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ANONYMUS AND MASTER ROGER

ANONYMI BELE REGIS NOTARII
GESTA HUNGARORUM

ANONYMUS, NOTARY OF KING BÉLA
THE DEEDS OF THE HUNGARIANS

Edited, translated and annotated by
MARTYN RADY and LÁSZLÓ VESZPRÉMY

MAGISTRI ROGERII
EPISTOLA IN MISERABILE CARMEN
SUPER DESTRUCTIONE REGNI
HUNGARIE PER TARTAROS FACTA

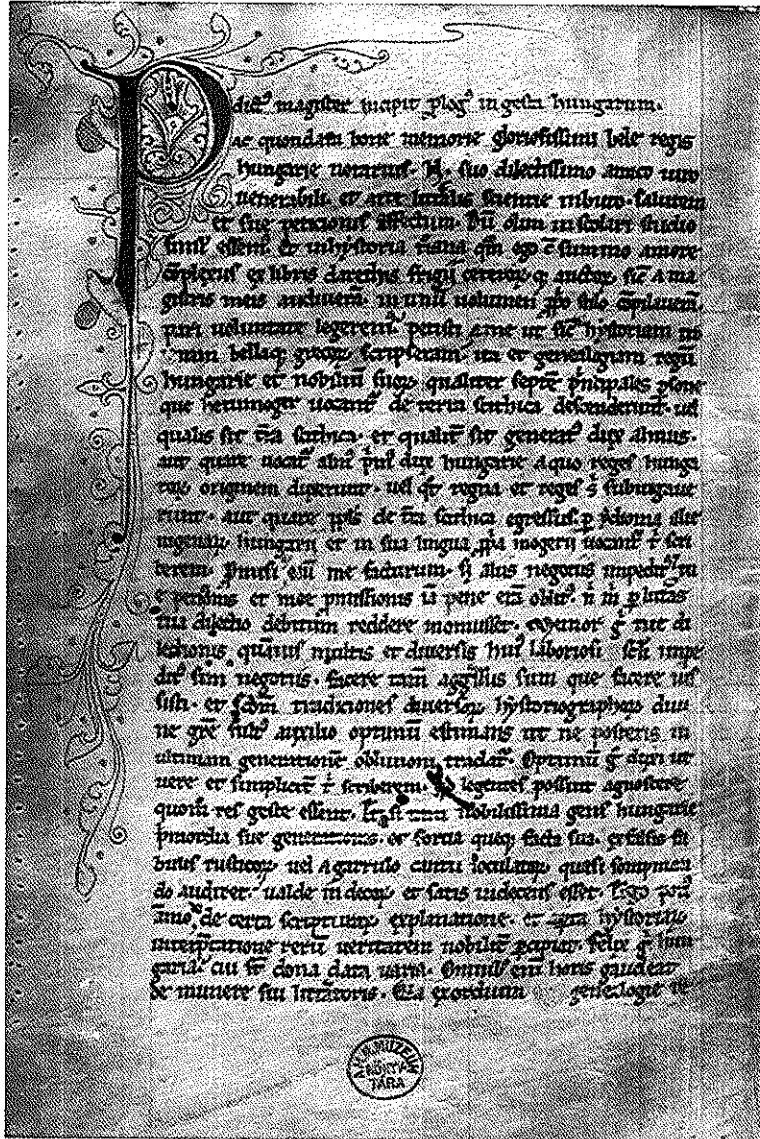
MASTER ROGER'S
EPISTLE TO THE SORROWFUL LAMENT
UPON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE
KINGDOM OF HUNGARY BY THE
TATARS

Translated and annotated by
JÁNOS M. BAK and MARTYN RADY



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INTRODUCTION



First page of the *Gesta Hungarorum* (OSZK Clmae 403, fol. 1v)

[XVI]

The *Gesta Hungarorum* of the anonymous notary of King Béla is the oldest extant chronicle of the history of the Hungarians.¹ In his seminal study of the narrative sources of medieval Hungary, C. A. Macartney described it as “the most famous, the most obscure, the most exasperating and most misleading of all the early Hungarian texts.”² Purporting to be an account of the background, circumstances and immediate aftermath of the Hungarian settlement in the Carpathian Basin in the late ninth century, the chronicle was probably composed in the early years of the thirteenth century and reflects the literary tastes and political concerns of its own age.

MANUSCRIPT AND EDITIONS

The *Gesta* survives in a sole MS of 24 folios (48 pages of which two are blank), 17 by 24 cm in size, written in a Gothic minuscule that on the basis of its hand and decoration may be dated to the mid-thirteenth century. The writing and the elaborate initial P of the incipit (see fig. 1, p. XVI), are characteristic of that time. It is clearly not an autograph. There are many scribal errors, especially in the manner of abbreviation and in respect of proper names. So, for ex-

¹ It is, however, more than likely that the early parts of the so-called “Hungarian Chronicle”, known only from later copies, were written earlier, but whether the author of the *Gesta* knew them cannot be established with any certainty. The scholarship on this issue up to his own times is summarized in C. A. Macartney, *Studies in the Earliest Hungarian Historical Sources*, 7 vols in 8 parts (Budapest and Oxford, 1938–51); republished in C. A. Macartney, *Studies on Early Hungarian and Pontic History*, ed. Lóránt Czigány and László Péter (Aldershot and Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1999), pp. 65–560.

² C. A. Macartney, *The Medieval Hungarian Historians: A Critical and Analytical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), p. 59.

[XVII]

ample, the word *civitatem* ('city'), abbreviated as *civitēm*, was rendered in the extant manuscript as *civitem*, which makes no sense. Most tellingly, in ch. 45, where the author wrote about Neopatras (present-day Ypatri in Greece), which fits the story of a Hungarian raid into Byzantine territory, the copyist misread the capital N and made out of it a better known name: "Cleopatra."³ It is not clear whether the extant text is complete, and not much should be made of the author's failure to discuss a subject promised earlier in his text.⁴

The fate of the copy through the centuries is not known. Catalogue evidence suggests that it had reached the Imperial Library (*Hofbibliothek*) in Vienna some time between 1601 and 1636, when Sebastian Tegnagel, court librarian and later director, registered it as *Historia Hungarica de VII primis ducibus Hungariae auctore Belae regis notario*, pasted this into the MS, and added numbers both to the chapters and to the folios. The *Gesta* was later mentioned in the catalogue of the court librarian Matheus Mauchter in 1652 as *De gestis Hungarorum liber*, and by Peter Lambeck in 1666. Their successor, Daniel Nessel suggested in 1692 that it should be edited. In 1711, David Czvittinger wrote a detailed report of the *Gesta* in his encyclopaedic *Specimen Hungariae Literatae*. Some time before 1780, Adam Kollár, director of the Hofbibliothek, had a manuscript from the collection of Schloss Ambras near Innsbruck bound with it, but they were later (in the first part of the nineteenth century) separated. It was then that the *Gesta* received its present leather binding, impressed with a gilt two-headed imperial eagle.⁵ The manuscript came to Hunga-

³ See below, p. 99.

⁴ The MS ends with a rhyming couplet which suggests that at least a break was intended there, but a discussion of events promised in ch. 15 (p. 45) is not followed up in the surviving copy.

⁵ The history of the MS in the Vienna library was reconstructed in detail by Emil Jakubovich, "Az ambrasi gyűjteményből való-e Béla király névtelen jegyzőjének kódexe" [Is the codex of the anonymous notary of King Béla from the Ambras collection?], *Magyar Könyvszemle* 34 (1927), pp. 84–99, with full bibliography. (Also available online: <http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00021/00179/pdf/084-099.pdf>)

ry in 1934 under the terms of the 1932 Treaty of Venice (in which the treasures of the Hapsburg Empire were distributed among the successor states) and is now held in the Széchényi National Library as Clmae 403.

The text was first published in 1746 by Johann Georg von Schwandtner in his *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum*, with a preface by the learned polyhistor, Matthias Bél⁶; four reprints followed in the subsequent twenty years. János Letenyei translated the *Gesta* into Hungarian in 1790 and gave the author the name "Anonymus," which has remained ever since. Between then and the end of the nineteenth century, the MS was re-published more than a dozen times. A scholarly edition, with critical annotation, was first published by Gyula Pauler and László Fejérparaky in 1900, and a revised edition by Emil (Aemilius) Jakubovich and Dezső (Desiderius) Pais in the first volume of Imre (Emericus) Szentpétery's *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum*. A full-tone facsimile edition was published more recently. The Latin text has been translated several times into Hungarian, as well as into Romanian, German, Slovak, and Polish. The present English-language version, based on one published in *The Slavonic and East European Review*,⁷ is the first parallel edition, with critical apparatus, of the Latin text and an English translation.

AUTHOR AND DATE

Despite two hundred years of scholarly effort, the identity of the author has not been established. He describes himself in the first line of the text as "P who is called master, and former notary of the late King Béla of good memory," but virtually every word in this sentence poses problems. The initial P, together with *dictus*, was read by some (thus by Schwandtner in the *editio princeps*) as

⁶ For the editions and translations, see Bibliography, pp. 229–41, below.

⁷ *The Slavonic and East European Review* 87/4 (2009), pp. 681–727.

an abbreviation for *praedictus*, that is “aforementioned,” on the assumption, from the empty page preceding the text, that in the extant copy a “title page” had been erased which originally gave the full name of the author (even though this would be unusual for medieval MSS). This hypothesis was rejected even before it was established with modern technology that the empty page contains merely an erased faulty beginning of the *Gesta* and no indication of any name of an author. Then, the P was understood as the initial of the author (although no dot follows it, as might be expected were it the abbreviation of a name). Accordingly, scholars hunted for an author called Peter, Paul or such like, but although some were suggested, none could be unequivocally connected to the *Gesta*.

That the author called himself “*dictus*” *magister* has caused needless headache to scholars. The humility formula, implying something like “although unworthy” (and typical for ecclesiastics) was widely used; indeed, there is even a similar wording in a charter from 1226 by Abbot Uros of Pannonhalma.⁸ Speculation about the author not having in fact obtained a degree and other similar constructions are irrelevant.⁹ Nor is the term *notarius* (which the author previously, perhaps in his younger years, had been) problematic. Although there were no notaries (public) in medieval Hungary, the staff of the gradually emerging chancellery, small in number, had ever since the late twelfth century been described as notaries.

