



# A New *sancta et fidelis societas* for Saint Sigismund of Burgundy: His Cult and Iconography in Hungary during the Reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg

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Examining both written and pictorial evidence, this study addresses the diffusion of the cult of St Sigismund from Bohemia to Hungary during the late fourteenth century and the saint's subsequent transformation during the fifteenth century into one of the Hungarian kingdom's patrons. In doing so, it assesses the significance of the actions that King Sigismund took to promote Sigismund of Burgundy, his personal patron, in Hungary and shows that the king emulated the model of his father, Charles IV of Luxemburg. King Sigismund promoted his spiritual patron within his kingdom and associated him with the traditional Hungarian patrons, the *sancti reges Hungariae*. The king thus succeeded in accommodating the foreign saint to a new home and transforming him for a short interval into one of Hungary's holy protectors. The natural consequence of this "holy and faithful fellowship" was the transfer of the cult from the royal milieu to the nobility of the kingdom. Willing to prove their loyalty to the king, Hungarian noblemen decorated their churches with St Sigismund's image and depicted him in the company of the saints Stephen, Emeric, and Ladislas. The study's larger aim is to illustrate how the political transformations of a certain period could facilitate the spread of a new saint's cult from the cult center to another region and that a saint's veneration could sometimes be politically motivated.

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Writing on the cults of dynastic saints in medieval Europe, Gábor Klaniczay showed that members of ruling dynasties were generally fervent supporters and promoters of cults of saints, especially those who had descended from their own families. Hungarian and Neapolitan Angevins, Přemyslids, or Luxemburgs harmoniously blended their personal piety with astute political calculation when proving their legitimacy to rule. Having several saints in the family or associating one's deeds with a particular saint (especially one's namesake) was an extension of that saint's sacredness over his protégé, guaranteeing the success of a ruler's actions.<sup>1</sup> Examining the iconography of Sigismund of Luxemburg, Bertalan Kéry revealed that the Holy Roman Emperor had a high devotion for his personal

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1 Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*.

patron, St Sigismund of Burgundy, and that medieval artists sometimes depicted the saint under his protégé's appearance.<sup>2</sup> Whereas King Sigismund's devotion for his namesake protector received previous attention, it became apparent only recently that the new King of Hungary promoted his personal patron and one of Bohemia's holy protectors within his realm.<sup>3</sup>

By examining the written and pictorial evidence, the present paper addresses the diffusion during the late fourteenth century of the cult of St Sigismund of Burgundy from Bohemia to Hungary and the saint's subsequent transformation by the late fifteenth century into one of the patrons of the Hungarian kingdom. In doing so, it assesses the significance of King Sigismund's efforts to promote his personal patron saint in Hungary and shows that he emulated the model of his father, Charles IV of Luxemburg, a fervent supporter and promoter of the cults of saints, an avid collector of relics, and a great patron of the arts. King Sigismund not only promoted his personal patron within his kingdom, but also associated him with St Ladislav, the patron saint *par excellence* of the Hungarian kingdom. Sigismund thus managed to accommodate the foreign saint to a new home and to transform him into one of the country's holy protectors. The natural consequence of this association was the transfer of the new cult from the royal milieu to the kingdom's aristocracy: willing to prove their loyalty to the king, Hungarian noblemen decorated their churches with the image of St Sigismund and depicted him in the company of the three *sancti reges Hungariae*, i.e., St Stephen, St Emeric, and St Ladislav. The paper's larger aim is to illustrate how the political transformations of a certain period facilitated the transfer of a new saint's cult from the cult center to another region and that a saint's veneration was sometimes politically motivated.

### *One Saint—Two Cult Centers: St Sigismund of Burgundy between Agaune and Prague*

King Sigismund of Burgundy (r. 516–24) was a convert from the Arian faith of his forebears to the orthodoxy of the Church of Rome and founder of the Abbey of Saint-Maurice d'Agaune in Valais, Switzerland (515). He was an impulsive and violent-tempered ruler, who had his son Sigeric killed mercilessly at the instigation of his new wife (522). Shortly after the murder of the king and

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2 Kéry, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 41–52.

