpád dynasty, there were no changes in the central region. In other words, there was nothing that could be compared with, for instance, the case of Saxony, a marginal region, which became a central region during the reign of the Ottonians.<sup>34</sup> The transit zones were narrow strips of territory around important roads which the kings used when traveling to other parts of the country or to other centers of power outside the central region. In the Kingdom of Hungary, these centers may have been found in the territories between the Danube River and the Tisza River, which connected the *medium regni*, for instance, with Bihar and Transylvania and, from the time of Ladislaus I, the territory beyond the Drava River in the direction of Dalmatia and Slavonia-Croatia. They may also have been found in the territories through which royal roads led to the episcopal seats, royal mansions, and hunting areas to the south, north, and west, outside the *medium regni*. And finally, the zones of proximity were the adjacent territories where the kings had their favorite haunts (in particular, the bishoprics and royal palaces) located on the margins of the central regions. In the Kingdom of Hungary, this may have been, for example, the territory between the Danube River and the Tisza River (e.g. Vác, Kalocsa, Tiszavárkony, etc.).

If the king began to travel more frequently from the center to marginal parts of the country which previously had been less often visited, the importance of the remote regions grew markedly, as did the importance of the transit and proximity zones. This is clearly shown by the more frequent donations made to the older centers of power, the construction of new royal residences, and the foundation of monasteries in these territories. For example, when King Coloman was in the Dalmatian city of Zadar in 1101, he stayed at palace, who had commissioned previously built there.<sup>35</sup> Dalmatia became part of the Kingdom of Hungary only during his reign, and so he established a new residence in this city, which he then used when he came to Zadar.

The Árpád rulers certainly built such royal palaces at other important places within their kingdom. Within the political geography, these grand residences, which were often edifices of several stories which sometimes included a tower

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32 Zsoldos, “Confinium.”

33 Hudáček, “Silva Bereg.”

34 Ehlers, “Having the King,” 15–16, 26; Bernhardt, “On the Road,” 307–10.

35 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 146, 426.

and fortification, were physical embodiments of royal power. Through their architecture and their external and internal decoration (paintings, tapestries, etc.), they were also symbolic expressions of the king's authority in these parts of the country during his absence.<sup>36</sup> According to Thomas of Split, Coloman visited the Dalmatian city of Split (Spalato), probably in 1102, where citizens received him respectfully after a time. The burghers of Split allocated a tower on the eastern edge of the city fortifications to Coloman, where the king accommodated his deputy (*dux*), together with the military garrison, which was in charge of the collection of the royal fee.<sup>37</sup> Coloman and his court visited the Dalmatian cities (Trogir [Trau] and Zadar) several times, for example, in 1102, 1105, 1108, and 1111. Later, Béla II, Géza II, and Stephen III also stayed there.<sup>38</sup>

### *Medium Regni*

The center of power for the rulers of the Árpád dynasty was in the territory of the former Roman province Pannonia, and some sources therefore continue to refer to it as *Pannonia*, *medium Ungarie* or *caput regni*, or sometimes just as *Hungaria*. In the secondary literature, one smaller part of this territory is most often referred to as *medium regni*.<sup>39</sup> Grand Prince Géza, followed by his son Vajk (Stephen I) and other Hungarian kings, most often stayed here, in this center of power of the kingdom. Important royal seats existed here, along with the oldest monasteries and first bishoprics to be founded.<sup>40</sup> In addition to these important seats, the sources sometimes mention, usually only once, places which cannot always be located and the importance of which for the kings cannot always be determined. As the monarchs spent time at these places, they may have been important sites that the Árpád kings regularly visited. In this period, the seat of the kingdom was the so-called traveling court, and the power center was wherever the monarch was staying.<sup>41</sup>

36 Reuter, "Regemque," 140–41; Airlie, "The Palace," 256–61, 277–79, 286.

37 *Thomae archidiaconi*, Cap. 17, 95; Cap. 18, 99.

38 Györffy, "A XII. századi," 47–50; Steindorff, *Die dalmatinischen*, 11–25; Szeberényi, "Remarks," 36–37; Gál, "The Roles," 472–74, 483–84.

39 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 10, 261; cap. 26, 286; cap. 28, 288, 290; cap. 83, 339; cap. 124, 394; *AA, His. Iero.*, Liber I, Cap. 7, 12–13; *Simonis de Kéza*, Liber 2, Cap. 27, 43, 165–66, 172; Barta and Barta, "Royal," 22; Altmann et al., *Medium Regni*, 5–8, 11–199; Veres, "A magyar," 371–72.

40 Kumorovitz, "Buda," 44–46; Kralovánszky, "The Settlement.," Barabás, "The Christianization," 119–23, 125.

41 MacLean, "Palaces," 313; Airlie, "The Palace of Memory," 1–8; Leyser, "Ottonian," 739–40.

In addition to the *medium regni*, which formed a small territory from Esztergom through Óbuda to Székesfehérvár, the broader center of Árpád power was bounded by the Danube River in the north and west (*circa partes Danubii*), the Drava in the south, and the frontier areas near the borders with Margraviate of Austria and Carinthia in the east. In the early eleventh century, the Kingdom of Hungary was also comprised of territories on the left bank of the Danube River,<sup>42</sup> between the Danube and the Tisza, and Bihar in the east.<sup>43</sup> When Stephen I defeated the independent rulers Gyula II and Ajtony, he annexed their expansive areas in the east (Transylvania) and south to his kingdom.<sup>44</sup> The medieval sources differentiate between Hungary in the narrower sense (Pannonia, *Hungaria*, including Bihar) and Transylvania (*regnum or provincia*), which had a specific position within the kingdom.<sup>45</sup> During the reign of Ladislaus I and Coloman, Dalmatia and Croatia were also added to the Kingdom of Hungary.<sup>46</sup>

The power expansion of the Árpád dynasty to other parts of the country determined and gradually also changed the direction of travel and sojourns of the kings, which began to include these newly added territories more and more frequently. The planning of regular visits to these parts of the country, which were rather distant from the central part, was also adapted. During journeys to new locations undertaken by the royal court, new routes began to be used along which stood mansions or monasteries where the king could stop and replenish supplies or make longer stays.

The importance of certain sites in the central part of the kingdom is also indicated by mentions of places where individual members of the Árpád dynasty were buried. Stephen I and his son Emeric were buried in the Basilica of the Virgin Mary in Székesfehérvár.<sup>47</sup> All the royal coronations took place at Székesfehérvár (with the exception of the coronation of Stephen I in Esztergom), and beginning with Coloman, several of the Hungarian kings and their family members were buried next to the graves of the first dynastic saints,

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42 In historiography referred to as the Principality of Nitra.