A further problem arises with the identity of King Béla, the deceased former sovereign of the author. There were four kings of Hungary called Béla. Béla I, one of the exiled sons of the blinded Vazul, a relative of St Stephen, reigned briefly between 1060 and

⁸ See László Erdélyi, ed., *A pannonhalmi Szt. Benedek rend története*, 12 vols. (Budapest: Stephaneum, 1902–1916), vol. 1, p. 680, and a similar wording from the year 1221, vol. 12, p. 201.

⁹ In fact, in the time of Anonymus the title *magister* did not imply a university degree or teaching license; see Rainer Maria Herkenrath, “Studien zum Magistertitel in der frühen Stauferzeit,” *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 88 (1988), p. 5 (pp. 3–35).

1063. Béla II “the Blind,” blinded as a child together with his father, Prince Álmos, by King Coloman, reigned from 1131 to 1141. Béla III, who returned from Byzantium where he had been for a while heir presumptive to Emperor Manuel, was king between 1172 and 1196. Finally, there is Béla IV, Hungary’s ruler during the Mongol invasion and acclaimed “restorer” of the kingdom, who reigned longer than all his namesakes, from 1235 to 1270. The basic difficulty of identifying the author and dating his writing is compounded by the fact that very few charters were issued before the 1220s (and even less survived). Accordingly, the names and properties (estates, castles, etc.) mentioned in the *Gesta* cannot be cross-checked with the evidence preserved elsewhere in order to establish more exactly the time of the chronicle’s composition.¹⁰

From the eighteenth to the mid-twentieth century the central issue was the “reliability” of the author: that is, how well informed he was of the events he related, and, thus, how much reliance may be put on his pieces of “information.” In respect of his reliability, it was assumed that the earlier he could be shown to have composed his account, the better; for if he wrote in the eleventh century—or at least in the early twelfth—he might be supposed to have “known” more precisely what happened in the ninth. On the other hand, it had to be conceded that many expressions or references in the *Gesta* pointed to a later composition, maybe even as late as the end of the thirteenth century. The debate over the four Bélas could fill a library and elicited some very acute and valuable philological and historical insights, which it is hardly necessary to rehearse here. For some time now, the scholarly consensus—though not without some scholars holding out for a different dating—is that Anonymus was formerly employed by Béla III and thus wrote his *Gesta* some time after 1192.

Even accepting this date as a *terminus post quem*, the exact date of the *Gesta*’s composition is still debated. Presently, most historians (disregarding the minority who still doubt the connection

¹⁰ The few instances where some hints at historical persons can be found are noted below, see e.g. n. 4 on p. 43; n. 1 on p. 44; n. 3 on p. 51.

to Béla III) suggest a date later than the traditional "ca. 1200." The concern to justify Hungarian claims to the territory of the kingdom vis-à-vis Byzantium or to explain the involvement of the royal house in the affairs of Halich, relevant in the years immediately following Béla's death,¹¹ speaks for an early thirteenth-century date. How much later it could have been written is an open question, depending on the weight given to linguistic and historical (charters &c.) evidence. However, considering the probable age of the author and the fact that it is unlikely that the Mongol invasion of 1241 would not have left traces in the *Gesta*, the *terminus ante quem* could be as late as the 1230s.

While the name of the author remains an enigma (and in our times the need to find names for anonymous authors, a matter central to scholarly enquiry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,¹² is of less importance), some features of his career can be culled from the text. It has been assumed—partly based on his formulaic reference to "schoolmate N."—that he studied at a French or (more likely) Italian university or cathedral school, but his rather simple Latin and limited familiarity with the Classics speaks against that. It would have been, for example, obvious to borrow from Vergil when telling the story of the foundation of a new homeland, but he never did.¹³ His schooling was more probably that of a notary and his style is closer to the rather unsophisticated urban chronicles of his time than to that of university-trained authors. Anonymus's literary models are taken more from "popular

¹¹ Between 1205 and 1213, King Andrew II led almost yearly campaigns to Halich, supporting different claimants to its throne; after 1205/6 he used the title *rex Galicie et Lodomerie* in his royal style; and in 1214 he made his son, Prince Coloman, king of Halich; see George A. Perfecky, "Hungary and the Hungarians in the Galician-Volynian Chronicle," *Hungarian Studies* 8 (1987) 1-2, pp. 19-29, with extensive quotations from primary evidence.

¹² Compare the eighteenth-century efforts by Russian scholars to identify the author of the anonymous Primary Chronicle; see Oleksiy Tolochko, "On Nestor the Chronicler," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, forthcoming (2010).

¹³ Compare, among others, Cosmas of Prague, whose chapter on the settlement of the ancestors in Bohemia is thoroughly indebted to the *Aeneid*, or Dudo of St. Quentin, who used Vergil for his story of the Normans' foundation of their duchy.

readings" than from the Classics or ecclesiastical authors. The occasional word or term from such authorities must have reached him second hand. He may, however, had travelled abroad, as he was familiar with some areas of Western Europe, and it is unlikely that the books he read (as discussed below) would have been available in Hungary

The author's knowledge of place names, major roads and castles, especially in the north-eastern part of Hungary, and the frequent echo of formulas of charters in the text confirm his closeness to the itinerant royal court.¹⁴ His linguistic abilities are unclear: he seems to have known some Magyar, but whether it was his first language is uncertain, since sometimes he uses Hungarian "case endings" in the Latin, as if unaware of Hungarian grammar. (It has also been suggested that he took these forms from some long-lost, heroic songs and retained them unchanged.) Still, many of his etymologies are correct and betray a knowledge of the vernacular. He felt, for example, that an ending -d implied a Hungarian diminutive (e.g., Borsod, ch. 18, p. 49 and elsewhere).¹⁵ It has been demonstrated that he knew little if any Greek but may have had a grasp of some Turkic language (he was possibly the first European writer to call the Black Sea as such, which suggests some acquaintance with Turkic).¹⁶ His occasional etymologies based on

¹⁴ It is worth noting that from the forty-eight castles mentioned by Anonymus, forty-four have been identified by archaeologists as being built in the Árpáadian age (though, of course, not in the ninth century); see István Bóna, *Az Árpádok korai várjai* [Early castles of the Árpadians], 2nd ed. (Debrecen: Etnica, 1998).

¹⁵ It has been suggested that the words *contra stare* for 'resist, stand up against' hide a Hungarism as mirror translation of Magyar *ellenállni* 'stand against,' since the expression is very rarely found in Medieval Latin; however, it may come from the Bible. Possible Hungarisms are also suggested in János Harmatta, "Remarques sur le lexique du latin médiéval et la substrat hongrois," *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 13 (1975), pp. 335-44.

¹⁶ Georges I. Bratianu, *La mer Noire* (Societas Academica Dacoromana. Acta Historica, 9), Monaco, 1969, p. 45; János Horváth, "Meister P. und sein Werk," *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 17 (1969) pp. 17-48; 18 (1970): 371-412, 19 (1971) 347-382. However, naming the Pontus Euxinus 'Black Sea' occurs also in Nordic texts, e.g. in Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla* or *the Lives of the Norse Kings*, ed. Snorre Sturluson and Erling Mønsen, p. 1 (Cambridge: Heffer, 1932), and in

Slavic words are correct. But these are only hypotheses. Whether our notary obtained higher ecclesiastical preferment after service in the chancellery cannot be ascertained, although it is supposed by most scholars. That he did not identify himself as such may have been due to the stylistic demands of the humility topos.

GESTA REGUM – GESTA NOBILIUM¹⁷

More relevant than the exact identity of the author is his purpose in writing, the *causa scribendi*. Even if we disregard the witty construction of Szabolcs de Vajay, who played with the idea that the *Gesta* was but a “game” among intellectuals,¹⁸ there are many other possible guesses as to the author’s intentions. Anonymus may indeed have intended to give a historically-grounded account of early Hungarian history that was not based upon the songs of minstrels and the yarns of yokels,¹⁹ and that comported with the historical fashion of his times. To present a respectable or even illustrious *origo gentis*—in this case, the descent of the Hungarians from the undefeated Scythians—was a common endeavor in the Middle Ages.²⁰ Similarly, to establish an elegant genealogy for the ruling dynasty—here by associating it with Japhet, son of Noah, and

the *Morkinskinna* (c. 1220), ed. Finnur Jónsson, pp. 84–5 (Copenhagen: Jørgensen, 1932), thus, the form may have reached Anonymus from other directions as well.

¹⁷ We borrow this subtitle from the Romanist János Györy’s book, *Gesta Regum – Gesta Nobilium. Tanulmány Anonymus krónikájáról* [*Gesta Regum – Gesta Nobilium: Studies on the chronicle of Anonymus*] (Budapest: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, 1948).

¹⁸ The well-known medievalist Szabolcs de Vajay, wrote a tongue-in-cheek novel, published (appropriately anonymously!) with the title *Én, Anonymus* [I, Anonymus] (Budapest: Argumentum, 1998), in which he has the notary write a spoof *Gesta* for the amusement of a friend.

¹⁹ See below, Prologue and ch. 42, pp. 5 and 91.

²⁰ On rhetorical-literary history writing based on Classical sources, see Reginald W. Southern, *Aspects of the European Traditions of Historical Writing*, vol. 1, *The Classical Tradition from Einhard to Geoffrey of Monmouth*, Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th Series, 20, 1970, pp. 173–96. See also Alheydis Plassmann, *Origo gentis:*

with the Old Testament Gog and Magog, and even more so, with Attila the Hun, the “scourge of God,”—fits well with the legendary stories of other ruling houses. The notary did even more, assigning to the landowning clans and kindreds of his time heroic ancestors from the “conquest age,” who received their estates from none less than Árpád, chief of the ninth-century Magyars, and “hold it ever since,” as the author repeatedly confirms. As a member of the chancellery, he may have had access to donation charters, even if there was hardly any central register of such grants in his time (nor was there any later). Throughout the Hungarian Middle Ages, the proems (*narrationes*) of these documents often referred in detail to past heroic deeds²¹ as the reason for the grant of an estate *in perpetuum*. The exploits of the heroes and the suitable prizes obtained for them, as told by the notary, reflect this perception of service and reward. Indeed, it was not long after 1200 that the leading families began to refer to a real or legendary ancestor of their kindred when describing themselves as being *de genere &c* (‘of the kindred of...’).²² By lauding the descent of the royal house and of the kingdom’s leading families, the *Gesta* may thus have been welcome both to the court and to the king’s great men, the author’s lords and contemporaries. Moreover, Anonymus did not tire to underline that Árpád consulted his retinue every time before deciding on a campaign or embassy, while in the so-called “blood contract” the legendary chieftains (the “principal persons” in his usage) were guaranteed that they and their offspring would forever hold the possessions they had obtained and would not be left out of the prince’s council.²³ The oath additionally contains in rudimentary form what became the oft-discussed “right of resistance” of the no-

Identitäts- und Legitimitätsstiftung in früh- und hochmittelalterlichen Herkunftserzählungen, Orbis mediaevalis, 7 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2006).

