

The Saint and His Finger: Dominican Legends and Exempla from Thirteenth-Century Hungary

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The implantation of the Black Friars in Hungary (1221) was followed by the emergence of Dominican written culture in Hungary. The major evidence of this activity was undoubtedly the Life of St Margaret (before 1274), but there were other attempts to collect legends or written accounts of miraculous acts from among members of the Order in Hungary.

Numerous *Vitae Dominici* or *exempla* collections relate stories from the missionary work of the Friars in the Balkans and present the political influence of the Order of the Preachers in the kingdom of Hungary. But most of these legends concern a largely forgotten relic of St Dominic, which, indisputably, was one of his fingers.

In this essay, I examine how a Dominican cult emerged around this complex activity of the Preachers in the Eastern frontiers of Western Christendom. I also show how the Hungarian *exempla* influenced the memory of St Dominic in the thirteenth century. Interestingly, late medieval Hungarian copies of Dominican collections do not include this “Eastern tradition” at all, and they make no mention either of the relic or of the stories inspired in the Hungarian milieu.

A tradition is disappearing. In this essay, I make efforts to reestablish some of its elements through an analysis of the corpus of available documents.

Keywords: Dominican Order, exempla, legend, medieval Hungary, relic

The implantation of the Black Friars in Hungary was due to a decision made by one of St Dominic’s closest companions, Paulus Hungarus (Paul of Hungary), a former professor of Law in Bologna who, in 1221, began to organize the activity of the Order of the Preachers in Central Europe. The first convents were established in the greatest commercial centers of the country, but the Friars continued to advance beyond the southern and eastern frontiers of the kingdom to fulfil the wish of their founding father: the Christianization of the Bosnian heretics and the pagan Cumans. The order enjoyed royal support until the early 1260s, but afterwards King Béla IV (1235–70) favored the Franciscans.¹

The arrival and settlement of Dominicans was followed by the genesis of a Dominican written culture in Hungary. The single most significant piece of

1 See Fügedi, “Koldulórendek és városfejlődés,” 66–68.

evidence of this activity is the Life of St Margaret (the so-called *Legenda vetus*, before 1274),² but there were other attempts to collect legends or miraculous acts from among members of the Order in Hungary. Italian, Spanish or French *vitae Dominici* or *exempla* collections relate numerous stories from the missionary work of the Friars in the Balkans, and they also present the political influence of the Order in the kingdom of Hungary. These documents reveal fragments of a rich, but later almost totally forgotten, Hungarian Dominican legendary tradition. In this essay, I examine the activity of the Preachers in the eastern frontiers of Western Christendom and the birth and decline of this special Hungarian cult of Dominic, which was centered on a relic of the saint.

Historians have shown little interest in the miracles or *exempla* that were alleged to have taken place in Hungary.³ To this day, the main work in the field remains the 1927 doctoral thesis by Mária I. Rössler.⁴ This brief volume (64 pages) constitutes an attempt to provide an overview based on the documentation assembled by the seventeenth-century Dominican writer Sigismundus Ferrarius,⁵ but Rössler analyzed neither the source-tradition nor the historical context of the subject, and some of her conclusions have already been shown to be erroneous.

Recent editions of early sixteenth-century's vernacular legendary compositions (for instance the Old Hungarian Dominican Codex,⁶ the Book of Examples,⁷ and the Life of St Margaret⁸) made efforts to identify precisely the textual basis of some miracles, but these studies focused essentially on linguistic problems. Hence, before venturing into a more profound examination of our subject, I would like to offer a short overview of the development of the Dominican tradition from a specific, Hungarian perspective.

2 Klaniczay and Klaniczay, *Szent Margit legendái*, 38–50. The term *legenda vetus* is proposed by Tibor Klaniczay, *ibid.*, 20.

3 The problem is mentioned in Tarnai, “*A magyar nyelvet írni kezdik...*”, 89, note 206.

4 Rössler, *Magyar domonkosrendi példák*.

5 Ferrarius, *De rebus Hungariae*.

6 This Hungarian Life of St Dominic was copied by the Dominican nun Lea Ráskai in 1517, along with the two other vernacular works mentioned below (notes 7–8). For the critical edition, see: *Domonkos-kódex, 1517*.

7 *Példák könyve, 1510*.

8 *Szent Margit élete, 1510*.