43 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 28, 288; Cap. 64, 312–14; Cap. 102, 366; Cap. 104, 369–70; Kristó, “Die Entstehung,” 14–15.

44 Györffy, *Święty*, 138–52; Kristó, “Die Entstehung,” 15–16; Thoroczkay, “The Dioceses,” 50–52.

45 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 26, 286; Cap. 28, 287; Cap. 30, 291; Cap. 64, 314; Cap. 65, 314–15; Cap. 102, 366; Cap. 134, 408; Cap. 137, 412; *Simonis de Kéza*, Liber 2, Cap. 27, 165–66; Cap. 43, 172; Kristó, *Early*, 17–30; 43–114.

46 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 132, 406; Szeberényi, “Remarks,” 36–37.

47 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 70, 322; *Legenda minor sancti Stephani regis*, Cap. 8, 399; *Legenda S. Emerici ducis*, Cap. 7, 458–59.

Stephen I and his son Emeric.<sup>48</sup> But before Coloman, all kings were buried in monasteries, episcopal or collegiate churches which they had built, completed, or richly endowed, and not in Székesfehérvár: Samuel Aba in Abasár, Peter Orseolo in Pécs, Andrew I in Tihany, Béla I in Szekszárd, Géza I in Vác, Ladislaus I either in Oradea or perhaps at the Somogyvár monastery<sup>49</sup> (which he founded), Coloman's son Stephen II also in Oradea, and Emeric I in Eger. Esztergom, Székesfehérvár, and Óbuda were important sites, but the Hungarian kings also built their own monasteries or churches next to the chapters where they had their palaces, and apparently they stayed there regularly. These places were of exceptional importance to the kings and their families, which is evidenced by several donations, confirmations, and gifts from individual members of the Árpád dynasty, such as those by Domoslaus to the monastery of Pécsvárad,<sup>50</sup> by David to the Tihany monastery,<sup>51</sup> and by Lampert to the collegiate chapter in Tittel.<sup>52</sup> These important power and sacred centers were also visited by their descendants, and within the dynasty's sacral topography some of them became the favorite residences of the Hungarian monarchs, where the memory (*memoria*) of famous ancestors was preserved, as is sometimes mentioned in charters of foundation or donation.<sup>53</sup>

### *The Árpád Rulers on the Road*

According to the Lesser Legend of St. Stephen, when his enemies were destroying royal castles, mansions, and estates, they also wanted to conquer Veszprém castle, where the king allegedly liked to stay.<sup>54</sup> The Árpád rulers left

48 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 152, 433; Engel, "Temetkezések," 613–14, 616–22, 632–34; Thoroczkay, "A székesfehérvári," 11.

49 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 76, 332; Cap. 85, 343; Cap. 93, 357; Cap. 96, 360; Cap. 130, 403; Cap. 141, 420. Historians still do not agree on the question of where Ladislaus I was actually originally buried. László Solymosi assumes that it was Oradea. László Koszta, however, leans towards Somogyvár and suggests that his remains may have been transferred to Oradea only under Coloman or Stephen II. Solymosi, "Egy tévedés nyomában," 171–72; Koszta, "Bencés szerzetesség," 294, 297–300.

50 *DHA*, vol. 1, no. 12, 63 and 77 (1015), no. 76, 222; no. 103, 306.

51 *DHA*, vol. 1, no. 86, 264; no. 96, 284; *Simonis de Kéza*, Liber 2, Cap. 58, 180; Györffy, "Die Kanzleien," 327.

52 *DHA*, vol. 1, no. 106, 309; Romhányi, "The Ecclesiastic," 309–10.

53 *MES*, vol. 1, no. 65, 94–96 (1138); Nemerkenyi, *The Latin*, 269–78. See Bernhardt, "King," 44, 59–61; Remensnyder, "Topographies," 194–96.

54 *Legenda minor sancti Stephani regis*, Cap. 3, 395. In the Chronicle Composition, the chapter on Óbuda also mentions that Stephen I habitually visited the churches he founded three times a year. This is very likely just a *topos* and only a later interpolation about the famous Christian king and founder of the monarchy.

this central territory when they traveled to their estates in the peripheral areas of the country to meet the local political elites, when on military campaigns, for synods and countrywide assemblies (Tarcál, Szabolcs),<sup>55</sup> to hunt (Igfón, Sárospatak, Maramureş [Máramaros] or Zvolen [Zólyom]),<sup>56</sup> or in exceptional cases, to celebrate important Christian holidays (Csanád, Ikervár, Bodrog).<sup>57</sup> However, the sources do not reveal how often they did this, nor do they indicate where the monarchs and their entourages stayed most frequently when they traveled to the peripheral parts of the kingdom. For example, the Lesser Legend of St. Stephen mentions that at the time the Pechenegs unexpectedly invaded Hungary (sometime between 1017 and 1018), the king was hunting in *remotae partes*.<sup>58</sup> This reference to a remote area suggests that Stephen was not hunting in the forests of the *medium regni* but somewhere in the east of the country, maybe in the popular Igfón Forest in Bihar, which was located outside the center of power of his kingdom.<sup>59</sup>

When Béla I became king, he summoned an assembly at Székesfehérvár in 1060–1061, and he issued orders according to which two elders from each village should come to an audience with the king. Székesfehérvár was the traditional location for countrywide assemblies and also the main center of power where the Árpád kings were crowned.<sup>60</sup> The kings spent a substantial period of time in Székesfehérvár every year in order to celebrate the important holidays, including the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, the death of St. Stephen, and the lifting of his remains.<sup>61</sup> People from different parts of the country had the opportunity to see the monarch and to participate with him in royal legal courts, liturgical ceremonies, and feasts.<sup>62</sup> The king reached judgements, solved disputes, received foreign ambassadors, and planned military campaigns, and there were also

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But this sentence might suggest the Árpád kings often traveled to the places where there were older royal churches or churches which they themselves had founded, whether they were churches on their demesnes or in chapters, episcopal seats, or monasteries. *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 67, 317.

55 Colomanus: Proem, *DRMH I*, 23; Syn. Szab., *DRMH I*, 53.

56 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 114, 380; Cap. 115, 381. Probably also *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 139, 416; Szűcs, “Sárospatak,” 1–57; Hudáček, “Kráľovské,” 38–41.

57 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 75, 330; Cap. 139, 417.

58 *Legenda minor sancti Stephani regis*, Cap. 5, 397.