²¹ See Elemér Mályusz, “La chancellerie royale et la rédaction des chroniques dans la Hongrie médiévale,” *Le Moyen Age* 75 (1969), pp. 51–86, 219–54.

²² Indeed, almost all of the kindreds mentioned by the author as descendants of the legendary heroes are documented from around 1200.

²³ See chs. 5–6, p. 17–19 below.

bility, codified in the famous Golden Bull of Andrew II of 1222.²⁴ All these notions coincided with the concerns of the ever more powerful aristocracy of the early thirteenth century, one of the possible intended “audiences” of the retired notary.

In contrast to most historians of his age, Anonymus, even though most likely a clerk, did not denigrate the pagan ancestors of the Magyars but rather emphasized that God or the Holy Spirit had led them in their battles and exploits.²⁵ Of course, the conviction that victory is granted by God to the just side, and thus that the victors must have had divine support, was general in the Christian Middle Ages,²⁶ but the notary went further than this. He underlined more than once that the pagan Magyars were granted victory and obtained new land with the express support of God. Only once did he admit that the Hungarians of the tenth century were bent on conquest and the ruthless subjection of peoples—but then right away added that they were compelled so to act, otherwise they could not have bequeathed land and power to succeeding generations.²⁷ The Christianization of the people by St Stephen is noted briefly and one who resisted it, condemned,²⁸ but in the *Gesta* none of the usual “discontinuity” can be detected between the distant heathen past and the Christian age. Thus a divine legitimization of all past deeds of the “ancestors” was interwoven with the “national history.” Subsequently, the “mission” of the Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin became a basic tenet of Magyar national identity, with or without a religious or metaphysical content.

²⁴ See *DRMH* 1, 32-5, and Josef Deér, “Der Weg zur Goldenen Bulle Andreas II,” *Schweizer Beiträge zur allgemeinen Geschichte* 10 (1952), pp. 104-38.

²⁵ See chs. 4, 8, 23, 37, 39, 44, 46, 49, 50, 56 etc., pp. 15, 23 and so on, below. See László Veszprémy, “More paganism”: Reflections on Pagan and Christian Past in the *Gesta Hungarorum* (*GH*) of the Hungarian Anonymous Notary,” in Ildar H. Garipzanov, ed., *Historical Narratives and Christian Identity on a European Periphery* (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming), ch. 10, and the other articles in the same volume.

²⁶ For which, see e.g. 1 Macc. 3.19: “For the success of war is not in the multitude of the army, but strength cometh from heaven.”

²⁷ Ch. 44, p. 97.

²⁸ Ch. 57, p. 1279 with the closing rhymed lines.

METHOD AND SOURCES

Anonymus’s account is above all else a “toponymic romance” that seeks to explain place-names by reference to imagined events or persons, and vice versa. Not having had any reliable information on the early history of the Magyars, nor of the events surrounding their arrival and settlement in the Carpathian Basin, Anonymus had to invent the past on the basis of what he knew of his own time and assemble it in the narrative form popular in his age.

The notary’s basic “method” was to explain the toponymy of the late twelfth century by reference to events and people living in the ninth and tenth centuries and to invent persons whose names he took from toponyms. He also sensed, correctly, that names of places, waters, and mountains or hills tend to preserve the memory of olden times or of their earliest inhabitants and first known owners. In fact, Hungarian place names are often derived from some ancient owner, without any morphological change. (Therefore, the many place names in the *Gesta* are valuable clues to the old Hungarian language, at least as it was spoken ca. 1200). It was by conflating persons with places that Anonymus arrived, for example, at the names of the warrior Csepel, of the Vlach lord, Marót, and of the defeated leader of Slavs, Salan. These personal names were all taken directly from contemporary toponymy, respectively the name of the island on the Danube immediately south of modern Budapest; that of two villages, both called Marótlaka (now: Morlaca), near Cluj²⁹; and that of the ford of Szalánkemén/Slankamen on the confluence of the Danube and Tisza rivers.

Although Anonymus got the names of the earliest Hungarian rulers right, as well as some of the early tribal chieftains, he described the Hungarians beating Slavic, Vlach and Bulgarian leaders whose names—as mentioned above—are not attested anywhere else. The Magyars allying themselves with the Cumans (who

²⁹ To complicate matters further, the word *maróti* meant a Moravian in Old Hungarian!

appeared in Europe only in the late eleventh century) and, more incredibly, defeating "Romans" are particularly impressive items of his phantasy. All in all, his description of power-relations north of the Danube in the late ninth century is not supported by any other account. As he had no knowledge of the peoples encountered by the Magyars of the ninth century, he populated the region with those whom he knew from his own time or whose names appeared among the toponyms of his country. For good measure, he also added some, such as the Romans, derived from his own reading of popular histories.

Nevertheless, there are bits of history also known from other sources in Anonymus's work, and at least a few of his heroes can be confirmed from information given by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Liudprand of Cremona, the Annals of St Gall, and the continuator of Regino of Prüm.³⁰ For much of the early history he borrowed extensively from Regino. As well, he plainly relied in part on diverse (unknown) written accounts, some of which would later feed into the "Hungarian Chronicle" known from a fourteenth-century compilation, but possibly going back to some centuries before.³¹ (The Hungarian Chronicle also tells of the shaven Cuman heads being sliced like unripe gourds.³²) The extent

³⁰ See below, chs. 55, 57 (p. 121). Constantine Porphyrogenitus's mid-tenth century account, *De Administrando imperio*—henceforth *DAI*—thus records 'Almoutzis' and his son, 'Arpad', as Hungarian leaders (ch. 38)—ed. Gyula Moravcsik and Romilly J. H. Jenkins (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1967), pp. 172-3; Gyula Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1958), vol. 2, pp. 63, 71-2, 107, 298. For the Western sources, see below, esp. chs. 53-5 (pp. 115-21). Regino's account is known to have circulated extensively in Central Europe. According to Macartney (*The Medieval Hungarian Historians*, pp. 82-3), Anonymus may have also borrowed from an account of the Third Crusade.

³¹ The relationship of these—and possibly others—to each other is a complicated issue (on which see also above, n. 1, on p. XVII) and would lead too far to be discussed here. A brief summary is offered in László Veszprémy, "Gesta Ungarorum," in *Europas Mitte*, vol. 2, pp. 542-50; see also László Veszprémy and Frank Schaer, ed. and trans., *Simonis de Kéza, Gesta Hungarorum/Simon of Kéza, The Deeds of the Hungarians* (Budapest and New York: CEU Press, 1999)—henceforth, Simon of Kéza—esp. pp. xii-xiv.

³² Ch. 8, below; cf. ch. 102, SRH 1, p. 368.

to which the author relied upon "oral traditions"—which he dismissed twice, but quoted once!—cannot, however, be tested, but it is not unlikely that the major clans had traditions of their own origins as well as minstrels who recited heroic songs about these. There are many stylistic elements in the *Gesta*, such as "formulaic" repetitions, that are typical of lays of this type. Alas, little can be said about these possible oral traditions, as the first surviving fragment of a vernacular "heroic song" is from the siege of Šabac, anno 1478—clearly far too distant from our notary's time to tell us anything about what he might have heard.

Based on his toponymic constructions and on some oral or written traditions, Anonymus decided to write a story of the Hungarians wandering westwards and occupying step by step, partly with victorious battles, the Carpathian Basin using the narrative modes he had learned from the stories of the siege of Troy and the exploits of Alexander the Great.

According to the expectations of his age, when chroniclers were no more satisfied by merely reporting what they read or heard but wished to authenticate their narrative,³³ Anonymus right away mentioned Scripture and Dares Phrygius as his authorities. Indeed, he relied on both. His Biblical references, mainly from the Pentateuch but also from other books of the Old Testament, are not surprising in a clerical author. Dares and his *Excidium Troie*³⁴ came to be Anonymus's model not only by direct borrowings, but in the

³³ See Bernard Guenée, *Histoire et culture historique dans l'Occident médiévale* (Paris: Aubier, 1980), pp. 300-31, and idem, "L'histoire entre l'éloquence et la science. Quelques remarques sur le prologue de Guillaume de Malmesbury et ses *Gesta regum Anglorum*," *Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres. Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres* 1982 (126, no. 2), pp. 357-69.

³⁴ The account of the fall of Troy by pseudo-Dares Phrygius was composed ca. 600 AD and much read in the centuries following. See *Daretis Phrygii de Excidio Troiae Historia*, ed. Ferdinand Meister (Leipzig: Teubner, 1873), esp. chs. 12-13, pp. 14-7; *The Trojan War: The Chronicles of Dictys of Crete and Dares the Phrygian*, trans. R. M. Frazer Jr. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), pp. 131-68; *Excidium Troiae*, ed. E. Bagby Atwood and Virgil K. Whitaker (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1944); *Excidium Troie*, ed. Alan Keith Bate, *Lateinische Sprache und Literatur des Mittelalters*, vol. 23 (Frankfurt-Bern-New York: Peter Lang, 1986).

overall structure of short but informative accounts naming important protagonists and main events.³⁵ For the lively battle scenes, Anonymus's guide was one of the popular romances about Alexander the Great.³⁶

Legal expressions abound in the *Gesta*. Some of them have a good pedigree, such as the word *embola* for 'a troop' that comes from Justinian's *Codex* (1.2.10 etc.) and appears in twelfth-century commentaries as well. But it is unlikely that Anonymus read any of these. We may rather assume that he found the word in some model charter or formulary. His pun on *exercitator* – *exercitatione* (ch. 55, p. 118–9) is also hardly his invention, since it appears in Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies* (9.3.58), but was no doubt similarly transmitted to him in some handbook or charter. Most of the legal terms are, however, borrowings from chancery practice, identifiable from the—however few—Hungarian deeds of his age or earlier.