The Genesis of St Dominic's Legendary and Its Connections to Hungary

The first brief *vita* of Dominic (*Libellus de principiis Ordinis Praedicatorum*) was composed between 1231 and 1234 by Jordan of Saxony (d. 1237), one of his closest companions and followers as master general of the Order (1221–36). It could be considered the most authentic report of the life of the saint because it was based on a personal and collegial contact. Jordan's *Libellus* was continued by a Spanish friar, Peter of Spain (Petrus Ferrandi), whose *Vita* was written in the period between 1237 and 1242. In these documents there was no mention of any Hungarian miracles. The two *Lives* recount only Dominic's acts and deeds in Spain, France, and Italy. The General Chapter of the Order decided in 1245 to prepare a new composition of the *Vita*, a work that Constantine of Orvieto (d. cca. 1258) compiled, complementing Peter's writings with the addition of some two dozen other miracles that allegedly took place after the death of the saint.⁹ These stories obviously mark how the cult of recently canonized (1234) Dominic spread toward the frontiers of Western Christendom. Apart from some southern Italian cases, almost the whole newly incorporated miracles (namely 20 from 23) took place in Hungary. The *Vitae* of Peter and Constantine served as the basis for a more recent *Vita* written by Humbert of Romans, the fifth master elected in 1254 during the General Chapter in Buda.¹⁰ His version later became the "official"¹¹ legend of Dominic, a reference point for all other biographers.¹²

Among the later collections of the second half of the thirteenth century (Bartholomew of Trent, Rodrigo of Cerrato, Gerard of Frachet), one should definitely mention the *Vita* of Theodoric of Apolda (about 1294–96) which contains 17 Hungarian miracles from the earlier legends.¹³ Apparently, the Hungarian part of the Dominican corpus was already closed.

Finally, from the "non-official" Dominican writings emerges the famous *Legenda Aurea* of the Genoese friar, Jacobus de Voragine. This work, written before 1264, was the amplest and most popular medieval hagiographical

9 For the edition of the two documents, see: *Monumenta historica*, fasc. II. 1–88. and 197–260.

10 *Acta Capitulorum*, 68 and 71.

11 Here, I call Humbert's legend "official" in the sense that the 1260s General Chapter of Strasbourg recommended his use in the lectionary, and added that "*et alie deinceps non scribantur*". See *Acta Capitulorum*, 105.

12 On the evaluation of Dominic's legends, see: Tugwell, *Humberti de Romanis Legendae*, 30 *et passim*.

13 The ties to Hungary of Dominic's legendary tradition were related by Deák, *Árpád-bázi szent Margit*, 125.

compilation, with almost one thousand manuscripts surviving up to 1500.¹⁴ As a Preacher, the author assigns particular place to the founder saint of the Order, and in his legend he cites five Hungarian miracles. A no less popular encyclopedia, the *Speculum historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais (about 1260), relates nine stories, and the *exempla* collection of Thomas of Cantimpré, entitled *Bonum Universale de Apibus* (or simply *Apiarius*, about 1254–63) also contains five miracles concerning the activity of the Order in the frontier lands of Hungary, i.e. in Cumania and Bosnia (See Appendix).

As I have mentioned, the first Dominican *Vitae* did not pay attention to the Hungarian cult of the saint, but the situation changed about 1245, when the new, “revisited” Life involved Hungarian elements, and these miracles were incorporated into the legendary corpus.

But while these texts are of the same origin and relate the miracles in identical ways, the *exempla* of Thomas of Cantimpré are different in subject and source material and therefore constitute exceptions. As I demonstrate below, they concern the missions to the Balkan frontier of Hungary, referring also to the Mongol invasions, themes completely ignored in other Dominican works.

Memory of the Cuman Missions

The missionary work among the pagan Cumans had a primary role in the early visions and plans of the newly founded Order of the Preachers. According to Jordan of Saxony’s account, Dominic initially planned to evangelize this nomadic people living beyond the Carpathians,¹⁵ but in the end he became an ardent combatant of the Albigensian heresy in Languedoc, France. Nevertheless, the Hungarian Dominican province, from its beginnings, had a sworn ambition to convert the Cumans. With the support of the papacy and King Andrew II of Hungary (1205–35), a bishopric was founded in Milko¹⁶ around 1227, and a Dominican friar became head of the diocese.¹⁷ We know little of the activity of this Episcopal see, but we do know that in 1241 the invading Mongols destroyed

14 Vauchez, *La Spiritualité*, 174–75.

15 Henriët, “Dominique avant Saint Dominique,” 25–26 and note 49. Henriët argues that Dominic’s intention to preach among the Cumans could simply indicate his determination to convert the pagans of distant regions.

16 We could not identify this place precisely, but it is located somewhere in the Vrancea region in Romania. Budai, “A milkói püspökség,” 17.