59 It was in this forest, for example, that Prince Géza also hunted and stayed in 1074. *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 114, 380; Cap. 115, 381. See Szabó, *Woodland*, 93–97, 105–9, 120–26, 135–37.

60 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 95, 359; Göckenjan, “Stuhlweißenburg”

61 *Libri liturgici*, vol. 1, 14–15, 37–39.

62 Reuter, “Regemque,” 143–44; Reuter, “Assembly,” 196–205; Bernhardt, “On the Road,” 310–11; Roach, “Hosting,” 41–42; Zupka, *Ritual*, 55–57, 123–24.

debates on the state of the kingdom. He fostered relationships with his faithful magnates, *ispáns*, bishops, and abbots, and he granted gifts and issued charters of donation. These events were accompanied by various ceremonies and rituals.<sup>63</sup>

The countrywide assemblies were mainly held once a year, or more frequently, if necessary, mostly out in the open, for instance on islands, in the vicinity of important castle centers, and next to episcopal or royal palaces. The times at which assemblies were convened coincided with the celebration of the important church holidays within the liturgical year, such as Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost.<sup>64</sup> For example, according to *The Long Life of St. Gerard*, Stephen I came to Székesfehérvár every year, where abbots and bishops gathered to celebrate the Assumption of the Virgin Mary together.<sup>65</sup> The Chronicle Composition states that King Samuel Aba was staying in Csanád during Lent in 1044. This is one of the first references to the presence of a king outside the central territory. Csanád was an episcopal seat, where the Hungarian Bishop Gerard worked at the time. Samuel Aba may have traveled there to spend time in the episcopal seat during Lent and to meet the important bishop. It is very likely that at that time, due to the presence of the king, a local assembly was convened at Csanád, with about 50 noblemen gathered there.<sup>66</sup> This possibility is also suggested by a later reference to the meeting of Hungarian noblemen in Csanád, who were unhappy with the reign of Peter Orseolo.<sup>67</sup> The members of the Árpád House mostly celebrated a number of Christian holidays in their main residences, episcopal seats, and monasteries in the power center of the kingdom. It is not clear, therefore, whether this was an isolated event or whether kings regularly visited outlying parts of the kingdom in this connection too. In 1046, the village of Zámoly is mentioned, where Peter Orseolo stopped on his way from the border castle of Moson to Székesfehérvár. When he realized that Prince Andrew wanted to capture him, he took refuge in a *curia*, where he and his men defended themselves for three days.<sup>68</sup> It may therefore have been a fortified royal mansion in the central part of kingdom along a road that connected several important sites in its vicinity.

63 Deér, "Aachen," 16–18; Font, *Koloman*, 50–51.

64 Such as king Peter Orseolo in 1045. *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 78, 334; Font, *Koloman*, 49–50, 55.

65 *Legenda sancti Gerardi episcopi*, vol. 2, Cap. 5, 487–88.

66 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 75, 330; *Legenda sancti Gerardi episcopi*, vol. 1, Cap. 5, 476; *Legenda sancti Gerardi episcopi*, vol. 2, Cap. 14, 500; Zupka, *Ritual*, 42–43; Veres, "A magyar," 361.

67 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 81, 337; Bak and Lukin, "Consensus," 100–1.

68 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 85, 343; *AMTF*, vol. 2, 417.

Among the important royal palaces was Tiszavárkony, which was mentioned at the meeting of King Andrew and Prince Béla in 1059 as a *pallacium*, and in 1098, King Coloman also traveled there when he was about to fight his brother Álmos.<sup>69</sup> Tiszavárkony was strategically located because it stood on the right bank of the Tisza River, and the far side of the river was already Bihar territory. This is why rulers of the Árpád family often stopped there on their way to the Igfon Forest, Transylvania, or even to the more distant northern or southern parts of the country along the Tisza River. In 1064, King Solomon and Prince Géza were staying in Győr during the holiday of St. Fabian and Sebastian, where they concluded a peace treaty.<sup>70</sup> The selection of Győr as the site may not have been accidental. Although Solomon had been crowned in Székesfehérvár, he did not yet have a firm grip on power, so he withdrew to the border castle of Moson for a period of time. Prince Géza also returned to the Kingdom of Hungary at that time. He had been residing in Poland.

Through the intercession of the Kalocsa Archbishop, Dezider, the cousins finally met in the seat of the Győr bishop, which was located near the border where Solomon was staying. It is probable that in order to prevent a new conflict between them, they did not choose any of the most important royal seats, such as Esztergom or Székesfehérvár, for the meeting, but preferred instead the “neutral” city of Győr.<sup>71</sup> Several months later, Solomon and Géza visited another episcopal seat together, Pécs, on Easter Sunday.<sup>72</sup> Maurus, the bishop of Pécs, who had contributed significantly to the peace agreement between them,<sup>73</sup> must have known that at Easter, the king and the prince would come to his palace and he therefore had to make sufficient preparations for their arrival. When the king and prince arrived with their entourages,<sup>74</sup> the bishop had to provide them with suitable lodging in his seat and ensure they had everything necessary for their stay.<sup>75</sup> During this holiday, Prince Géza placed the royal crown on the

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69 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 92, 354–54; Cap. 144, 423; Zupka, *Ritual*, 74, 94; Bagi, “The Dynastic,” 148–49.

70 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 97, 362; Zupka, *Ritual*, 77–79.

71 *ÁMTF*, vol. 2, 595. See Bernhardt, “On the Road,” 311–13.

72 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 97, 362; Bachrach, “Exercise,” 394–95; Helmraht, “Reisekönigtum,” 114–15.

73 Fedeles and Koszta, *Pécs (Fünfkirchen) das Bistum*, 48–49.

74 The royal entourage could have numbered about 150–300 people, together with supplies and baggage. In the case of a military expedition, it could be up to as many as 1,000 people. Helmraht, “Reisekönigtum,” 112; Strömberg, “The Swedish,” 167.

75 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 98, 363; *ÁMTF*, vol. 1, 359.

head of Solomon in the presence of the noblemen of the country.<sup>76</sup> As it was an exceptional event, it is very likely that Hungarian bishops, abbots, magnates, and *ispáns* also took part in this ritual, who were apparently in Pécs at that time.