Among the *artes dictandi*, Anonymus used, beyond doubt, that of Hugh of Bologna, the *Rationes dictandi prosaice* (ca. 1119–30),³⁷ already in the first few lines of his work. (Indeed, this is a strong argument against placing him in the eleventh century.) However, he did not follow it in the rest of his writing as his formulations are quite pedestrian. Excepting a few puns and not very imaginative metaphors, his style is plain, though mostly clear

³⁵ There are, indeed, examples of codices in which such texts are bound together. One such, from Monte Cassino, now in the Bibliotheca Laurentiana, contains the *Exordia Scythica*, Dares Phrygius and a commentary on the *Aeneis*; in another (in Bamberg) a probably Neapolitan story of Troy and an excerpt from Virgil are found together. Our notary may have perused a similar codex; see István Kapitánffy, "Anonymus és az *Excidium Troiae*" [Anonymus and the *Excidium Troiae*], *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 75 (1971), pp. 126–29 (reprinted in idem, *Hungarobyzantina: Bizánc és a görögység középkori magyarországi forrásokban* (Budapest: Typotext, 2003), pp. 194–203.

³⁶ E.g. the *Historia Alexandri Magni. Historia de Preliis. Rezension J2*, ed. Alfred Hilka (Meisenheim am Glan: Anton Hain, 1976–7); see also the Bibliography.

³⁷ Hugo Bononiensis, *Rationes dictandi prosaice*, in *Briefsteller und Formelbücher des elften bis vierzehnten Jahrhunderts*, ed. Ludwig Rockinger (Munich: Franz, 1863; repr. Aalen: Scientia, 1969), vol. 1, pp. 47–94.

and informative. The few rhymed sentences would not qualify as *prosologium* (verse inserts into prose) and one cannot find any of the more demanding rhetorical devices usual in twelfth- and thirteenth-century writings.

After all this, it hardly needs to be emphasized that the *Gesta* is in no ways a source of information for the events it pretends to narrate, but rather for the ideas about them current in the Hungary of the notary's times and for the literary skills of its author.

RECEPTION

There are very few documents from the Middle Ages that carry such heavy political baggage. Soon after its publication in the eighteenth century, German scholars of the Universities of Halle and Göttingen dismissed it as a baseless tale, and called the author a "Fabelmann" (fairy-tale teller), particularly on account of his faulty description of the Rus' principalities. In fact, these chapters of the *Gesta* offered a striking parallel to the description in the Russian Primary Chronicle (first published in 1767) of the Hungarians' passage by Kiev on their way to their new homeland. But August Ludwig Schlözer and Johann Salomo Semler argued that the principalities mentioned by Anonymus did not exist in the ninth century. They also pointed to Anonymus's uncritical and inconsistent use of Regino.³⁸ Other German readers also noted the absence of any reference to Germans in the kingdom of Hungary, which is, in fact, a strange omission. While the *Gesta's* authenticity in the strict sense of being a narrative composed in the Middle Ages, rather than a later forgery, was rarely doubted, it was nevertheless decried as not being a "true record."

³⁸ E.g., Johann Salomo Semler, *Versuch den Gebrauch der Quellen in der Staats- und Kirchengeschichte der mitlern Zeiten zu erleichtern* (Halle: Gebauer, 1761), pp. 27–33; August Ludwig Schlözer, *Nestor, Russische Annalen in ihrer Slawonischen Grund Sprache* (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1805), vol. 3, pp. 107–48.

Within the kingdom, it was a Slovak priest, Georgius Szklenár, who in 1784 and 1788 first registered doubts as to the *Gesta's* reliability. His study was a seriously critical assessment, based on good philology, but he, too, dismissed the notary as "a liar" on account of his failure to include the location of Great Moravia.³⁹ On the other hand, Anonymus's account was given full credit when it served nationalist interests. The Romanians of the eighteenth-century Principality of Transylvania (at that time under Viennese rule) turned to him for support. In the *Supplex libellus Valachorum*, submitted to the Vienna court, the authors claimed the right to be one of the historic "nations" of Transylvania beside the Hungarians, Székely and Saxons. They argued on the basis of Anonymus's narrative that, even though Prince Gelou/Gyalu of the "Vlachs" was defeated by the Magyars, his subjects swore an oath of allegiance to the chief Tuhutum/Tétény. Hence their descendants should be accepted as a constituent community of the Principality.⁴⁰

All such challenges were rejected by patriotic Hungarian (and Saxon) authors, some of whom added serious scholarship to the study of the text. The first major monograph in defense of Anonymus, Daniel Cornides's *Vindiciae anonymi Bele Regis notarii*, published posthumously in 1802, addressed virtually all the issues of dating and authenticity that were to be discussed in the subsequent two centuries. While he did not come down unequivocally on the date (hesitating between Bela II and III), he mustered almost all problematic points which have featured in one way or another in the debates down to our day.⁴¹

³⁹ Georgius Szklenár, *Vetustissimus Magnae Moraviae situs*, (Posonii: n. p., 1784), and *Hypercriticon examinis vetustissimi Magnae Moraviae situs et vindiciae Anonymi Belae Regis scribeae*, Ibid. 1788. The author could not foresee that the question of the location and extent of "Magna Moravia" will be a major issue of debate some two hundred years later, beginning with Imre Boba's *Moravia's History Reconsidered: A Reinterpretation of Medieval Sources* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1971)—and still not settled.

⁴⁰ *Representatio et humillimae preces universae in Transylvania valachicae nationis se pro reanicolari natione qualis fuit...* (Ias, 1791).

⁴¹ A few overviews of the controversies around the *Gesta* are listed in the bibliography, below, p. 233.

The description which the author gives of the presence and whereabouts of peoples in Central Europe during the ninth century was extensively used to buttress historical claims to territories until well into the twentieth century. Readings of the *Gesta* were thus used after 1918 to justify the cession of Transylvania to Romania as well as, after the Second World War, of Oroszvár to Czechoslovakia.⁴² In 1987, the *Gesta* acquired particular notoriety on account of a full-page advertisement in *The Times*, paid for by the Romanian government, affirming the validity of the chronicler's account of a Romanian presence in the Carpathian basin more than a thousand years before.⁴³ Modern scholarly readings of the *Gesta Hungarorum* are less beset by political partisanship in the post-Schengen world of the EU. Only dinosaurs care about who was where first.

On the other side, the story as presented by Anonymus quickly came to form the *grande narrative* of the Magyars in the age of budding national self-consciousness and beyond. The first major step was its transformation into an epic poem of ten cantos by the young Mihály Vörösmarty (1800–1855), published in 1825 as "The Flight of Zalán: A Heroic Poem."⁴⁴ In the best Homeric tradition—following the example of the seventeenth-century Hungarian epic by Nicholas Zrínyi/Zrinski on the siege of the castle of Szigetvár⁴⁵—Vörösmarty described in romantic fashion heroic musters, roaring battle scenes, and the tragic fates of the vanquished. His names, partly culled from the notary's text,

⁴² Macartney, *The Medieval Hungarian Historians*, p. 70.

⁴³ *The Times*, 7 April, 1987; reproduced in László Péter, ed., *Historians and the History of Transylvania* (Boulder CO: East European Monographs, 1992), pp. 197–201.

⁴⁴ Mihál (sic) Vörösmarty, *Zalán futása. Hősköltemény* (Pest: Trattner, 1825). On this see János M. Bak, "From Anonymus to the 'Flight of Zalán,'" in *Histoire Croisée of the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Patrick Geary and Gábor Klaniczay (The Hague: Brill, forthcoming).

⁴⁵ Miklós Zrínyi, *Libri obsidionis Szigetianae XV, azaz A szigeti veszedelem XV énekben*, first published in 1651.

partly of his own invention,⁴⁶ and the entire image of the victorious horsemen defeating the cowardly Slavs became the common inheritance of the Hungarian public, “folklorized” through calendars and schoolbooks until well into the twentieth century.⁴⁷ For the millennial celebration of the “arrival of the Hungarians” in 1896, the novelist Maurus Jókai (1825-1904) designed a 120-metre panorama, which in its depiction of events closely followed Anonymus’s account.⁴⁸ In 1995, the restored panorama, after suffering damage in the Second World War, was put on public view at Pusztaszer, where, according to Anonymus’s account, the conquering Hungarians had first drawn up their laws. And Árpád with his six “principal persons,” mounted on Arab steeds and wearing panther-skin capes, just as Anonymus and Vörösmarty imagined them, still overlooks the grave of the Unknown Soldier at Heroes’ Square in Budapest.

EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES

The Latin text follows, as mentioned above, essentially the one established by its editors in the standard collection of Hungarian narrative sources, edited by Szentpétery, but has been freshly

⁴⁶ A quick survey of given names in Hungary today would confirm the continued popularity not only of Attila but also of Árpád, Emese, Szabolcs, Zsolt and many others for which the copyright rests with either the notary or the poet.

⁴⁷ In her doctoral dissertation, the folklorist Éva Mikos looked at more than seventy calendars (“Farmers’ Almanach” type books) beginning with 1778, and found in a great number of them stories and pictures based on the *Gesta*; see her “Anonymus és a folklore, avagy esettanulmány arról miképpen lett az ismeretlen mester műve mindékié a 19. században” [Anonymus and folklore: A case study about the unknown master’s work having become common knowledge in the nineteenth century], in *Folklor és történelem*, ed. Ágnes Szemerkenyi (Budapest: Akadémiai, 2007), pp. 102–22.