17 The papal letters were published in: Pfeiffer, *Die ungarische*, 177–79. Concerning their analyses, see: Ferentz, *A kunok és püspökségük*, 133–38.

the diocese,¹⁸ which was never re-established, although the title “bishop of Milko” was in use until the early sixteenth century.¹⁹

However, in the Dominican tradition, the memory of these missions, so important for the identity of the Order, did not remain without echo. In his famous allegorical *Apiarius*, Thomas of Cantimpré offers two accounts which touch on their work. According to one, a seven year-old Cuman child, playing with his sisters near the river, was killed by a water demon. He was resuscitated by the supplications of his parents, and later, under the influence of the Prior of the Order, he became a friar (*a priore ordinis praedicatorum in Hungaria receptus*). According to the second, this same friar later committed a serious infraction of the rules by giving his used clothes to vagrants (*lotrici*) without permission. He fell ill and died *sine confessione* and *sine viatico*, but Archangel Michael drove away the demons hoping to capture his soul, and he rose again. Confessing his sins to the Prior, he received absolution, and he later evangelized many of his people (*Cumanorum populum non modicum baptizavit*).²⁰

In these stories, the role of a certain Dominican prior was emphasized several times. There were only two Hungarian priors whose activity in Cumania could be historically confirmed: Paulus Hungarus, the founder of the province, and his companion and successor in the position, Theoderic. Paulus fulfilled his duty for two years (1221–22), but Theoderic was head of the province between 1223 and 1227, and he later become bishop of Milko.²¹ Since Thomas of Cantimpré makes no mention of the title of bishop for his protagonist, we can reasonably suppose that the story was incorporated into the Dominican memory before 1227.

Impacts of the Mongol Invasions and the Bosnian Heretics

The Cuman missionary diocese was swept away by the Mongols in 1241, like many other Dominican convents, and many friars were killed.²² The *Bonum universale de Apibus* recalls the devastation with an *exemplum*. A powerful Hungarian duke (*Dux quidam in Hungaria potentissimus*) surrendered his offices and entered the

18 Klaniczay, “The Mendicant Orders,” 257–58.

19 Makkai, *A milkói (kun) püspökség*, 43–44.

20 *Thomae Cantimpratani Bonum Universale*, lib. 2, cap. LVII, Nos 11–12, 544–45.

21 Pfeiffer, *Die ungarische*, 133–34.

22 The Mongols besieged and certainly burned down the convents of Pest and Szeben (present-day Sibiu, Romania). For Pest, see: Pauler, *A magyar nemzet*, 2:164–66; For Szeben, see Pfeiffer, *Die ungarische*, 160.

Order. At the approach of the Pagans, their companions left the convent, but he remained behind with the invalids. After the withdrawal of the enemy, the friars returned and found his severed head pierced by lances. Horrified, one of the brothers pleaded with God for three days to explain to him the reasons for what had befallen them. Finally, the murdered man appeared to him and, using biblical citations,²³ explained to him that the sufferings of this world are remunerated in the Heaven.²⁴

The so-called “duke” of this story was already identified in the Hungarian historiography.²⁵ In reality, Buzád Bánffy was not a member of the royal family or the aristocracy, as his title misleadingly suggests, but he did hold several important positions. He was *comes* (or count, a sort of nominated royal official of a county) in different regions, such as Győr, Bihar, Pozsony, and Sopron, and he then served as ban of Slavonia²⁶ or Szörény.²⁷ In 1233, he entered the convent of the Black Friars in Pest.²⁸ It seems, however, that he preserved some of his former secular duties: his name reappears in numerous official charters as a witness.²⁹ If one is familiar with the details of Buzád’ career, it is not difficult to identify the anonymous convent of the *exemplum* as the convent in Pest.

Apparently, the connections of the Hungarian Dominicans with the “Infidels” intrigued the attention of a so distant chronicler as the Brabantian Thomas of Cantimpré. In another *exemplum* he turned towards Bosnia and told a story on Johannes Teutonicus, bishop of the diocese.

The narrative emphasized the sanctity of the protagonist: as a prelate, he continued to maintain a mendicant way of life. Though he had an annual income of more than 8,000 marks, he frequently visited his diocese on foot, without a horse, using a donkey to carry his books and episcopal accessories. Thomas of Cantimpré emphasizes that Johannes later became master general of the Order, referring to his election of 1241.³⁰

23 “Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” Luke 24:26; and “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.” Romans 8:18.

24 *Thomae Cantimpratani Bonum Universale*, lib. 2, cap. XLIV, no. 2, 421–22.