The very valuable and unique information in the Chronicle Composition on royal travel during a relatively short period (1072–1075) relates to Solomon's reign. They were not confined to the central part of the kingdom, where, for obvious reasons, he stayed most often as king, but also traveled outside this territory because of military campaigns or important meetings. First he was in Niš (Serbia), then he went to the Keve castle (on the road to Belgrade), from where he traveled to a meeting in Esztergom (where he negotiated and concluded a peace treaty with Prince Géza on the nearby Danubian island).<sup>77</sup> He then traveled to Székesfehérvár, after which he stayed briefly in the royal village of Megyer (probably Kismegyer near Győr), from where he went to a meeting near the Rábca River. He then celebrated Christmas in the nearby Ikervár, from where he went to Zala, then to the Szekszárd Abbey, then to Kemej near the Tisza River, where fought with his cousins. He then moved to the curia of Peter's son (probably Peterka near Pest), from where he went to nearby Rákos (near Pest). He then fought at Mogyoród, and after the military defeat, he crossed the Danube River at Szigetfő and arrived at the border castle of Moson.<sup>78</sup>

In 1073, King Solomon celebrated Christmas at a place called *Geminum Castellum*, which was mentioned as Ikervár, located on the right side of the Rába River. Since it is mentioned as *castellum* and the Hungarian name has the ending *vár*, it was very likely a royal fortified palace or mansion, which must have included a church or a royal chapel where Solomon could have celebrated this important Christian holiday.<sup>79</sup> The king went from there to Zalavár, where he met with Marquard, duke of the Germans, who apparently had promised him military assistance against Géza.<sup>80</sup> Although Zalavár was a county castle, Stephen I founded a Benedictine abbey there sometime at the beginning of the eleventh century,<sup>81</sup> so at the end of 1073 or at the beginning of 1074, Solomon may have stayed either in this castle or in the royal monastery. The king then apparently

76 See Zupka, *Ritual*, 38–39, 42–46, 69, 76–78.

77 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 112, 378. See also *MES*, vol. 1, no. 62, 87 (1136); *ÁMTF*, vol. 2, 284–85. In 1188, Béla III and his magnates were staying at Esztergom, probably also on a nearby island. *CDS*, vol. 1, no. 99, 93.

78 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 111–21, 377–91.

79 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 114, 379.

80 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 114, 379.

81 *Ibid.*

visited Szekszárd Abbey in early 1074, and he camped near it and attended mass in the monastery church in the evening.<sup>82</sup>

When Géza, his opponent, became king, he celebrated Christmas at the Szekszárd monastery sometime between 1074 and 1076, which had been built by his father, Béla I.<sup>83</sup> Although Vác was exceptionally important to the Árpád dynasty and was also the seat of the bishop, very little information has been preserved about its earliest history. According to the Chronicle Composition, Vác was an important seat of King Géza I, and the bishopric was probably established there during the reign of Peter Orseolo (the territory of the diocese was split off from the territory of the Eger bishopric).<sup>84</sup> When Géza was still a prince and fought against Solomon for power, he met his brother Ladislaus and also later the Olomouc Prince Otto in Vác.<sup>85</sup> Sometime in the beginning of March 1074, before the famous Battle of Mogyoród, Princes Géza, Ladislaus, and Otto (from Moravia) left from Vác for the manor of Cinkota (part of Budapest today), which is mentioned as *allodium*. This Latin term might indicate that there was also a royal mansion, similarly to Dömös (*regale allodium*), where the Árpád rulers had their mansion or palace in the second half of the eleventh century.<sup>86</sup>

According to the Chronicle Composition, King Ladislaus I celebrated Easter Sunday of 1093 at the county castle of Bodrog.<sup>87</sup> Unless we count the episcopal seat of Csanád, the royal visit to Bodrog is the only reference to the celebration of an important Christian holiday at a county castle. We do not know why Ladislaus was staying at the Bodrog castle at that time. It was in a strategic position on the left bank of the Danube River, near the spot where the Drava River flows into the Danube. As Ladislaus was spending Easter there, there must have been a church. As in the case of Csanád, it is not possible to determine whether the Hungarian kings visited this site more frequently or if this was merely a one-off visit by Ladislaus. Béla II, at the suggestion of his wife Helene and the barons, convened a countrywide assembly near Arad probably sometime

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82 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 114, 380–81.

83 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 130, 402; Cap. 96, 360.

84 *ÁMTF*, vol. 4, 309–10, 314; Koszta, “State Power,” 72; Barabás, “The Christianization,” 127.

85 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 117, 385; Cap. 119, 387. On the presence of the king in Vác see the charter from 1139. *CDSI*, vol. 1, no. 79, 77.

86 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 121, 388; Gerevich, “The Royal,” 385; *ÁMTF*, vol. 4, 512–13. *Glossarium*, 25; *Lexicon*, 36–38; *LLMH*, vol. 1, 136; *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 96, 360.

87 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 139, 417; *ÁMTF*, vol. 1, 712.

between 1131 and 1132.<sup>88</sup> We do not know why this place was chosen. After Béla was blinded, some Hungarian magnates helped him find refuge at an unknown place in the kingdom so that the king would not find out about it.<sup>89</sup>

During the reign of Stephen II, Béla may have stayed in Arad or in its vicinity in secret, in other words beyond the main center of power, where the Hungarian king moved most frequently, and this might explain why the assembly was held there. For Béla II, Arad was probably a favored and important seat where he frequently stayed, as indicated by the fact that he founded a collegiate chapter there, probably in 1135.<sup>90</sup> The countrywide assemblies over the course of a year could also take place outside of the *medium regni* at places which were linked to an older tradition of the holding of local assemblies, possibly in the vicinity of the favorite seats of the king or his family. The selection of a site depended to a great extent on the preferences of the monarch too. He could select a suitable place to hold a royal tribunal and meet his loyal magnates based on the political situation in the country at the time.

When traveling from one place or territory to another, the kings likely only stopped a single night in the various localities (e. g. royal agricultural mansions or villages). These stays were referred to as “one-night stops.” If need be, the king would spend a single night or several days in a tent or on the estates of his loyal magnates.<sup>91</sup> When King Béla III, together with his notary, validated the last will of Csaba sometime around 1177, he did so on a Sunday, next to the house of *comes* Zenie, while he sat under an oak tree in the presence of his *ispáns*.<sup>92</sup> In 1071, for example, King Solomon and Prince Géza stayed in the village of Buziás on the estate of Vid, the *ispán* of Bács.<sup>93</sup>

The Árpád rulers also traveled in response to invitations from loyal magnates, most often to be present for important events. Thus, in 1061 (1064), Palatine Otto invited King Solomon and Prince Géza to celebrate the consecration of his St. James’ Monastery, which he had had built in Zselic (Zselicszentjakab, part of Kaposvár today).<sup>94</sup> The consecration of a church or monastery was an important event that the monarch had to attend. Several people from the royal court and the close vicinity of the monastery gathered for the occasion. At such

88 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 160, 447.