⁴⁸ See, inter alia, Janos M. Bak and Anna Bak-Gara, “The Ideology of a ‘Millennial Constitution’ of Hungary,” *East European Quarterly* 15 (1981), pp. 307–26; reprinted as ch. 17 in J. M. Bak, *Studying Medieval Rulers and Their Subjects: Central Europe and Beyond* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010.).

collated with the manuscript in facsimile.⁴⁹ Since that edition is slightly outdated and not easily available, we also note as emendations vis-à-vis the manuscript and register in the notes the corrections proposed by more recent research. The titles of the chapters follow the rubrics of the surviving manuscript, and the numbering of the chapters adheres to conventions set since the eighteenth century. As usual in modern editions, the author’s usage regarding u/v has been normalized, but occasionally (in proper names) retained for the sake of authenticity.

The translation follows the principles of the CEMT series. It attempts to reproduce as far as possible the sense and style of the Latin original while offering a readable English narrative. In the case of the *Gesta* we may have been more rigorous than usual in following the Latin, retaining repetitions and circumlocutory formulations even if the sentence structure thus became awkward. A few exceptions to CEMT practice have been made. Besides “modernizing” all proper names, about which more below, we reduced the number of *ets* and cut up the notary’s often interminably long sentences, frequently containing events or comments not belonging in the same statement. The usual Latin form of beginning titles, *De* (On...), was omitted for easier readability. We tried to rescue as much as possible of the author’s word-plays, but did not succeed in all cases. The two or three rhyming inserts are translated in such a way as to give an impression of their character. Verbatim quotations taken from diverse sources (reproduced in italics) are identified wherever appropriate,⁵⁰ but the author’s frequent recurrence to his readings (such as the story of Troy or the Alexander the Great romances) was not specified in every case. Our translation has profited much from recent German and Hungarian versions,⁵¹ both of which have more annotations than the present volume. In respect of the notes and critical apparatus, we have fol-

⁴⁹ See Bibliography, pp. 229–30.

⁵⁰ Biblical quotations follow as a rule the Douay-Reims translation of the Vulgate. Recurrent Biblical phrases will not be identified at subsequent instances.

⁵¹ See the Bibliography, below, p. 230.

lowed CEMT practice by referring mainly to titles in languages other than Hungarian (or other local vernaculars), assuming that readers familiar with these will be able to find the references in the national bibliographies and handbooks. Considering the extensive scholarship on innumerable details of the *Gesta*, we had to be economical. The bibliography (pp. 229–41 below) may help to identify additional literature.

The usual problem of translating technical terms in medieval Central European texts into English—due to the different social and political development from that in the British Isles—emerged with the *Gesta* as well, and even more so as the notary applied terms of his own time to describe events occurring many hundred years before. Among these are such words as *dux*, *nobilis* and *jobagio*. The first is the most problematic. Anonymus seems to have used the term in its very basic meaning, as ‘leader.’ He did not mean by “duke” the ruler or commander of a region or group of people subordinate to a sovereign. His *duces*, be they leaders of the Hungarians or their opponents, were supreme lords of their respective “polities.” Therefore, we decided to follow the traditional Hungarian custom of calling the heads of peoples or major territorial units “princes” (with the exception of the dukes of the Czechs, who bore this title in the earlier Middle Ages). We did not attempt to be precise in a “constitutional” sense, thus our choice is open to challenge. The author’s reference to *nobiles* and *jobagiones* can be decoded on the basis of near-contemporary records (such as the Golden Bull of Andrew II of 1222). There, both terms refer to the major lords or aristocrats, even though the two words changed their meaning in the course of the thirteenth century. *Nobiles* came to mean a wide stratum of freemen with landed property, and *jobagio* (from the Hungarian ‘*jobbágy*’) a seigneurially dependent peasant. The notary used the two terms in their ancient meaning, thereby adding to the debate over the dating of his text. Another term with specific meaning for the medieval Hungarian society is *genus*, used by Anonymus for the descendants of the legendary heroes of his story. We translate it as ‘kindred,’ a term introduced in the translation of Erik Fügedi’s pioneering study of a noble family-

network in northern Hungary.⁵² The kindreds—similar to clans, but differing in the way they reckoned their membership and in some other characteristics—seem to have held land in common. Even after the land had been divided up between branches (and later families), all male members of the kindred had inheritance rights in case of default of issue and thus retained a concurrent legal interest. Many kindreds had a central castle and a sacral centre (‘kindred monastery’) that served as their common funeral site. As argued above, the *Gesta* seems to have been written to a great extent for the purpose of giving these twelfth- and thirteenth-century kindreds an archaic pedigree. Much less problematic is that the author calls all waters, from creek to river (even lake!) *fluvius* (exceptionally: *rivulus*, *stagnum*), and all elevations, be they only 20–50 meters high, *mons*; we keep his usage and translate all of these as ‘river’ and ‘mountain’ (unless otherwise specified by the author). Similarly, Anonymus called every settlement of some importance *castrum* or Hungarian *-vár* (castle), regardless whether in fact it was ever a fortified site. We have occasionally commented on this, but otherwise translated his appellation verbatim. Additional problems of translation are discussed in the relevant notes.

Names posed here a greater problem than in several other texts in this series. As mentioned above, only very few personal names are known from other sources; most of them were invented by the author based on place names or borrowed from his own time. Both those in charters and the *Gesta* are inconsistent in their spelling. In the course of the two hundred years of scholarly study of this text, a certain convention (not without doubts and disagreements among experts) has emerged in Hungarian historiography, and we have followed it. Some of the spellings (mostly based on linguistic study) have been revised in the last decades, and we have taken those suggestions into consideration. Readers having

⁵² Erik Fügedi, *The Elefánthy: The Hungarian Nobleman and His Kindred*, ed. Damir Karbić (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 1998). The problem of continuity between the ancient clans of the “Conquest Age” and the kindreds known from the twelfth–thirteenth century (and beyond) is a moot point and needs not to detain us here.

the parallel Latin text on the left hand page may decide to accept or reject our constructions. (The variants can be easily compared in the Index of Names, pp. 243–50 below). None the less, it has to be admitted that no one is sure about the “original” form of most of the names, if they ever existed outside the imagination of Anonymus.

As to geographical names—as discussed above, a significant element in the whole work—we have chosen to be pragmatic. Without going into the controversies over the one or the other toponym, we accepted the most convincing reconstruction and have sought to identify it with a name appearing on a modern map. Quite a few of these are, admittedly, uncertain, but Hungarian historians and archaeologists have applied so much attention to this text that we had plenty of suggestions to choose from. CEMT policy is to print geographical names in their present-day official—or usual Anglicized—form. This may sound anachronistic, but considering that in our own time the Carpathian Basin is divided between several states each with its official language, only this procedure allows readers to find the location on any good map. (The different versions of the place names are listed in the Gazetteer, pp. 263–8; and a map on the front endpaper, using Anonymus’s spelling, gives some indication of the approximate location of most of them.)



The Statue of Anonymus in the City Park of Budapest
(Miklós Ligeti, 1903)

INCIPIT PROLOGUS IN GESTA HUNGARORUM^a

[SRH, 33] P dictus^b magister ac quondam bone memorie gloriosissimi Bele regis Hungarie notarius¹ N *suo dilectissimo amico, viro venerabili et arte litteralis scientie inbuto,*² *salutem et sue petitionis effectum*^c.³ Dum olim in scolari studio simul essemus et in hystoria Troiana, *quam ego cum summo amore complexus ex libris Darethis Frigii*⁴ *ceterorumque auctorum,*⁵ *sicut a magistris meis audiveram, in unum volumen proprio stilo compilaveram,* pari voluntate legeremus, petisti a me, ut, sicut hystoriam Troianam bellaque Grecorum scripseram, ita et genealogiam regum Hungarie et nobilium suorum, qualiter septem principales persone, que Hetumoger⁶ vocantur, de terra Scithica descenderunt vel qualis sit terra Scithica et qualiter sit generatus dux Almus⁷ aut quare vocatur Almus primus dux Hungarie, a quo reges Hungarorum originem duxerunt, vel quot regna et reges sibi subiugaverunt aut quare populus de terra Scithica egressus per ydioma alienigenarum Hungarii et in sua lingua propria Mogerii vocantur, tibi scriberem. *Promisi etenim*^d *me facturum,* sed aliis *negotii impeditus et tue petitionis*^e et mee *promissionis* iam pene eram oblitus, nisi mihi *per litteras tua dilectio debitum reddere monuisset.* Me-

^a Hungarum Ms

^b sic Ms, sine puncto. P <re>dictus Silagi; P. dictus SRH, Juhász

^c affectum Ms

^d et Ms add.

^e petitionis Ms corr.

¹ On the unknown identity of the author, see above, XIX seq.

² Nothing is known about N, if he existed at all. This clause and several others in the Prologue (such as writing for a friend, apology for delay, arguing for the need of remembrance) are commonplace usual in introductory passages (exordial *topoi*).

³ Here and below see Hugo Bononiensis, *Rationes dictandi prosaice*, pp. 53, 63–4, 84–6.

HERE BEGINS THE PROLOGUE TO THE DEEDS OF THE HUNGARIANS

P who is called master, and sometime notary of the most glorious Béla, king of Hungary of fond memory,¹ to *the venerable man N his most dear friend steeped in the knowledge of letters.*² *Greetings, and the answer to his plea.*³ When we were together at school reading with common purpose the story of Troy that I had *brought most lovingly together into one volume* from the books of Dares Phrygius⁴ and other authors,⁵ in suitable style, as I was taught by my masters, you asked me that, in the same way as I had written on the history of Troy and on the wars of the Greeks, so to write for you of the genealogy of the kings of Hungary and of their noblemen: how the seven leading persons, who are called the Hetumoger,⁶ came down from the Scythian land, what that Scythian land was like and how Prince Álmos⁷ was begotten and why Álmos, from whom the kings of Hungary trace their origin, is called the first prince of Hungary, and how many realms and rulers they conquered and why the people coming forth from the Scythian land are called Hungarians in the speech of foreigners but Magyars in their own. *I did indeed promise* that I would do so, but *hindered by other matters,* I might have almost entirely forgotten *your request and my promise,* had not your

⁴ See above, p. XXIX. For the sake of economy, we will mark by italics, but not specify in every case, the borrowings from these.

⁵ E.g., the *Excidium Troiae*, see above, n. 34, p. XXX.