3 Tóth, "Patronus regis," 80–96.

his family by Frankish King Chlodomer, the Abbot of Saint-Maurice Venerandus became interested in the remains of his monastery's founder and brought them for burial to Agaune from a well near Orléans, where the king's body was lying together with his massacred family (535). From that moment on, the cult of the holy king and martyr Sigismund started its gradual development in the shadow of the cult of St Maurice and his fellow Theban martyrs.<sup>4</sup> The monks of Agaune managed by the late sixth century to create for the founder of their abbey an aura of sanctity revolving around St Sigismund's healing power over fevers. This was reflected by the *Missa sancti Sigismundi regis pro febricitantibus*, a votive mass composed initially for the forgiveness of King Sigismund's sins, later sung as a means of seeking cure through the saint's intercession.<sup>5</sup> As attested by the distribution of relics, church dedications and commemoration through liturgical and hagiographical texts, St Sigismund's cult was present until the mid-fourteenth century, mainly in Southern France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and the Low Countries.<sup>6</sup> This regional diffusion indicates a moderate veneration of St Sigismund, who was known, though not popular in other parts of Europe.

The situation changed through the actions of Charles IV of Luxemburg, King of Bohemia (1346–78) and Holy Roman Emperor (1355–78), whose great knowledge of the cults of saints, understanding of the power and value of relics, and intense piety made him a passionate collector of relics.<sup>7</sup> He acquired first in 1354, from the Benedictine Monastery in Einsiedeln, a piece of St Sigismund's skull, which ended up in St Vitus Cathedral in Prague.<sup>8</sup> However, it was only in 1365, when Charles IV was crowned King of Burgundy and strengthened his imperial power in the region, that he took great interest in the cult of the sixth-century holy king, whose successor he claimed to be from that point on.<sup>9</sup> Detouring to Agaune from his coronation site in Arles, Charles IV took with him, despite the abbot's reluctance to hand them over, the ax of St Maurice's

4 For Sigismund's life and early cult, see: Folz, "Heiligen Könige," 317–44; idem, *Saints rois*, 23–25; Paxton, "Power," 95–110; idem, "Liturgy and Healing," 23–43.

5 Ibid., 23–43.

6 Folz, "Heiligen Könige," 340–341; Paxton, "Liturgy and Healing," 26, 33.

7 For Charles' passion for relics, see: Chadraba, "Devotio antiqua," 51–69; Machilek, "Privatfrömmigkeit," 87–101; Mengel, "Bones, Stones," 263–372; Otavský, "Reliquien," 129–41, 392–98. For his political propaganda through royal saints' cult and associated works of art, see: Rosario, *Art and Propaganda*; Crossley, "Politics of Presentation," 99–172.

8 Mengel, "Bones, Stones," 327–28.

9 For the political significance of Charles' sixth coronation, which made him the personal ruler of all the kingdoms of his empire, see: Machilek, "Privatfrömmigkeit," 99; Hilsch, "Krönungen," 111; Stoob, *Kaiser Karl IV*, 207–23.

martyrdom and St Sigismund's skull and half the body, i.e., a significant part of the holy king's relics.<sup>10</sup> He arranged for their transfer to Prague through a series of well-orchestrated actions, which resulted in the rapid transformation of St Sigismund of Burgundy into one of Bohemia's patron saints.<sup>11</sup>

As convincingly argued by David Ch. Mengel,<sup>12</sup> the Burgundian royal martyr was placed from the very beginning in the *sancta et fidelis societas* of St Wenceslas,<sup>13</sup> the tenth-century royal martyr and Bohemia's traditional patron.<sup>14</sup> St Sigismund's relics arrived to Prague on the vigil of St Wenceslas (September 27), when the town was filled with people coming for one of the annual fairs. They were transferred the next day to St Vitus Cathedral, which was miraculously illuminated during the office of matins: a sign of St Sigismund's previous merits and future miracles and a symbol of St Wenceslas' rejoicing in such *holy and faithful companionship*. The relics were then placed in a prominent chapel situated opposite the shrine of St Wenceslas.<sup>15</sup> The diocese-wide proclamation of the advent of St Sigismund's relics requested by the Archbishop of Prague during a diocesan synod (October 17, 1365)<sup>16</sup> and numerous miracles occurring immediately at the saint's new shrine<sup>17</sup> testify to the cult's carefully planned promotion by the archbishop and emperor and to the great impact that the transfer of the holy king's relics had in Bohemia. St Sigismund attracted numerous pilgrims seeking to be healed to Prague, both Archbishop John Očko of Vlašim and Charles IV himself being cured of fevers through the holy king's miraculous intervention

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10 Mengel, "Bones, Stones," 332–36.

11 For Sigismund as Bohemian patron, see: Polc, "Zapomenutý patron," 127–31; Mengel, "Remembering," 17–32; Studničková, "Kult Sigismund," 299–339.