89 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 157, 443; Bagi, “The Dynastic,” 147.

90 *ÁMTF*, vol. 1, 170–72; Juhász, “Az aradi,” 494–96.

91 Helmrath, “Reisekönigtum,” 113; Roach, “Hosting,” 40; McKitterick, “A King,” 150–51.

92 *CDSL*, vol. 1, no. 93, 89.

93 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 109, 375.

94 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 99, 364; *DHA*, vol. 1, no. 50/I, 169; no. 50/II, 170–174.

a public event, the ruler presented himself as the protector of Christianity. This celebration included feasts, gifts, rituals, and ceremonies.<sup>95</sup> On similar occasions and for other reasons (the confirmation of loyalty, creation of alliances, planning of a military campaign, etc.), the Hungarian kings visited the estates of important magnates and *ispáns* much more frequently than is mentioned in sources.

The king's arrival at a place was demanding and expensive for the host, but the king's presence also created important advantages for the host. A stay by the king was a great honor and an exceptional event for the surrounding area. During such visits, the king and his hosts exchanged gifts, and the king would be accommodated and entertained throughout the whole visit. As a reward, the host might "obtain" some donations.<sup>96</sup> The consecration of the chapter church in Dömös in 1108 was probably similarly spectacular. Prince Álmos even invited King Coloman to this important event, despite the fact that he had a long-standing dispute with him.<sup>97</sup> The importance of this residence is evidenced by the fact that, when the king had Álmos and his young son Béla blinded in 1113, he was then taken to his "monastery" in Dömös.<sup>98</sup> However, there was originally a royal (hunting) mansion on the site, which is mentioned as *regale allodium* as early as 1063 and as *curia Dimisiensi* in 1079.<sup>99</sup>

Very little information has been preserved about the number of journeys and stays of the Hungarian kings in various parts of the country in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. That is why the mentions in the charters from 1134 and 1152 are exceptionally valuable. The document from 1134 related a dispute, which lasted several years, concerning the Dubrava Forest between the Zagreb bishopric and Somogy *ispán*, or the Somogy castle-warriors. Fáncsika, the archbishop of Kalocsa, and Macilinus, the bishop of Zagreb, and three important men from the Zagreb bishopric gave testimony in favor of the bishopric at the synod in Oradea and swore on the local altar.<sup>100</sup> It is very likely that King Béla II was also present at this synod.

King Géza II's charter of 1152 records the verdict of Palatine Belus, the court judge Hendrik, and three *ispáns* concerning the dispute brought by royal servants who were to present themselves at a divine tribunal before the Veszprém

95 Zupka, *Ritual*, 55–57, 64, 123–24.

96 Leyser, "Ottonian," 746–49; Roach, "Hosting," 34–40; Ehlers, "Having the King," 3–9.

97 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 148, 427–28; Thoroczkay, "A dömösi," 411–12.

98 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 150, 430.

99 *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 96, 360; *DHA*, vol. 1, no. 78, 226; *ÁMTF*, vol. 4, 583–93; Gerevich, "The Royal." See also mansion of Zirc in *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 93, 357.

100 *ChAH*, no. 41, 49–50; Šišić, *Geschichte der Kroatien*, 346–48; Szeberényi, "Birtokviszonyok," 115–18.

chapter. This royal decision was probably previously taken and approved under oath in the Church (of the collegiate chapter?) of St. Stephen the King next to the Şemlacu Mare royal estate. This could have happened during a countrywide assembly at which Géza II may also have been present.<sup>101</sup>

### *Iter Regis in the Law-Codes and Synods of the Árpád Rulers*

Pursuant to King Coloman's law-code, all payments received from the royal counties before the holiday of St. Michael were to be sent to Esztergom, and a share of them belonged to the king. The shares due to the *ispáns* and *centuriones* were to be set aside from the county's fees in Esztergom.<sup>102</sup> Thus, sometime before the holiday of St. Michael, the king or his deputy could stay in Esztergom in order to supervise the payment of his share. The king thus must have met with his loyal magnates, bishops, or abbots in Esztergom every year, and this important event was accompanied by various ceremonies, rituals, feasts, tribunals, agreements with political elites, bestowal of gifts, and the award of donations. The Synod of Szabolcs in 1092 forbade priests to celebrate mass outside of a church with the exception of travel that lasted for several days, and under such circumstances, they were allowed to celebrate mass in a tent. This probably also applied to the royal chaplains if they were on the road with the king for an extended period of time and there was no church in the vicinity.<sup>103</sup>

Another article of this synod mentions that if an abbot or monk were to visit the royal court, he was not to greet the monarch in the church but should do so in either king's residence (*domus*) or a tent.<sup>104</sup> The king could thus be found at the places where he had a *domus*,<sup>105</sup> thus presumably meaning the royal palace,

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101 "X principes servants iustitiam G. rex prenomatus in Mezeusumlusiensi sancti Stephani regis ecclesia conventa in unum gloriosorum multitudine principum, sic ab iniusta perversorum incursion causam cuiusque studuerunt statuerunt..." ChAH, no. 23, 61. In the thirteenth century, there was a royal mill and monastery of Augustinians-hermits who had been invited there by the monarch, in Şemlacu Mare. Based on documents from the first half of the fourteenth century, county assemblies took place next to this church on the holiday of St. Stephen the King. The 1152 assembly may also have taken place in August during the holiday of St. Stephen the King (sometime between August 15 and 20). Géza II probably visited Şemlacu Mare more often, as it was his estate, and he could stay there while traveling around the country. During the time the king was present, tribunals and local assemblies were probably held there. *ÁMTF*, vol. 3, 493–94; Mező, *Patrocíniumok*, 19.