⁶ Literally, 'the seven Hungarians.' Constantine Porphyrogenitus (DAI, ch. 38, pp. 170–1) confirms that the tribes of the Hungarians were seven in number. Throughout the text, the seven leaders are referred to as *principales persone* (which may be a borrowing from canon law, see, e.g., *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, vol. 2 Greg IX, Lib. 2, Tit. 1, c. xiv [col. 245], or Tit. VII. C.I [col. 265], 8c.). Incidentally, the 'Seven Hungarians' may have been the name of the tribal alliance; such appellations were common among steppe people, for example the name Onogur—a 'people' to which the Magyars belonged in the seventh-ninth centuries—means 'the ten Ogurs'.

⁷ On the problem of translating *dux*, see above, p. XXXVI.

mor igitur tue dilectionis, quamvis multis et diversis huius laboriosi seculi *impeditus sim negotiis*, facere tamen aggressus sum, que facere iussisti, et secundum traditiones diversorum hystoriographorum divine gratie fultus auxilio optimum estimans, ut ne posteris in ultimam generationem oblivioni tradatur. *Optimum ergo duxi, ut vere et simpliciter* tibi scriberem, *quod legentes possint agnoscere, quomodo res geste essent*.¹ Et si tam nobilissima gens Hungarie primordia sue generationis et forcia queque facta sua ex falsis fabulis rusticorum [SRH, 34] vel a garrulo cantu ioculatorum quasi sompniando audiret, valde indecorum et satis indecens² esset.³ Ergo potius an non⁴ de certa Scripturarum explanatione et aperta hystoriarum interpretatione rerum veritatem nobiliter percipiat. Felix igitur Hungaria, cui sunt dona data varia, omnibus enim horis gaudeat de munere sui litteratoris,⁴ quia exordium genealogie regum suorum et nobilium habet, de quibus regibus sit laus et honor regi eterno et sancte Marie matri eius, per gratiam cuius reges Hungarie et nobiles regnum habeant felici fine hic et in evum. Amen.

I. DE SCITHIA.⁵

Scythia igitur maxima terra est, que Dentumoger⁶ dicitur, versus orientem, finis cuius ab aquilonali parte *extenditur* usque ad Nigrum Pontum.⁷ *A tergo* autem habet *flumen*, quod dicitur *Ithanais*,

⁴ *āmo Ms. anon Juhász: ammodo Silagi.*

¹ Dares, Preface, p. 1.

² *indecens et indecorum* was an often used formula in letters, probably of rhetorical or canonical origin; see, e.g., MGH, *Die Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit*, Vol. 5, *Briefsammlungen der Zeit Heinrichs IV*, ed. Carl Erdmann and Norbert Fickermann (Hanover: Hahn 1950), p. 61.

³ In the notary's time, there was increased concern about the "authenticity" of reports of the past as passed on by minstrels. So, for example, Count Baudoin V of Hainaut (1171–92) ordered a search for a "reliable" record about Charlemagne—and found the so-called Pseudo-Turpin chronicle; see Bernard Guenée, *Histoire et culture historique dans l'Occident médiéval*, Collection historique (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1980), p. 110. See also Paul Magdalino, ed., *The Perceptions of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe* (London: Hambledon Press, 1992).

kindness admonished me in a letter to discharge the debt. Mindful therefore of your kindness, and although *hindered by* the many and various *affairs* of this wearisome world, I have undertaken to do your bidding, following the example of diverse historians, supported by the help of God's grace; seeing this as best lest it be lost to posterity forever, *I considered it best* that I should write to you *truthfully and plainly*, so that *readers can know exactly what happened*.¹ It would be most *unworthy* and completely *unfitting*² for the so most noble people of Hungary to hear as if in sleep of the beginnings of their kind and of their bravery and deeds from the false stories of peasants and the gabbling song of minstrels.³ May they not more nobly perceive the truth of matters from the sure explanation of Scripture and the straightforward exposition of historical accounts? Glad thus is Hungary made, by the gifts to her conveyed, and should rejoice all hours in the gift of her men of letters,⁴ because she has now [a record of] the beginning of her line of kings and noblemen, for which kings shall be praise and honor to the King Eternal and the holy Mary, His mother, through whose grace the kings of Hungary and noblemen have the kingdom for happy purpose here and ever after. Amen.

1 SCYTHIA⁵

Scythia is then a very great land, called Dentumoger,⁶ over towards the east, the end of which *reaches* from the north to the Black Sea.⁷ *On the far side*, it has a river with great *marshes*, called the *Don*,

⁴ The first part of this sentence is in rhymed prose.

⁵ The account of Scythia given here ultimately derives from Justin's *Epitoma historiarum Philippicarum*, 2.1—*M. Iuniani Iustini Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum Pompei Trogi*, ed. Otto Seel (Leipzig: Teubner, 1972), pp. 18–9—and the *Exordia Scythica*—MGH AA, vol. 11/2, ed. Theodor Mommsen, pp. 308–22 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1984)—mediated through Regino, ad a. 889 (pp. 131–2).

⁶ The origin of this word—for both the legendary ancestral land and its inhabitants—is unclear. Its first part may refer to the River Don and the second to the name of the Magyars. Simon of Kéza and the Hungarian Chronicle have Dentia and Mogoria as two of the three parts of Scythia.

⁷ On the term 'Black Sea,' see above, p. XXIII.

cum *paludibus* magnis, ubi ultra modum habundanter inveniuntur zobolini¹ ita, quod non solum nobiles et ignobiles vestiuntur inde, verum etiam bubulci et subbulci ac opiliones sua decorant vestimenta^a in terra illa. Nam ibi habundat *aurum et argentum* et inveniuntur in fluminibus terre illius preciosi *lapides et gemme*. Ab orientali vero parte vicina Scithie fuerunt gentes *Gog et Magog*,² quos inclusit Magnus Alexander.³ Scithica autem terra *multum patula in longitudine et* [SRH, 35] *latitudine, homines vero, qui habitant eam*, vulgariter Dentumoger dicuntur usque in hodiernum diem et *nullius*^b umquam *imperatoris* potestate subacti fuerunt. *Scithici* enim sunt *antiquiores*^c *populi* et est potestas⁵ Scithie in oriente, ut supra diximus. Et primus rex Scithie fuit *Magog filius Iaphet*⁶ et gens illa a Magog rege vocata est Moger,⁷ a cuius etiam progenie regis descendit nominatissimus atque potentissimus rex Athila,⁸ qui anno dominice incarnationis CCCC° L° I° de terra Scithica descendens *cum valida manu* in terram Pannonie¹⁰ venit et fugatis Romanis regnum obtinuit et regalem sibi locum constituit iuxta Danubium super Calidas Aquas¹¹ et omnia antiqua opera, que ibi

^a vestimeta *Ms*

^b nullus *Ms corr.*

^c iux *Ms*

¹ It is interesting that the author called this animal and its fur (also below, pp. 29 and 41) *zobolini*, apparently from the Russian *sobol*, while elsewhere in medieval Latin it is called *sabellum*.

² Rev. 20.7; Isidore of Seville (*Etym.* 14.4.150 and 9.3.402).

³ See Andrew Runni Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1932).

⁴ Justin had discussed the Egyptians before writing about the Scythians (2.1, p. 18); hence the adjective "more" ancient.

⁵ *Potestas* is a textual corruption; the *Exordia* (p. 319) has *posita* ("located").

⁶ Magog is mentioned as *filius Japhet* in Gen. 10.2. Japhet is either the eldest or youngest son of Noah (the Book of Genesis gives both) and father of Magog. According to Isidore of Seville (*Etym.* 9.2.26-37), all the peoples of Europe were Japhet's descendants, with Magog being the specific progenitor of the Scythians and Goths.

where sables¹ can be found in such extraordinary abundance that in that land not only nobles and commoners dress in them but also with which even ox-herds, swine-herds and shepherds adorn their raiment. *Gold and silver* abound there and in the rivers of this land *precious stones and gems* are found. On its eastern side, neighboring Scythia, were the peoples *Gog and Magog*,² whom Alexander the Great had walled in.³ Scythia is *very extensive in its length and breadth and the men who dwell there*, commonly called Dentumoger, have right up to the present day never been subject to the sway of *any emperor*. *The Scythians are a more ancient people*⁴ and the power⁵ of Scythia is in the east, as we said above. The first king of Scythia was *Magog, son of Japhet*,⁶ and this people were called after him Magyar,⁷ from whose royal line the most renowned and mighty King Attila⁸ descended, who, in the year of Our Lord's incarnation 451,⁹ coming down from Scythia, entered Pannonia¹⁰ *with a mighty force* and, putting the Romans to flight, took the realm and made a royal residence for himself beside the Danube above the hot springs,¹¹ and he ordered all the old buildings

⁷ Anonymus is alone in deriving the Hungarians' name from Magog. Other chronicles construed an ancestor called Magor/Mogor (Simon of Kéza, pp. 15, 25; SRH vol. 1, p. 249, &c.).

⁸ From the extensive literature on the Attila tradition see, e.g., Martyn Rady, "Recollecting Attila: Some medieval Hungarian images and their antecedents," *Central Europe* 1 (2003), pp. 5-17. It is to be noted that despite including Attila in the genealogy of the dynasty, Anonymus—unlike the other chroniclers—did not connect the Huns to the Hungarians.

⁹ The single correct date in the *Gesta*, although not of Attila's arrival in Pannonia but of his most famous battle on the fields of Catalaunum.

¹⁰ The author used (like many other medieval writers) the name of the Roman province, Pannonia, for Hungary. However, the notary knew the precise meaning of the term, i.e. Hungary south and west of the Danube, and so applied the term more specifically to that region (see below, ch. 47, p. 103).