12 Mengel, "Holy and Faithful," 145–58.

13 "... Quis dubitet sanctissimum patronum nostrum Wenceslaum apud Deum sanctum Sigismundum sibi obtinuisse in socium, qui adhuc positus in humanis sanctum sibi impetravit et vicum. O sancta et fidelis societas, que nullo potuit violari certamine, quaeque adunata corporibus pro delictis populorum staret et mente . . .," National Library of France, Paris, NAL 1510, published in "Miracula sancti Sigismundi," 463.

14 For the cult of Wenceslas, see Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 101–08, 163–67, 329–31, 347–48, with bibliography.

15 Mengel, "Holy and Faithful," 148–50. For Wenceslas' and Sigismund's *sancta et fidelis societas* in art, see: Studničková, "*Sancta et fidelis societas*," 446–53. The lines connecting St Sigismund's and St Wenceslas' chapels with the shrine of St Vitus and the planned tomb of St Adalbert formed the arms of a cross, which had the relics of the four Bohemian patrons at its ends, Homolka, "Ikografie sv. Víta," 566.

16 Mengel, "Bones, Stones," 339–40.

17 "Miracula sancti Sigismundi," 462–69. Mengel analyzes the 31 miracles that occurred just in the first four months after the transfer of the relics; see "Bones, Stones," 352–70.

(late January of 1366 and summer of 1371).<sup>18</sup> The cult's rapid success and its strong support from Charles IV—who named his third-born son, the future King of Hungary and Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund of Luxemburg, after St Sigismund in 1368—led finally to the establishment of the saint as one of the country's patrons.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, at the 1366 diocesan synod in Prague, St Sigismund's feast day was moved from May 1 to May 2 so that he could have a separate celebration on a different date from that of the Holy Apostles Philip and James. This was an honor usually granted to a country's patron saint and was granted to Sigismund on account of his great and glorious miracles.<sup>20</sup> St Sigismund's newly acquired significance was reflected also in the religious art commissioned by his two promoters, the Burgundian holy king appearing twice in the early 1370s in the company of Bohemia's traditional patrons, i.e., St Wenceslas, St Adalbert, St Vitus, St Procopius and St Ludmila: once on the votive panel ordered by Archbishop John Očko of Vlašim (before 1371) and a second time, as the result of Charles IV's commission, on the mosaics above the Golden Gate of St Vitus Cathedral (1370–71).<sup>21</sup>

### *Two Sigismunds in Late Medieval Hungary: King Sigismund of Luxemburg and St Sigismund of Burgundy*

As shown by Péter Tóth, the presence of St Sigismund's cult in medieval Hungary was mediated by the transfer of the saint's relics to Prague and the advent as King of Hungary of Sigismund of Luxemburg (1387–1437), who was the son of Charles IV and who promoted his personal patron in the region.<sup>22</sup> Before this date, there is scant evidence of St Sigismund's veneration in Hungary: some of the earliest Hungarian calendars do, nevertheless, contain the feasts of his martyrdom (May 1) and the *translatio* of his relics (October 15/16); however, the holy king's *passio*, office, and votive mass are missing from these eleventh-

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18 Both miracles attest to the familiarity of the cured ones with Sigismund's specialized healing power, *ibid.*, 357–58, 371. When Charles fell ill, his wife vowed to walk the distance of around 30 kilometers from Karlštejn to Prague to express her piety at St Sigismund's shrine; she then donated a large amount of gold to be used for adorning the saint's skull, Studničková, "Kult Sigismund," 307–08.

19 Charles' first son was named after the patron of Bohemia, St Wenceslas. For Charles' naming practice, see: Machilek, "Privatfrömmigkeit," 88–92; Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 330–31.

20 Mengel, "Bones, Stones," 341.

21 For these works, see: Schleif, "Hands," 9–15; Piqué and Stulik, *Conservation*.

22 Tóth, "*Patronus regis*," 80–96.

to-fourteenth-century liturgical manuscripts<sup>23</sup> and only the church in Kopács (Kopačevo, Croatia) was dedicated to St Sigismund (1299).<sup>24</sup> This indicates that the cult of the first medieval royal saint was confined in limited form to Hungarian church practice and did not manage to become popular until the end of the fourteenth century, when the situation changed radically.