102 Colomanus: 79, *DRMH I*, 31; Deér, "Aachen," 4–5; Font, *Koloman*, 44, 50.

103 Syn. Szab.: 29, *DRMH I*, 57; Font, *Koloman*, 52–53.

104 Syn. Szab.: 36, *DRMH I*, 58.

105 To the term *domus* and its meaning see Zsoldos, "A királyné," 268, 300–1.

agricultural mansion, or royal village. But if he was on the roads and there was no suitable accommodation available in the vicinity, he camped in a tent in which he received visitors. This is also proven by the Synod of Esztergom, which took place sometime in the years between 1105 and 1112/1113. According to one of its articles, mass could not be celebrated anywhere but in a church, not even in a tent or “house” (*domus*), which probably meant residences in which there was no chapel. However, this did not apply to the king, for whom masses could be celebrated outside of a church, as well as to bishops, *ispáns*, and abbots, but only if they had a designated tent or similar specially adapted place for holding mass, and this only applied when they were traveling.<sup>106</sup> King Coloman’s law-code also stipulates that a mass could only be held in consecrated places, but this did not hold true for journeys or pilgrimages, which probably only applied to the king, senior church dignitaries, and magnates, who were permitted to celebrate mass at a portable altar, within a tent, or at an alternative place deemed suitable. However, this exception did not apply when they were on the hunt.<sup>107</sup>

In order for the Hungarian kings to be able to exercise their power even in the more distant territories of their kingdom, they had to visit them in person from time to time. The personal presence of the monarch and his court was also often linked to the execution of royal judicial powers and the confirmation of the loyalty of the local powerful elites in these peripheral parts of the country.<sup>108</sup> However, the Árpád kings probably did not visit these territories every year, because they spent most of their time in the *medium regni*. Whether they were staying in the central region or the peripheries the kingdom, in order better to deal with the necessary “administration,” they had their *ispáns* available at the royal castles or abbots in royal monasteries and provosts in collegiate chapters. Kings used messengers (*nuntii regis*) to communicate with the surrounding areas. The task of these messengers was to announce royal regulations, important changes, or exceptional events concerning the kingdom and the ruling dynasty. For example, *Life of Archbishop Conrad of Salzburg* mentions that the Archbishop of Esztergom sent a messenger (*nuntius*) with an urgent message to King Stephen II, who sometime before 1131 was staying outside the central territory in the *marchia Ruthenorum*.<sup>109</sup>

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106 Syn. Strig.: 33, *DRMHI*, 62.

107 Colomanus: 68, *DRMHI*, 30.

108 See Roach, “Hosting,” 39–40; Bachrach, “Exercise,” 394–95; Zotz, “Kingship,” 318.

109 *Vita Conradi archiepiscopi Salisburgensis*, Cap. 18, Gombos, *Catalogus*, no. 4950, 2326.

The Árpád rulers may also have used their messengers to announce the arrival of the royal court to individual parts of the country. Even if kings routinely visited the same places over the course of a year, sometimes their plans may have changed due to various circumstances, making it necessary to inform loyal dignitaries of these changes. Therefore, the royal messengers had to convey the plans of the monarch to the individual bailiffs of agricultural or hunting mansions, abbots, bishops, *ispáns*, etc., well in advance to give them sufficient time to prepare for the arrival of the king, which meant gathering supplies, ensuring available fodder for horses, and making sure that the items necessary to accommodate the royal court were on hand.<sup>110</sup> The royal messengers had to travel to a public place in the various localities of the kingdom, where people normally gathered, usually the markets, and announce the royal regulations there. In addition to royal messengers (*nuntii*), who probably enjoyed royal protection and an important position, the law-code of Ladislaus I also mentions other messengers who traveled by horse (*cursores*).<sup>111</sup> While it is not entirely clear how these messengers differed, *cursores* were apparently of lower status than the royal messengers, who seem to have been sent (also on horseback) directly from the royal court (*nuntii* as well as *precones* and *veredarii*).<sup>112</sup> *Cursores* may have been county messengers who only traveled within their territory and were forbidden to ride a horse (probably only one) further than the third village. This may suggest that their movements were limited to a comparatively small area, and *cursores* were apparently subordinate to the royal messengers.<sup>113</sup>

It is very likely that stud farms were established near some royal residences, mansions, or main roads. In the *medium regni*, there was an important and probably large royal stud-farm in Csepel-sziget, which was close to royal residences such as Óbuda or Székesfehérvár.<sup>114</sup> A mention from 1067 says that a royal stud-farm was also found in the frontier county of Borsod, next to the royal mansion at Szihalom and close to the main road along the Tisza River.<sup>115</sup> Next to Alpár, at the border of Csongrád and Szolnok counties, close to the road to Szolnok castle, according to a reference from 1075, a man lived who cared for and

110 See Bernhardt, "On the Road," 305–6; MacLean, "Palaces," 313; Roach, "Hosting," 37.

111 Ladislaus III: 1, 2, 14, *DRMH I*, 17, 20.

112 *DHA*, vol. 1, no. 28/II, 123; no. 73/II, 218; no. 81, 236; no. 114, 326; *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 95, 359; Bartoniak, *Legenda maior sancti Stephani regis*, Cap. 13, 389; *MLLM*, 1074.

113 Ladislaus III: 28, *DRMH I*, 22; *Chron. Hung. comp. saec. XIV*, Cap. 92, 354; Györffy, *Święty*, 293, 295.

114 *DHA*, vol. 1, no. 14, 91 (1019); *ÁMTF*, vol. 4, 198–200.

115 *DHA*, vol. 1, no. 58, 183.

guarded royal horses.<sup>116</sup> These horses, which were kept only at designated places in the kingdom and were apparently a kind of network of royal stud-farms, were probably also used by royal messengers when delivering regulations from the royal court to other, often remote parts of the country.

Coloman's law-code contains a wealth of information concerning the various laws governing the travel of members of the royal family. Should the king or a prince enter any county, he was to receive a war horse from this county.<sup>117</sup> It is not quite clear if this provision only applied in the case of a military campaign or whether the king and prince had the right to a war horse for their entourage whenever they crossed through the territory of a royal county. Apparently, upon entry into another county, they returned the first war horse and got a new one. This practice seems to have been repeated whenever the king or prince was traveling in the country and passing through the individual counties. Another article of this law-code is related to this provision according to which, if the *ispán* of a border territory (*marca*) received important news from the royal court, he was to send two messengers with four war horses to the king (only horses without riders?). The messengers were to cover the expenses of the journey themselves, and the expense incurred on their return to the frontier area was to be covered by the palatine. Should these horses die or be injured, financial compensation was to be paid to these messengers, but should the horses return uninjured, their journey back to the frontier territory was to be considered a military campaign.<sup>118</sup>

The meaning of this provision is not quite clear, but the *ispán* and the two messengers from the border territory had to know where the king was staying and what road he would take so that they could bring him the war horses. The dignitaries of the royal court therefore had to inform the (border) *ispán* in advance about the monarch's journey to his territory, and it was probably the royal or county messengers who came to the frontier area to announce this important news.<sup>119</sup> This may have been an unexpected military campaign due to the invasion by an enemy from the neighboring country, and the monarch therefore had to move to the frontier with the army. However, it is possible that this merely referred to information about the regular arrival of a royal, and

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116 *DHA*, vol. 1, no. 73/II, 216; *CDS*, vol. 1, no. 58<sup>+</sup>, 56.