25 Pfeiffer, *Die ungarische*, 196; Puskely, *Virágos kert vala*, 178–80.

26 Fügedi, *Ispánok, bárók*, 94. and 100.

27 Zsoldos argues that Buzád was ban of Szörény and not of Slavonia, as the earlier historiography contended. See: Zsoldos, *Magyarország világi archontológiája*, 291–92.

28 Harsányi, *A domonkos rend*, 27. The exact date of his conversion is identifiable by his testament, see: Ferrarius, *De rebus Hungariae*, 59.; Pfeiffer, *Die ungarische*, 154–55.

29 *Monumenta Hungariae Historica. Diplomataria*, 12:76, 88.

30 *Thomae Cantimpratani Bonum Universale*, lib. 2, cap. LVII, No. 55, 582.

It is an intriguing question how these stories came to the Netherlands. At the time, there were many Hungarian prelates who fostered close contacts with Western intellectual centers, for example Bartholomew and Raynald, bishops of Pécs and Transylvania, respectively, both of French origin,³¹ or the Wallonian Robert, Archbishop of Esztergom. The latter was born in Liège, where Thomas was educated. The contemporary French Cistercian Alberic of Trois-Fontaines relates in his *Chronica* the role of both Bartholomew and Robert in the evangelization of the Cumans in 1227.³² Raynald of Transylvania is also mentioned in other documents.³³ As László Koszta points out, this mission was almost exclusively directed by prelates of foreign origins. He held that these clerics, not having had any earlier contact with the pagan world in their native countries, were more zealous than Hungarian bishops, who had grown somewhat accustomed to the presence of Cumans.³⁴

Judit Csákó argues that Alberic learned these details orally through Cistercian sources,³⁵ which does not explain how Thomas was informed of the specifically Dominican miracles. Concerning the accounts of other *exempla* of the period of the Mongol invasion, Robert died earlier (1239) and Raynald was killed on the battlefield of Muhi (1241)³⁶ a few weeks before the devastation of Pest, and only Bartholomew survived. Later, from 1247 until his death (1254), he was at the papal Curia in Lyons, and he almost certainly died in Paris,³⁷ so he cannot be ignored as a possible distant source of Thomas. However, some facts suggest that the *Apianus* drew on a few other Hungarian testimonies, and the Bosnian bishop is particularly interesting from this point of view.

31 Kiss, “11–13. századi magyar főpapok,” 346–47.

32 “Chronica Albrici monachi Trium Fontium,” 920. As Körmendi points out, the Cistercian chronicler erroneously identified the Bishop of Transylvania: his name was in fact Raynald and not Guilelmus. See: Körmendi, “Imre, III. László és II. András,” 155.

33 Pfeiffer, *Die ungarische*, 78.

34 Koszta, “Egy francia származású főpap,” 70.

35 Csákó, “Néhány megjegyzés,” 521–22.

36 The bishop of Transylvania was killed on April 11 on the battlefield of Muhi by the Mongols. See: Zsoldos, *Magyarország világi archontológiája*, 348.

37 Koszta, “Egy francia származású főpap,” 70–71.

The Activity of Johannes Teutonicus in Hungary

Johannes Teutonicus (or Wildeshausen,³⁸ also known in Hungary as John of Bosnia³⁹) was educated, like many early Dominicans, at the law schools of Bologna, and he became friar in the early 1220s. After having spent several years wandering all over Western Europe (for instance preaching the Crusade of Emperor Frederick II in Germany),⁴⁰ he joined his old confrère, Paulus Hungarus, and perhaps in 1227 became prior of the Hungarian province. By papal appointment, he became bishop of Bosnia between 1234 and 1237. Four years later, he was elected master general of the Order, a function he fulfilled until his death (1252).⁴¹

Johannes was a well known actor in Hungarian political life in the early 1230s. In the tense situation between the clergy and the royal power after the agreement of Bereg in 1233, he followed the “hard-core” clerical line, excommunicating King Andrew II in the name of the papal legate, Cardinal James of Pecorara.⁴²

A few months later, along with his nomination as bishop of Bosnia, the Hungarian Dominicans obtained, in addition to the Cuman missions, oversight of the evangelization of the Balkan heretics. However, the Christianization of Bosnia proved a fiasco. The predecessor of Johannes (an unknown, local cleric) was deprived of his office, as he was, according to a papal letter, incompetent, analphabetic, simoniac, and a friend to the Bogomils. None of this was true of Johannes, but he was no more successful. In 1234, prince Coloman (king Andrew’s son) led a Crusade against the Balkan heretics, but Johannes himself, in all probability, never crossed the borders of his diocese.⁴³

Apparently, the bishop had better relations with other members of the royal family than with the king himself. Almost two decades later, in 1252, already as

38 In order to distinguish him from the contemporary Canon Law glossator, Johannes Teutonicus Zemeke. See: Pennington, “Johannes Teutonicus,” 183–94.