St Sigismund's reputation seemingly spread rapidly outside Bohemia and news of the translation of his relics to Prague soon reached the neighboring Kingdom of Hungary. The gilded silver statue of St Sigismund was donated by *quemdam nobilem de Hungaria* to the saint's shrine and appeared in the 1374 inventory of St Vitus' treasury.<sup>25</sup> In 1375, the *Statuta capituli Varadiensis* recorded the existence of an altar dedicated to St Sigismund in the Cathedral of Nagyvárad (Oradea, Romania).<sup>26</sup> Sometime between 1364 and 1380, the chaplain of King Louis the Great requested permission to venerate St Sigismund's relics kept in the Cathedral of Olomouc since the early thirteenth century.<sup>27</sup> The Hungarian altars and churches dedicated to the new Bohemian patron correspond to the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg and were obviously inspired by the king's devotion to his personal patron: the altar in Körmöcbánya (Kremnica, Slovakia, 1391),<sup>28</sup> the royal chapter church in Buda (1410–24), the Pauline monastery in Verőce (1414–33), and the churches and chapels in Niva (1422), Úszfalva (Uzovce, Slovakia, 1429), and Hásság (Haşag, Romania, 1446).<sup>29</sup> St Sigismund gradually made his presence felt in liturgical writings as well. His feasts originating in Bohemian liturgical practice, i.e., the martyrdom of the saint (May 2) and the *translatio* of his relics (September 27), appear in several late-fourteenth-century or fifteenth-century missals with either Hungarian provenance or use.<sup>30</sup> St Sigismund's Life was known in Hungary by the early fifteenth century, when

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23 Ibid., 85.

24 Doc. no. 508, Wenzel, *Codex diplom.*, 12: 642.

25 Podlaha and Sittler, *Chrámový poklad*, XXIX.

26 Bunyitay, *Váradi káptalan*, 74; the altar is mentioned again in 1423 and 1437, Balogh, *Varadinum*, 2: 36, 44, 278.

27 Doc. no. 121 (352), Tadra, "Cancellaria," 101. For Sigismund's Olomouc relics preceding the acquisitions of Charles IV, see Studničková, "Kult Sigismund," 300–01.

28 Radocsay, *Középkori táblaképei*, 37.

29 Mező, *Templomcím*, 254; idem, *Patrociniumok*, 496. For the double dedication to St Ladislav and St Sigismund of the monastery in *Kysbathe/Gerchen* (1383–84), see below.

30 Missals kept in the National Széchényi Library, Budapest. For May 2, see: *Missale Ecclesiae Hungaricae saec. XIV*, Clmae 395; *Missale Posoniense (Codex "A") saec. XIV*, Clmae 214; *Missale Ecclesiae Polonicae 1379*, Clmae 451, Radó, *Libri liturgici*, 73–74, 77–79, 111–12. For Prague *translatio*, see: *Missale Hungariae Superioris s. XIV*, Clmae 93, *ibid.*, 67–69.



a *Legenda aurea* manuscript (copied in Italy in the second half of the fourteenth century) was augmented by two Hungarian users with several legends, including that of St Sigismund, the incipit of which is *Tempore Tiberij . . .*<sup>31</sup> The votive mass *pro febricitantibus* is featured in two fifteenth-century missals<sup>32</sup> and two *orationes* (*Sancti Sigismundi martiris* and *Rex et martyr, Sigismunde...*) appear in a prayer book written around the year 1460 in Southern Germany or Bohemia, though used in Upper Hungary.<sup>33</sup> The final outcome of this slow process was the inclusion of St Sigismund among Hungary's patron saints, as attested by *Legende sanctorum regni Hungarie in lombardica historia non contente* (Strasbourg, 1484–1487)<sup>34</sup> and its subsequent editions published in Venice (1498 and 1512).<sup>35</sup> In this collection of saints' lives which are relevant for Hungary, though omitted by *Legenda aurea*, one can also read the *vita* of St Sigismund: he was naturalized at last and enjoyed the company of Hungary's traditional patrons, i.e., the three *sancti reges Hungariae*—Stephen, Emeric, and Ladislas.<sup>36</sup>

Regarded as a zealous promoter of his patron's cult,<sup>37</sup> King Sigismund indeed tried to promote his namesake saint in Hungary. His actions are better understood when compared to the practices of veneration and promotion employed by Sigismund's father, Charles IV of Luxemburg. Soon after moving his residence from Visegrád to Buda (1408), King Sigismund started the construction next to his new court of a royal chapter church, a project on which he spent many thousands of florins by the year 1410. This attracted the praise of Pope John XXIII in a letter issued on August 3, followed fifteen days later by another one authorizing the access of visitors to the church in Buda on certain Marian feasts.<sup>38</sup> The construction of the chapter church was completed during the years 1419–24, as attested by accounts of visitors to the church, which received the double patronage of the Holy Virgin and St Sigismund.<sup>39</sup> As noted

31 University Library, Budapest, *Iacobus de Voragine: Legenda Aurea. Legendae Sanctorum*, Cod. Lat. 44, Mezey, *Codices Latini*, 65; Madas, “*Légende dorée*,” 55–56.