117 Colomanus: 36, *DRMHI*, 27. See Veres, "A magyar," 359–60.

118 Colomanus: 36, *DRMHI*, 27.

119 Sometimes, the king unexpectedly decided to come to a place where the locals were not prepared for his arrival. Leyser, "Ritual," 198.

it did not concern any matter of defense, but rather applied only to “annual” travel within the country. This provision in Coloman’s law-code is related to the previous regulation about the provision of a war horse by the county. While the former probably concerns the ordinary needs of the royal or princely entourage, the latter likely applies more to a military campaign. This law-code further mentions that if the king visits a (royal) village and somebody steals a (royal) horse there, the inhabitants will not be expected to provide compensation.<sup>120</sup> Apart from traveling from one county to another and occasionally arriving in the border areas of the kingdom, Arpad’s kings apparently regularly visited their villages, which may have been hunting or agricultural mansions scattered across the countryside.

Another regulation in Coloman’s law-code concerns the royal judicial powers. If the king entered a county, two counties judges were to join him, and together they would decide local lawsuits.<sup>121</sup> Thus, in the course of his regular travels, the ruler came to the counties, where he personally exercised his judicial authority and thereby also demonstrated his position of power (though it is not clear whether he traveled to each individual county every year). The following provision of this law-code is also very interesting. It regulates the collection of *denarios* from the free inhabitants of the Kingdom of Hungary. Eight *denarios* were originally paid by all freemen, but after the new regulation, this amount was to be paid only by the men of the castle (*cives bedbomadarii*), who apparently were exempt from the duties of the common “castle folk,” but as freemen, they still had to pay the king a tax for their freedom. Free of the men who usually furnished the king with horses, transport wagons and “services for pay” (*servitia stipendiaria*) when the king traveled through their territory were to only pay four *denarios*.<sup>122</sup> The freemen who provided services to the king were favored, as they paid only half of the amount usually paid, presumably because they were expected to fulfill special duties intended to address the needs of the monarch. There also seem to have been free royal people whose services were mainly related to supplying the royal court, though it is not impossible that their duties also included providing for the needs of the king in the course of his regular travels around the country.<sup>123</sup> The question is what, in fact, is meant by the Latin

120 Colomanus: 62, *DRMHI*, 29.

121 Colomanus: 37, *DRMHI*, 27. On the Hungarian judicial system and procedural law under the kings of the Árpád dynasty, see Hajnik, *A magyar bírósági*, 3–31.

122 Colomanus: 45, *DRMHI*, 28.

123 See Bolla, “Das Dienstvolk,” 15–24, 29–34.

term *servitia stipendiaria*, which some historians translate as mercenary services. From the context of this provision, it follows that it might be more appropriate to translate *stipendia* as hospitality or the provision of supplies (victuals, fodder for horses, etc.).<sup>124</sup> It probably meant duties and services similar to those provided by the specialized servants of the kings of the Holy Roman Empire, who provided supplies for rulers when they were on the road, which were referred to by the Latin terms *fodrum* (fodder), *gístum* (hospitality), and *servitium regis/regale* (services). Later, an “umbrella term,” *hospitium*, was used.<sup>125</sup>

### *Adventus Regis and Descensus*

In Hungarian medieval narrative sources, very few references to the ceremonial arrival (*adventus regis*) of the individual Árpád kings to important residences in the eleventh and twelfth centuries have survived.<sup>126</sup> The king’s arrival at a residence, town, monastery, or bishop’s seat was a ceremonial event, accompanied by liturgical-celebratory songs (*laudes*) and the public wearing of the crown (*Festkrönung*).<sup>127</sup> We can only assume that the regular arrivals of the rulers to popular localities also involved honoring the memory of saints<sup>128</sup> or royal ancestors or commemorating exceptional events, ceremonies which included the bestowal of gifts, public liturgical processions, and participation in church services, as we have documented, for example, in the case of kings Solomon and Géza during their visit to the Szekszárd monastery. In this context, one of the provisions of the Synod of Szabolcs is particularly important. It stipulated that, if a king or a bishop were to come to an abbey, the abbot and the monks should not welcome him or give him the kiss of peace in the monastery church. The solemn welcoming ceremony should take place, rather, in the cloister. At the same time, the abbot was to permit the king to enter the monastery with as large an entourage as he required.<sup>129</sup> As the rules for the ceremonial entry of the king were specially regulated, this is evidence that monarchs came to the monasteries regularly and, in addition to a “proper” welcoming ritual, very probably also

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124 *Mediae latinitatis*, 991–92.

125 Brühl, *Fodrum*, 10–11, 33–34, 337–38, 414–15; Metz, *Das Servitium*, 47–50; Gödel, *Servitium*, 19–35, 55–65, 78–89, 128–29, 138–54, 184–85.

126 Only Székesfehérvár, Split, Trogir and Zadar. Zupka, *Ritual*, 123–28.

127 Zupka, *Ritual*, 11–12, 26–28, 38–39, 42–49, 76–78, 117–21. See Bernhardt, *Itinerant*, 49–50; Warner, “Henry II,” 137–42; Warner, “Ritual.”

128 See Warner, “Henry II.”

129 Syn. Szab., 35, 36, *DRMHI*, 58. See Warner, “Ritual.”

expected shows of hospitality. This is clearly one of the first indirect references to the fact that members of the Árpád dynasty commonly exercised the right to *descensus* (lodging and provisioning) in the monasteries.

Thus, the aforementioned regulation of the Synod of Szabolcs was based on the actual practice of Hungarian monarchs, as is confirmed by *The Life of St. Emeric* in the description of the visit of Stephen I and his son to Pannonhalma, when the honor which, upon entry to the monastery, belonged to the king was left to Emeric.<sup>130</sup> The royal visit was an important event for the monastic community and an effective way for the monarch to control the activities, commitments, and fidelity of the leaders of his abbeys. Kings gave generous endowments to the monasteries, in return for which they expected abbots to provide financial or military support and, on their repeated arrival, the right to *descensus*. Although it was costly for the abbot to provide welcome and host the monarch and his entourage in the manner expected, during these visits, kings gave the abbots valuable gifts, and they confirmed estates or privileges and often granted new donations.<sup>131</sup> The first reliable document about the obligation of the monastic *populi udvornici* to provide supplies for the monarch's entourage upon arrival of the king (*adventus regis*) dates back to 1226 and concerns Pannonhalma Abbey.<sup>132</sup> This common practice was apparently applied by the Árpád rulers in all the royal monasteries, as evidenced by a document from 1247 on the rights and duties of the *iobagiones* of the Hronský Beňadik (Garamszentbenedek) Abbey, which were, however, based on their earlier freedoms granted by King Stephen III. If the monarch came to this monastery, they were to "assist" the abbot like other monastery *populi*, which very probably meant supplying the royal court with foodstuffs and providing various services.<sup>133</sup>

Royal travel was closely related to the right held by the monarch to hospitality that extended to his family, court dignitaries, and servants (*ius descensus regii*, Hung. *szállás*), but Hungarian sources from the eleventh and twelfth centuries do not contain any direct information related to this right. Although mentions of this right appear only in law-codes and privileges from the thirteenth century, it is nevertheless possible to assume that the members of the Árpád dynasty had

130 *Legenda S. Emerici ducis*, Cap. 2, 452; Zupka, *Ritual*, 122–23.