39 He was also often identified incorrectly as John of Freiburg, see: *Árpád-kori és Anjou-kori levelek*, note 352. In fact, Johannes Teutonicus de Friburgo, lector of the Dominican convent of Freiburg-im-Breisgau, lived two generations later and died in 1314. On this misunderstanding, see: Lorenc, *John of Freiburg*, 2 and mainly 11–12.

40 Maier, *Preaching the Crusades*, 32.

41 Chevalier, *Répertoire*, 1:1246.

42 In the agreement of Bereg, August 12, 1233, King Andrew II reaffirmed some political and economic privileges of the clergy (e.g. tax exemptions, salt trade), and he promised to pay 10,000 marks of indemnity as recompense for all previous damages. The king delayed the payment, so in the temporary absence of the papal legate, it was Johannes’ duty to declare the excommunication. Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, 96.

43 Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, 143–45.

master of the Order, Johannes designated the newly founded convent of Buda⁴⁴ as a place for the next General Chapter at the request of Andrew's son, King Béla IV. As mentioned above, in this royal center Humbert of Romans was elected in 1254 as the fifth master general of the Preachers.⁴⁵

Once again, one has to return to the texts of Thomas of Cantimpré to get a sense of the warmth demonstrated by Béla and his wife to the late Johannes Teutonicus who, even after his death, seemed to intervene in Hungarian politics. According to this *exemplum*,⁴⁶ the son and the consort of a Hungarian queen fought against each other. Fearing for the life of the combatants, she began to pray and, by revelation, her former confessor and Johannes appeared to her and reassured her that the two men would soon reconcile. As if by a miracle, an envoy came, sent by her husband, and declared that the two men had made peace.

Fortunately, historians have been able to identify the sources of this *exemplum*. The 1260 General Chapter, held in Strasbourg, investigated the miracles of Johannes Teutonicus, wishing to collect contemporary testimonies. In order to respond to this appeal, Béla IV and his queen had written two letters (in Lent, March 14) to the *capitulum generale* on the sanctity of Johannes.⁴⁷ The king describes the Bosnian bishop as “of holy memory,” emphasizing his affection for the poor and recounting how he healed the lame and the blind and even helped Béla recover from his illness. In her letter, Queen Maria Laskaris offers a similar account: the fame of Johannes' miracles and heavenly signs (*miracula atque prodigia*) spread far and wide, but in a more informative way, she describes a particular case, one concerning the same royal father–son disagreement, which can be read in the *Apiarius*.

One must keep in mind, in order to grasp the context in which these events took place, that in the late 1250s Béla and his elder son (the future King Stephen V, 1270–72) were in permanent conflict. In 1257, Stephen forced his father to elevate him to the dignity of the “Duke of Transylvania,” with complete power over this vast region. In 1259, he became Duke of Styria, but a year later he lost these recently occupied Austrian lands due to an uprising of local lords. Having

44 Apparently, according to the decisions of the Chapter General of Metz in 1251, the convent of Buda was founded by request of the Queen of Hungary, Maria Laskaris. “*Concedimus provincie (...) Ungarie unam [domum] ad petitionem regine.*” *Acta Capitulorum*, 60.

45 Harsányi, *A domonkos rend*, 25.

46 *Thomae Cantimpratani Bonum Universale*, lib. 2, cap. LVII, no. 59. 584.

47 Edited in: Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus*, 3:22 and 68.

lost all political and military power, he began to organize revolts against his father. Finally, after several agreements, as a “younger king” (*junior rex Hungariae*), he ruled over almost all of Eastern Hungary until the death of Béla (1270). Hungarian historians found no other sources indicating any military conflict between the king and his son before 1262, so the information in the letters involved in the *Apiarius* is the only evidence permitting us to date this conflict back to the period at least two years earlier.⁴⁸

These stories contain episodes from the early missionary work of the Friars beyond the Balkan frontiers of Hungary, and they also commemorated the destruction wrought by the Mongol invaders as well. The protagonist of some of these *exempla* was Johannes Teutonicus, and this indicates the formation of his Hungarian cult. However, he was not the only person whose *post mortem* miracles were venerated in the country, especially in a region close to the southeastern peripheries of the kingdom.

A Hungarian Region Full of Miracles

A Hungarian nobleman visited the relics of Dominic with his family. His son became ill and died en route. The body was placed in the church of the Order, in front of the altar, and the mourning father bitterly lamented to the saint: “I came to you joyfully, but I will return in sadness. Please, give me back my son, the happiness of my heart!” The boy revived and began to walk.