¹¹ Anonymus here (as elsewhere with Hungarian names) translated the name Buda-felhéviz, a village in the north of present-day Buda(pest), still a centre of hot springs and baths.

invenit,¹ renovari precepit et in circuitu muro fortissimo edificavit, que per linguam Hungaricam dicitur nunc Budavar² et a Teothonicis Ecilburg³ vocatur. Quid plura? Iter hystorie teneamus. Longo autem post tempore de progenie eiusdem regis Magog descendit Ugek⁴ pater Almi ducis, a quo reges et duces Hungarie originem duxerunt, sicut in sequentibus dicitur. *Scithici* enim, sicut diximus, [SRH, 36] sunt *antiquiores populi*, de quibus hystoriographi, qui gesta^a Romanorum scripserunt, sic dicunt: Quod Scithica gens *fuisse^b sapientissima et mansueta^c*, qui terram *non laborabant* et fere *nullum peccatum erat inter eos*. *Non enim habebant domos* artificio paratas, *sed tantum temptoria^d* de filtro parata.⁵ *Carnes et pisces et lac et mel manducabant et pigmenta multa habebant. Vestiti enim erant de pellibus zobolorum et aliarum ferarum. Aurum et argentum et gemmas habebant sicut lapides*, quia in fluminibus eiusdem terre inveniebantur. *Non concupiscebant aliena, quia omnes divites erant, habentes animalia multa et victualia sufficienter. Non erant enim fornicatores, sed solummodo unusquisque suam habebat uxorem. Postea vero iam dicta gens fatigata in bello ad tantam crudelitatem pervenit, ut quidam dicunt hystoriographi, quod iracundia ducti humanam manducassent carnem et sanguinem bibissent hominum.*⁶ Et credo, quod adhuc eos cognoscetis, duram gentem fu-

^a gesta *Ms corr.*

^b fuissent *Ms*

^c Scithici...sapientissimi...mansueti *Ms corr.*

^d temptoria *Ms corr.*

¹ The ruins of Aquincum, the capital of Pannonia Inferior, may have been visible in the author's time and the amphitheatre, the foundations of which still survive, must have made quite an impression on medieval spectators.

² Budavár, i.e. "Buda castle," is a problematic form, as the castle on Buda hill was not built before the Mongol invasion in 1241. The -burg ending in the German name may have induced the author to describe as a "castle" the royal residence in the area of Roman Aquincum, at the time called Buda, and later Óbuda, *Buda Vetus*, in distinction to the new castle.

³ Etzelburg features as Attila's residence in the Nibelungenlied—see *Das Nibelungenlied. Mittelhochdeutsch / Neuhochdeutsch*, nach dem Text von Karl Bartsch und

that he found there¹ to be restored and he built a circular and very strong wall, and in the Hungarian language it is now called Budavár² and by the Germans Etzelburg.³ What more? Let us keep to the story. A long time after, there descended from the progeny of the same King Magog, Ügek,⁴ father of Prince Álmos, from whom the princes and kings of Hungary trace their origin, as will be said in what follows. The *Scythians*, as we said, *are a more ancient people*, of whom historians writing of the deeds of the Romans said as follows: That the Scythian people *were most wise and gentle; they did not work the soil nor barely knew any sin among them*. And *they did not have homes* built by craft but rather tents made of felt.⁵ *They ate meat and fish and milk and honey and they had much spice. And their clothes were of the pelts of sables and other wild beasts. They held gold, silver and gems as common as stones*, which they found in the rivers of this land. *They desired no one else's goods, for they were all rich, having many animals and sufficient victuals. And there were no adulterers, for every man kept only his wife*. But, later, *this people*, worn out in war, became, as some historians tell, so cruel that they *ate in wrath human flesh and drank the blood of humans*.⁶ And I believe that you may still know a hardy nation by its fruits.

Helmut de Boor ins Neuhochdeutsche übersetzt und kommentiert von Siegfried Grosse, Universal-Bibliothek, 644 (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun, 1997), p. 416, avt. 22, 1379,1—although its location—whether in Buda or Esztergom—is debated. The *Kaiserchronik* (ca. 1147), however, recorded that Attila was buried in Buda (Ofen); see MGH Dt Chr. I, 1, p. 237.

⁴ For the form (spelling etc.) of personal names, see above, p. XXXVIII. The name Ügek may have some connection to the old Hungarian root *igy-ügy* meaning 'holy, venerable.'

⁵ Anonymus added here to Regino's description the specification "made of felt." He may have been familiar with such tents in which the Hungarians of the twelfth century lived, at least during parts of the year; see *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa by Otto of Freising and his Continuator Rabewin*, trans. and ed. Charles Christopher Microw (New York: Norton, 1953), p. 66.

⁶ This addition about the cannibalism of the Scythians reached Anonymus through Regino (ad a. 889, p. 133), who elaborated on Isidore of Seville's brief remark, *Etym.* 14.3.32.

isse de fructibus eorum. Scithica enim gens *a nullo imperatore* fuit subiugata. Nam *Darium regem* Persarum *cum magna turpitudine* Scithici fecerunt fugere et perdidit ibi *Darius octoginta milia hominum et sic cum magno timore fugit in Persas*. Item Scithici *Cirum^a regem Persarum cum trecentis et XXX milibus* hominum occiderunt. Item Scithici *Alexandrum Magnum* filium Phylippi regis et regine Olympiadis, *qui multa regna pugnando sibi subiugaverat, ipsum etiam turpiter fugaverunt*. Gens namque Scithica dura erat ad sustinendum omnem laborem et erant corpore magni Scithici et fortes in bello. Nam nichil habuissent in mundo, quod perdere timuissent pro illata sibi iniuria. Quando enim Scithici victoriam habebant, nichil de preda volebant, ut moderni de posteris suis,¹ sed tantummodo laudem exinde querebant. Et absque Dario et [SRH, 37] Cyro atque Alexandro nulla gens ausa fuit in mundo in terram illorum intrare. Predicta vero Scithica gens dura erat ad pugnandum et super equos veloces et capita in galeis tenebant et arcu ac sagittis meliores erant super omnes nationes mundi et sic cognoscetis eos fuisse de posteris eorum. Scithica enim terra quanto a torrida zona remotior est, tanto propagandis generibus salubrior. Et quamvis admodum sit spatiosa, tamen multitudinem populorum inibi generatorum nec alere sufficiebat, nec capere.² Quapropter septem principales persone, qui Hetumoger dicti sunt, angusta locorum non sufferentes ea maxime devitare cogitabant. Tunc hee^b septem principales persone habito inter se consilio constituerunt, ut ad occupandas sibi terras, quas incolere possent, a natali discederent solo, sicut in consequentibus dicitur.

^a Circum *Ms corr.*

^b hii *Ms corr.*

¹ In contrast to many contemporary authors, Anonymus did not normally include criticism of his own times through the device of praising the conduct of previous generations. This is the one instance where he does so, and it owes much to Justin 2.3–4.

The Scythian people were never subjugated by *any emperor*. For the Scythians *made Darius, king of the Persians, flee with the greatest ignominy, and Darius lost there 80,000 men and so fled in great fear to Persia*. Then, the Scythians *slew Cyrus, king of Persia, with 330,000 men*. Then, the Scythians *put to base flight even Alexander the Great himself, the son of King Philip and Queen Olympias, who had conquered many kingdoms in war*. The Scythian race was hardy so as to endure all toil and the Scythians were big in body and bold in war. And there is nothing in the world that they would not give up to revenge an injury done to them. And when the Scythians had a victory, they wished nothing of booty, as do their posterity today,¹ but sought only praise for it. And except for Darius, Cyrus and Alexander, no people in the world dared enter their land. The aforesaid Scythian people were hardy in combat and, on speedy mounts and with helmeted heads, they were better with bows and arrows than all the other nations of the world, and you will know this to be so from their offspring. For the Scythian land, as much as it is distant from the tropics, is the more healthy for generating offspring. And although spacious enough, it was still insufficient to sustain or hold the host of peoples begotten there.² On account of this, the seven leading persons, who are called the Hetumoger, not tolerating the pressures of space, thought very greatly of a solution. Then these seven leading persons, having taken counsel together, decided that they should forsake the soil of their birth and take for themselves such lands as they could inhabit, as will be said in what follows.

² Overpopulation as reason for migration was a commonplace in medieval histories, see, e.g., Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum*, I, 1, 52–3. Paul gives the explanation of overpopulation for the movement of the Goths, Vandals and Lombards, which Regino borrowed from Paul to explain the migration of the Scythians, and Anonymus here follows Regino (ad a. 889). See Simon MacLean, *History and Politics in Late Carolingian and Ottonian Europe: The Chronicle of Regino of Prüm and Adalbert of Magdeburg* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), p. 204.

II. QUARE HUNGARI DICITUR.

Nunc restat dicere, quare populus de terra Scithica egressus Hungari vocantur. Hungari dicti sunt a castro Hungu¹ eo, quod subiugatis sibi Sclavis VII principales persone intrantes terram Pannonie diutius ibi morati sunt. Unde omnes nationes circumiacentes vocabant Almus filium Ugek ducem de Hunguar et suos milites vocabant Hungaros.² Quid plura? His omissis redeamus ad propositum opus, iterque hystorie teneamus et, ut Spiritus Sanctus dictaverit, inceptum opus perficiamus. [SRH, 38]

III. DE ALMO PRIMO DUCE.

Anno dominice incarnationis DCCC° XVIII° Ugek, sicut supra diximus, longo post tempore de genere Magog regis erat quidam nobilissimus dux Scithie, qui duxit sibi uxorem in Dentumoger filiam Eunedubeliani³ ducis, nomine Emesu,⁴ de qua genuit filium, qui agnominatus est Almus. Sed ab eventu divino est nominatus Almus, quia matri eius pregnantis per sompnum apparuit divina visio in forma asturis, que quasi veniens eam gravidavit et innotuit ei, quod de utero eius egrederetur torrens et de lumbis eius reges

¹ Hungarian Ungvár, today Užhorod, Ukraine. We have retained here exceptionally the original spelling as the word play on Hung - Hungarian would otherwise have been lost.

² As usual, the author tries to explain a name from a toponym. Simon of Kéza (p. 79) changed the reference to the Ung River. In fact, the Latin (and other western) name for the Magyars came from their having been part of the Onogur tribal alliance, but the notary could not have known that. On the names of the Magyars in the sources, see András Róna Tas, *Hungarians and Europe in the Early Middle Ages: An Introduction to Early Hungarian History* (Budapest and New York: Central European Press, 1999), pp. 282-7, 340-1.