131 Bernhardt, *Itinerant*, 45–84; Leyser, "Ottonian," 722–24, 732–33; Bernhardt, "King," 41–48, 53–58; Warner, "Henry II," 135–36; Warner, "Ritual."

132 *CDSI*, vol. 1, no. 322, 233–35 (1226) and *CDSI*, vol. 2, no. 75, 52–54 (1240). See also references to the provision of *victualia* by royal monasteries in forged documents. *DHA*, vol. 1, no. 17, 101 (1024); no. 108/II, 316 (1101) or no. 43/II, 156 (1055); no. 96, 285 (1092).

133 *CDSI*, vol. 2, no. 241, 166 (1247).

exercised the *descensus* in the preceding centuries as well, as indirectly evidenced, for example, by the provision for the king's arrival at the monastery according to the Synod of Szabolcs.<sup>134</sup> Interesting in this context is Coloman's privilege for the Dalmatian city of Trogir from 1108, in which he allowed the Trogir burghers to live according to the old customs they had previously observed. If the king visited the city (*advenio*), he had no right to demand hospitality in the burghers' houses. Inhabitants of the city could welcome the ruler into their domiciles, but this was done on a completely voluntarily basis. If the kingdom were attacked by an enemy, the king, his wife, his sons, and his entourage were allowed to enter Trogir without limitation.<sup>135</sup>

Royal charters from the eleventh and twelfth centuries related directly to the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary do not regulate the king's right to *descensus* in any special way. The reason why no information of concerning this has survived may be related either to the insufficient number of preserved medieval sources or the fact that the Árpád dynasty commonly exercised this right, and thus it was not necessary to make special mention of it in the individual donation documents from this period. Apparently, after the annexation of Dalmatia, the Hungarian kings could not claim the right to *descensus* as was their custom in the Kingdom of Hungary, and therefore in important Dalmatian cities, which were already governed by other customs, they had to respect the old rights of these communities. According to the revenues of King Béla III, every *ispán* entertained the king once a year and gave him financial gifts during the banquets, which may be one of the first indirect references from the second half of the twelfth century to the royal right to *descensus* in the Kingdom of Hungary. The queen and her sons also received gifts such as silver, fine fabrics, and horses, probably on the same occasion when the king visited his *ispáns* during the year.<sup>136</sup>

The first mention of this royal right is found in the Golden Bull of 1222, when Andrew II promised not to collect any *collecta* or freemen's *denarios* from royal *servientes* and also pledged that he would not claim the right of *descensus* in

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134 *Glossarium*, 209; *LLMH*, vol. 3, 94–97; Solymosi, *A földesúri*, 55–73. See Veres, “A magyar,” 355.

135 However, this charter has only survived in a copy from the seventeenth century, and it is assumed that the original text was not written until sometime in the first third of the fourteenth century. It is therefore quite possible that the mention of the *descensus* does actually refer to a later period. *DHA*, vol. 1, no. 130, 355–57; Györfly, “A XII. századi,” 49–50; Steindorff, *Die dalmatinischen*, 11–25, 57–61. See Veres, “A magyar,” 382.

136 Barta and Barta, “Royal,” 22; Györfly, *Święty*, 415. See Font, *Koloman*, 43, 52, 57–60; Bernhardt, “On the Road,” 306–7. On the revenues of the kings of Árpád, see Weisz, “Royal Revenues,” 255–64.

their houses or villages unless they voluntarily invited him.<sup>137</sup> One of the articles in the 1231 confirmation of the Golden Bull deals with *descensus*, due to the significant damage and burden caused by the obligation to welcome and host the king, the queen, the royal sons, the archbishops, the bishops, the barons, and the nobles. The king ordered that the tithe required to supply the royal kitchen (*coquina nostra*) and the material provisions of the royal court would only be accepted if a payment was made upon the provision of victuals, such as corn, wine, and so on.<sup>138</sup> This provision provides evidence that in addition to the members of royal family, the *ispáns*, provincial dignitaries, and high church representatives also traveled the country and demanded the right of *descensus*.

### Conclusion

The Árpád kings spent a great deal of time on the road with their court over the course of a year. Even if they had a longer stay in the same place, mostly in their favorite residences, they also seem to have moved frequently to other sites, about which very little information has survived. In all likelihood, more trips took place in the eleventh and twelfth centuries than are mentioned in Hungarian medieval sources, whether merely sporadic excursions or regular sojourns, as part of the movement around the country. The presence of members of the Árpád dynasty is most often associated with the central part of the kingdom (*medium regni* and the surrounding territories). As very few sources from this period have survived, it is not possible to state unequivocally that *iter regis* was confined to this area and that other parts of the country were not regularly visited by the kings. Isolated mentions suggest that royal travel outside the main power territory was related not only to military campaigns but also to the celebration of religious holidays, assemblies, the judiciary, hunting, and very probably, even the consumption of foodstuffs and the provision of services in individual palaces, mansions, and monasteries throughout the kingdom. In this period, the personal presence of the monarch, which was related to symbolic shows of power, rituals and ceremonies, the resolution of conflicts, the strengthening of relations with faithful *ispáns*, etc., was extremely important and could not be limited only to the main part of the kingdom. When members of the Árpád dynasty left the central territory and traveled to other parts of the kingdom, though it is not possible

137 1222: 3, *DRMH I*, 32.

138 1231: 4, *DRMH I*, 37.

to determine how frequent these sojourns were or how long they lasted, the sources do indicate that they stayed in county castles, mansions, and monasteries (possibly also in tents) which formed parts of the dynasty's network of power-sacral centers as the rulers moved around the country.

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