A noble lady from the same region intended to attend a mass in honor of St Dominic. Upon entering the church, she could not find the priest, so leaving her cloth-rolled candles on the altar, she went to a corner to pray. When she returned, she saw the candles burning brightly, but the cloth remained intact.

These two *exempla* are cited from the Life written by Constantine of Orvieto and repeated literally by Humbert of Romans.⁴⁹ They strike us as typical, because, as with other texts concerning the Hungarian presence and cult of a relic of St Dominic, they reappear in numerous *Vitae* compositions (Appendix). As a common characteristic, each of these legends records the miracles happening around or in the same convent with the same relic, which is not specified. It seems that in the early thirteenth century this place was a center of the Preachers’ activity in the region.

48 Szentpéteri, “V. István,” 77–87. For a more modern point of view, see: Zsoldos, *Családi ügy*.

49 *Monumenta historica*, no. 72–73; Tugwell, *Humberti de Romanis Legendae*, no. 85–86.

The chronology and geography of the implantation of the Order is more or less clarified in the historiography. In 1241, the Hungarian Dominican network consisted of 25 houses. This number rose to 33–35 in 1303.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the question of the identity of the abovementioned convent was problematic for a long time. According to different manuscripts of the *Vita* of Constantine of Orvieto, it was *Sumlu*, *Similii* or *Similu*.⁵¹ Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum historiale* also identifies it as *Similu*,⁵² and Jacobus de Voragine designates it as *Silon* in his *Legenda Aurea*.⁵³ The early twentieth-century Hungarian historiography drew on Sigismundus Ferrarius' legendary composition, which mentioned the locality as *Similium* or, sometimes, *Simigium*. So, misdirected, in 1927 Rössler identified the place as Székesfehérvár,⁵⁴ and ten years later Harsányi proposed the town of Sümeg or the county of Somogy (all situated in western Hungary).⁵⁵ Finally, two generations later, following the edition of Theodoric of Apolda's *Vita*,⁵⁶ Györffy correctly localized the convent to Somlyó (Sumlu in Latin) in medieval southeast Krassó County (present day Vršac, Serbia).⁵⁷ It is almost certain that the other versions of the place name were due to typical scribal mistakes: in the process of copying the writer simply confounded how to connect the minims, and for the unknown Sumlu (see: *Sumlū*) he erroneously put Similii or Similu, but Silon, Similium or Simigium are later and explicitly distorted forms.

An examination of other geographical names used in the different Lives offers persuasive support for Györffy's conclusion: *flumen Cris* as the Karas River, *castrum Karassu* as Krassóvár (Caraş and Caraşova in Romania), or *villa Tituliensis* (Titel in Serbia) are all in the same region: in the Banat (nowadays divided between Serbia, Romania, and Hungary). Thus, as a result, in his recent (2008) work on Humbert of Romans' *Legenda Sancti Dominici*, Simon Tugwell

50 Fügedi, "Koldulórendek és városfejlődés," 68, and Zágórhidi Czigány, "A domonkos rend konventjei," 81–95.

51 Sumlu in the Vatican and Bourg Mss, Similii in the Paris Ms. The Rome Ms was the basis for the 1935 edition and identifies the place as Similu. See: *Monumenta historica*, 338.

52 *Bibliotheca Mundi*, vol. 4, lib. 32, cap. CXVI. 1272.

53 Graesse, *Jacobi a Voragine Legenda Aurea*, cap. CXIII, 479–80.

54 Rössler, *Magyar domonkosrendi példák*, 27.

55 Harsányi, *A domonkos rend*, 84. Here, Harsányi follows the opinion of Ferrarius who wrote: "*civitas Similium, vel Simigium (hungarice Somogy)*". Ferrarius, *De rebus Hungariae*, 74.

56 Gombos, *Catalogus*, 3:2333–39.

57 Györffy, *Az Árpád-kori Magyarországnak*, 1:493–94.

used the more correct Somlou as the name of the convent, instead of Similiu, which was used in the earlier (1935) edition.⁵⁸

Consequently, it seems clear that these miraculous stories were parts of a local Dominican tradition emerging around the convent of Somlyó/Sumlu/Somlou and somehow (almost certainly through Johannes Teutonicus) were integrated into the Lives of Dominic, from Constantine of Orvieto to Theodoric of Apolda. Why did this convent become so important in the legendary corpus? Somlyó was not a significant town in Hungary, neither from the political nor from the economic point of view. But its geographical position, as a close place to Cumania, was ideal for any Dominican missionary activity. And not independently of these facts, it was where a relic of the founder saint was kept.⁵⁹ Which one? The thirteenth-century sources are silent on this, but we have later evidence.