³ This strange name may be a combination of the names Enech, Dula and Belar, who feature as wives of the ancestors of the Magyars in Simon of Kéza (pp. 16-7). Such

2 WHY THEY ARE CALLED HUNGARIANS

It now remains to say why the people who set forth from the Scythian land are called Hungarians. The Hungarians are so called from the castle of Hung¹ where the seven leading persons, having subjugated the Slavs, tarried for a time upon entering the land of Pannonia. On account of this, all the nations round about called Álmos, son of Ugek, the prince of Hunguar and they called his warriors Hungarians.² What more? Passing over these matters, we shall return to our task, keep to our story, and, as the Holy Spirit commands, finish the work begun.

3 ÁLMOS, THE FIRST PRINCE

In the year of Our Lord's incarnation 819, Ugek, who, as we said above, being of the kindred of King Magog became a long time later a most noble prince of Scythia, took to wife in Dentumoger the daughter of Prince Eunedubelian,³ called Emese,⁴ from whom he begot a son, who was named Álmos. But he is called Álmos from a divine event, because when she was pregnant a divine vision appeared to his mother in a dream in the form of a falcon that seemed to come to her and impregnate her and made known to her that from her womb a torrent would come forth and from her

conflations are not rare, see, e.g., Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia regum Britanniae*, ed. R.E. Jones (London: Longmans, 1929), pp. 249-51. Anonymus does not seem to have known of the tradition of a primeval raid on women by the legendary ancestors of the Magyars as told by Simon of Kéza (ibid.).

⁴ The name may go back to an old Hungarian word for 'mother' or 'dam.' She is not named in other narratives. Anonymus here may have recorded an early Hungarian myth of *origo gentis*—the union of a woman with the totem of a falcon—but he "cleansed" the story by making Emese already pregnant and adding the word *quasi* 'as if' ("...seemed to..."). For a similar tradition among steppe people, see István Vásáry, "History and legend in Berke Khan's Conversion to the Islam," in *Aspects of Altaic Civilization III*, ed. Denis Sinor (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 230-52.

gloriosi propagarentur, sed non in sua multiplicarentur terra. Quia ergo sompnium in lingua Hungarica dicitur *almu* et illius ortus per sompnium fuit pronosticatus^a, ideo ipse vocatus est Almus. Vel ideo vocatus est Almus, id est sanctus, quia ex progenie eius sancti reges et duces erant nascituri.¹ Quid ultra? [SRH, 39]

IV. DE DUCE ALMO.

Dux autem Almus, postquam *natus est in mundum*,² factum est duci Ugek et suis cognatis *gaudium magnum*³ et fere omnibus primatibus Scithie eo, quod pater suus Ugek erat de genere Magog regis. Erat enim ipse Almus facie decorus, sed niger, et nigros habebat oculos, sed magnos, statura longus et gracilis, manus vero habebat grossas et digitos prolixos⁴ et erat ipse Almus pius benivolus, largus, sapiens,⁵ bonus miles, *hylaris dator*⁶ omnibus illis, qui in regno Scithie^b tunc tempore erant milites. Cum autem ipse Almus pervenisset ad maturam etatem, velut^c *donum Spiritus Sancti* erat in eo, licet paganus,⁷ tamen potentior fuit et sapientior omnibus ducibus Scithie et omnia negotia regni eo tempore faciebant consilio et auxilio⁸ ipsius. Dux autem Almus, dum ad maturam etatem iuventutis pervenisset, duxit sibi uxorem in eadem terra, filiam cuiusdam nobilissimi ducis,⁹ de qua genuit filium nomine Arpad, quem secum duxit in Pannoniam, ut in sequentibus dicitur.

^a pronosticatum, ex pronosticum *Ms* corr.

^b Scithice *Ms*

^c velut *SRH, Silagi, ū Ms* (i.e. unde).

¹ The author alludes here to the Latin adjective, *almus*, which also conveyed the meaning of *sanctus* or *pius*. Neither of his etymologies are convincing. The holy kings are King Stephen I, his son Emeric (canonized in 1083), and St Ladislav (canonized in 1192).

² John 16. 21.

³ Here and many times further down: Acts 8. 9.

⁴ The description owes much to the wording of Dares Phrygius (12, pp. 14–6).

loins glorious kings be generated, but that they would not multiply in their own land. Because a dream is called *alom* in the Hungarian language and his birth was predicted in a dream, so he was called Álmos. Or he was called Álmos, that is holy, because holy kings and dukes were born of his line.¹ What more?

4 PRINCE ÁLMOS

Prince Álmos, after he was *born into the world*,² brought *great joy*³ to Prince Ügek and his kinsmen and to almost all the leading men of Scythia because his father Ügek was of the kindred of King Magog. For Álmos himself was handsome of face, but of dark skin, and he had dark eyes, but big ones; tall and lean in stature, he had indeed large hands and long fingers⁴; and this Álmos was kind, benevolent, generous, resourceful,⁵ a good warrior, and a *cheerful giver*⁶ to all those who were at that time warriors in the Scythian realm. When this Álmos came to full age, as if the *gift of the Holy Spirit* was in him, although he was a pagan,⁷ he became yet more powerful and wiser than all the princes of Scythia and they conducted all the business of the realm at that time with his aid and counsel.⁸ Prince Álmos, when he came to full age of youth, took a wife in that land, the daughter of a certain most noble prince,⁹ from whom he begot a son by the name of Árpád, whom he took with him into Pannonia, as will be said in the following.

⁵ The word *sapiens* is used in this sense e.g. for the leaders of the Crusade in *The deeds of the Franks and the other pilgrims to Jerusalem*, ed. Rosalind M. T. Hill (Oxford: OUP, 1972), p. xviii.

⁶ 2 Cor 9.7

⁷ On the pagan Hungarians' divine support, see above, p. XXVI.

⁸ These terms were very common in medieval legal (especially so-called feudal) documents across the centuries. About their early occurrence, see A. J. Devisse, "Essai sur l'histoire d'une expression qui a fait fortune: consilium et auxilium aux IXe siècle," *Moyen Age* 74 (1968), pp. 179–205.

⁹ Not recording the name and/or family of wives—as here and below, pp. 113, 127—was general practice in Hungarian charters, on account of the strictly agnatic rule of inheritance.

V. DE ELECTIONE ALMI DUCIS.

Gens itaque Hungarorum fortissima et bellorum laboribus potentissima, ut superius diximus, de gente Scithica, que per ydioma suum proprium Dentumoger dicitur, duxit originem. Et terra illa nimis erat plena ex multitudine populorum inibi generatorum. ut nec alere suos sufficeret, nec capere, ut supra diximus. Quapropter tunc VII principales persone, qui Hetumoger vocantur [SRH, 40] usque in hodiernum diem, angusta locorum non sufferentes habito inter se consilio, ut a natali solo discederent, ad occupandas sibi terras, quas incolere possent, armis et bello querere non cessarunt. Tunc elegerunt sibi querere terram Pannonie, quam audiverant fama volante terram Athile regis esse, de cuius progenie¹ dux Almus pater Arpad descenderat. Tunc ipsi VII principales persone communi et vero consilio intellexerunt, quod inceptum iter perficere non possent, nisi *ducem ac preceptorem*² super se habeant. Ergo libera voluntate et communi consensu VII virorum elegerunt sibi *ducem ac preceptorem* in filios filiorum suorum usque ad ultimam generationem Almus filium Ugek et, qui de eius generatione descenderent, quia Almus dux filius Ugek et, qui de generatione eius descenderant, clariores erant genere et potentiores in bello. Isti enim VII principales persone erant viri nobiles genere et potentes in bello, fide stabiles. Tunc pari voluntate Almo duci sic dixerunt: Ex hodierna die te nobis *ducem ac preceptorem* eligimus et quo fortuna tua te duxerit, illuc te sequemur. Tunc supradicti viri pro Almo duce more paganismo fuis propriis sanguinibus in unum vas ratum fecerunt iuramentum.³ Et licet pagani fuissent, fidem tamen iuramenti, quam tunc fecerant inter se, usque ad obitum ipsorum servaverunt tali modo.

¹ The phrase “*de cuius progenie*,” repeated several times in the *Gesta*, may derive from a chancellery formula.

² Is. 55.4 and elsewhere in the Bible.

³ While such rites are well known among nomadic peoples—see Harry Tegnaeus, *Blood-brothers* (Stockholm: Philosophical Library, 1952); Klaus Oschema, “Blood-brothers: A Ritual of Friendship and the Construction of the Imagined Barbarian in the Middle Ages,” *Journal of Medieval Studies* 32 (2006), pp. 275–301—it is un-

5 THE ELECTION OF PRINCE ÁLMOS

The Hungarian people, most valiant and most powerful in the tasks of war thus originated, as we said above, from the Scythian people that are called in their own language Dentumoger. And their land was so full on account of the host of people born there that it was insufficient to sustain or keep them, as we said above. On account of this, the seven leading persons, who right up to the present day are called the Hetumoger, not tolerating the pressures of space, having taken counsel among themselves to quit the soil of their birth, did not cease seeking by arms and war to occupy lands that they might live in. Then they chose to seek for themselves the land of Pannonia that they had heard from rumor had been the land of King Attila, from whose line Prince Álmos, father of Árpád, descended.¹ Then these seven leading persons realized from their common and true counsel that they could not complete the journey begun unless they had *a leader and a master*² above them. Thus, by the free will and common consent of the seven leading persons, they chose as their *leader and master*, and of the sons of their sons to the last generation, Álmos, son of Ügek, and those who descended from his kin, because Prince Álmos was the son of Ügek, and those who descended from his kin were more outstanding by birth and more powerful in battle. These seven leading persons were noble by birth, strong in war, and firm in their faithfulness. Then they said with equal will to Prince Álmos: “From today we choose you as *leader and master* and where your fortune takes you, there will we follow you.” Then on behalf of Prince Álmos the aforesaid men swore an oath, confirmed in pagan manner with their own blood spilled in a single vessel.³ And, although pagans, they nevertheless kept true to the oath that they now made among themselves, until they died.

clear whence Anonymus may have heard or read about it. A similar blood-mingling ceremony is reported in 1250 as having taken place between a Cuman king and Emperor Baldwin II; see Joinville and Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, ed. M. R. B. Shaw (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), pp. 289–90. See also Maurice Keen, “Brotherhood in Arms,” *History* 47 (1962), pp. 1–17.