The last contemporary miraculous event related to Somlyó was written by Petrus Calo Clugiensis⁶⁰ in his Life of St Dominic.⁶¹ Petrus heard the story in 1315 during the General Chapter in Bologna from Miklós Vasvári, prior of Somlyó. According to the text, a provost of Fehérvár (*Alba Regalia*) died in the convent. The relic, Dominic's finger, was used in a particular way: it was plunged in a glass of water, and the water was poured into the throat of the corpse. Suddenly, the dead cleric vomited a stone, bigger than a hen's egg, and returned to life.

The story reappears two centuries later in the Hungarian vernacular legend of the saint (1517),⁶² with some alterations: "and in Hungary, in the town of Fehérvár (...) they sent to the convent where the finger of our father, St Dominic was."⁶³

58 Tugwell, *Humberti de Romanis Legendae*, 521 et passim. However, he prefers the form *flumini Eris* instead of the correct *flumini Cris*. Ibid., 521.

59 The *Vitae* repeats on several occasion the forms: "*ad reliquias beati Dominici accessit / visitandas*" etc. See for example: Tugwell, *Humberti de Romanis Legendae*, no. 85, 91, 92, 94, 98. etc.

60 Pietro Calò da Chioggia, d. 1348. Italian Dominican writer, author of a Life of St Dominic. See: Frazier, *Possible Lives*, 72.

61 "Vita sancti Dominici," 348. Unfortunately we could not consult the modern edition of the text: Tugwell, *Miracula sancti Dominici*.

62 Lajos Katona pointed out that this narrative was an interpolation of Calo's *exemplum*. Katona, "Újabb adalékok," 115–18.

63 Translated by the author. The original text in Hungarian: "*Esmeg magyar orzagban feyer varat (...) kevldenek az conuentben hol vala zent damancos atyanknak yu*". In *Domonkos-kódex, 1517*, 172–73.

Apparently, in the early sixteenth century, Lea Ráskai, a Dominican nun⁶⁴ and the scribe of this Hungarian *Vita* asserted that the relic was held in Fehérvár. She worked on a copy of an earlier, fourteenth-century translated text.⁶⁵ Since we have no more information concerning a relic kept in Fehérvár or anywhere in her time, we could assume that this “transference” from Somlyó to Fehérvár was due simply to a mistake in the translation of her source or a mistake on her part. This prestigious finger of Dominic had almost certainly been lost in the meantime, lost at least from the memory of the Hungarian cult of the Preachers.

Late Medieval Dominican Miracle Tradition in Hungary: A Forgotten Past?

Beginning in the second half of the thirteenth century, the Hungarian Dominican tradition was enriched with new elements. As mentioned before, the cult of St Margaret emerged after 1270, producing numerous *Legendae* consecrated to this devoted young nun of royal blood. Although several medieval Hungarian kings, from Stephen V to Mathias Corvinus (1458–90),⁶⁶ took steps to have her canonized, she was not beatified until 1943. Blessed Helen of Hungary (d. 1240?)⁶⁷ and Mauritius of Csák (d. 1336)⁶⁸ also had legendary compositions, written perhaps in the 1400s.

On the other hand, some parts of the previous legendary memory were lost in the later centuries of the Middle Ages.

We have no evidence of new miracles occurring in the Somlyó convent or any concerning Dominic’s finger relic after the early fourteenth century. Western *Vitae* continue to repeat the abovementioned stories without important changes, and even this apparently closed corpus is ignored in Hungarian documents. Evidently, as a result of the tumultuous history of this kingdom, the loss of medieval sources is enormous, but it is symptomatic that the 1517 vernacular legend had to borrow its stories that bore in some way on Hungary from Italian sources.

One observes the same phenomenon with regards to the Hungarian *exempla* of Thomas of Cantimpré, which are independent of the “official” Dominican

64 Wilson, *Women Writers*, 435–40.

65 Láz, *Apácaműveltség Magyarországon*, 307–08.

66 For a summary of these attempts, see: Klaniczay, “Efforts at the Canonization,” 313–40, and idem, “Matthias and the Saints,” 1–18.

67 Deák, *Árpád-bázi szent Margit*, 245–53.

68 Madas, “Boldog Csák Móric,” 26–30.

legendary tradition. The *Apiarius* was particularly popular in the Middle Ages: apart from its numerous vernacular (French, Flemish etc.) translations, 94 Latin manuscripts have survived up to the present day.⁶⁹ Hungary was no exception in this tendency. A compilation was written in 1448 by the Silesian-born Bartholomew of Münsterberg, a priest of Szepesolaszi (today Spišské Vlachy in Slovakia) and a former preacher of Lőcse (today Levoča in Slovakia). The codex is held in the University Library of Budapest.⁷⁰ The document served as a preacher's guide, and it included sermon-drafts, theological and medical treatises, and various *exempla*.⁷¹ The part containing 103 stories from the *Apiarius* is an abbreviated version of the two-thirds longer original work. Interestingly, no Hungarian miracles are mentioned in the manuscript. We do not know if this is due to the characteristics of the sources used by the scribe. A closer investigation could perhaps reveal the textual bases of this work. But it is certain that the intention of our cleric was not to evoke the ties of the miracles scattered in Thomas' allegorical opus to Hungary.

Conclusion

I have examined how the thirteenth-century Hungarian Dominican tradition was represented in various legendary or *exempla* compositions. These stories are testimony to the memory of the missionary activity of the Preachers and a flourishing, but later forgotten cult around a finger relic of the saint, kept in a convent in the southeastern part of the kingdom. Accounts of these miracles arrived in Western Europe in different phases, brought by different people in different ways between 1221 and 1260, where they became part of the hagiographical tradition. This transmission reveals multiple connections linking the different *provinciae* to one another, and the genesis, spread and subsistence of these legends prove that Hungarian Black Friars played active roles in the cultural and spiritual life of the Order.

However, in later periods of the Middle Ages, the information flow reversed: Hungarian Dominicans became receptors, as the compilation of the work

69 A complete bibliography for the medieval manuscripts of Thomas of Cantimpré is given by Axters, *Bibliotheca Dominicana*, 76–112.

70 Budapesti Egyetemi Könyvtár, Cod. lat. 65. ff. 116–57. I should mention the existence of a second one, also from around Lőcse, written by a certain Jacobus de Sommerfelt in 1453, which is held in our day by the Library Batthyaneum of Gyulafehérvár (today Alba Iulia in Romania). See: Selecká Mârza, *A Középkori Lőcsei Könyvtár* no. 42. Unfortunately, I could not consult this document.

71 For the manuscript descriptions see: Mezey: *Codices latini Medii Aevi*, 110–15.

of Thomas of Cantimpré and the composition of the Hungarian vernacular *Legenda* show in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The *Apiarius* was used only as sermon guide, with no references to local particularities, and the Hungarian Life of St Dominic (copied by Ráskai) had to turn to Italian *Vitae* to rediscover some Hungarian bearings of Dominic's miracles.

This transformation was due to various facts. The Balkan missionary work among the pagans and heretics was abandoned in the midst of thirteenth century; the legendary corpus was closed a generation later. New spiritual ideas were emerging: female mysticism and sanctity,⁷² complemented by an unquestionably Central-European aspect: the cult of holy women of royal blood.⁷³ Inspired by a modern enthusiasm for the *mulieres sanctae*, Margaret's veneration became widespread in Hungary, and it began to overshadow other local cults, including that of the finger of St Dominic.

72 Vauchez, *La spiritualité*, 162–64.

73 Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*.

Appendix. Cases Related to Hungary in Thirteenth-century Dominican Legends and Exempla

	Constantine of Orvieto	Humbert of Romans	Vincent of Beauvais (L. 30.)	Thomas of Cantimpré (L. II.)	Jacobus de Voragine (c.113.)	Theodoric of Apolda	Hungarian Vernacular Legend
1	72	85	(c. 116.) 1.		1. (p. 479)	C 324	1. (pp. 73–74)
2	73	86	2		2. (p. 480)	C 325	
3	74	87	3			C 326	
4	75	88	4		3. (p. 480)	C 327	2. (pp. 74–75)
5	76	89	(c.117.) 1			C 328	3. (pp. 75–77)
6	77	90	2			C 329	
7	78	91	(c.118.) 1		4. (p. 480)	C 330	
8	79	92				C 331	
9	80	93				C 332	
10	81	94					
11	82	95					
12	83	96				C 333 a	
13	84	97				C 333 b	
14	85	98					
15	86	99				C 334 a	
16	87	100				C 334 b	
17	88	101				C 334 b	
18	89	102				C 334 c	4. (p. 161)
19	90	103	2			C 335	
20	91	104	3		5. (p. 480)	C 336	
							5 (pp. 172–73)
				c. XLIV 2			
				c. LVII 11			
				c. LVII 12			
				c. LVII 55			
				c. LVII 59			

Manuscripts

Budapest: *Budapesti Egyetemi Könyvtár*, Cod. lat. 65. ff. 116–57.

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