32 Cathedral Library, Esztergom, *Missale Poseniense (Codex “T”) saec. XV*, LI 7, and National Széchényi Library, Budapest, *Missale in usum Balb. Batthyány Capítanei de Kőszeg 1489*, Nyelvelmékek 17, Radó, *Libri liturgici*, 126–32, 169–72.

33 University Library, Budapest, *Orationes*, Cod. Lat. 109, Tóth, *Catalogus Codicum*.

34 Prüss, *Leg[e]n]de*.

35 Madas, “*Légende dorée*,” 59–60.

36 The collection includes, in the calendar's order, other saints and feasts relevant for medieval Hungary. For Sigismund's *vita*, see Prüss, *Leg[e]n]de*, fols. 3r–4r.

37 Folz, “Heiligen Könige,” 338.

38 Doc. no. 553–54, Kumorovitz, *Monumenta*, 3: 287–88.

39 For the church's history, see: idem, “Budai várkáporna,” 109–51; Végh, “Adatok,” 25–34.

by András Végh,<sup>40</sup> there are too many similarities between King Sigismund's religious foundation in Buda and that of Charles IV in Nuremberg (1355–58)<sup>41</sup> not to notice whose model of devotion and artistic patronage the Hungarian king followed. Both churches were located outside, though close to the royal residence, on the site of a former Jewish quarter.<sup>42</sup> As far as one can judge by the ground plan of the vanished church in Buda, they both displayed similar architectural features and sculptural decoration.<sup>43</sup> Both fulfilled the function of court chapels and collegiate chapter churches.<sup>44</sup> Most significantly, they enjoyed a similar double patronage, being placed first under the protection of the Holy Virgin and, second, under that of the founder's patron saint, i.e., St Sigismund, for the church in Buda<sup>45</sup> and St Wenceslas for the church in Nuremberg, the founder of which was *Karolus, qui et Wenceslaus*.<sup>46</sup>

King Sigismund understood the importance of relics in the promotion of a saint's cult and, like his father, he endeavored to acquire St Sigismund's relics in order to distribute them within his kingdom. A seventeenth-century copy of a document dated June 30, 1414 accounts for King Sigismund's visit to Agaune with the explicit intention to acquire some of his patron's relics and take them to Hungary.<sup>47</sup> More precisely, to a chapel the king was going to build in *Voarenza*, a deserted place in the Diocese of Vác, which was found next to an island on the Danube, a location lying in the proximity of the royal palace in Visegrád and identified with Verőce. The chapel was to be dedicated to St Sigismund and entrusted to the care of Pauline monks.<sup>48</sup> The document also offers relevant information on King Sigismund's devotion to his patron saint and his intention to spread and ensure the continuity of the royal martyr's cult

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40 Ibid., "Adatok," 25–26.

41 For Nuremberg Frauenkirche, see: Bräutigam, "Nürnberger Frauenkirche," 170–97; Crossley, "Our Lady," 64–80.

42 For the Nuremberg Jewish quarter, see: Maué, "Nuremberg's," 34–35. For the Jewish quarter in Buda, see: Feld, "Beszámoló," 35–49; Kárpáti, "Szent Zsigmond," 205–40.

43 Végh, "Adatok," 25–26. For the church's fragmentary sculptures, see: Gergely Buzás and István Feld, *A budai Szent Zsigmond templom és gótikus szobrai*.

44 Végh, "Adatok," 25–34; Kumorovitz, "Budai várkapolna," 109–51.

45 Ibid., 113–21.

46 Charles was named Wenceslas at birth (1316), but was re-Christened Charles during his confirmation (1323) by his uncle, Charles IV the Fair of France, at whose court Charles was educated, Schneider, "Karolus," 365–87. For the cult of Wenceslas in Nuremberg, see: Srovnal, "Kult svatého Václava," 233–48.

47 *Copiae Henrici Macognini de Petra canonici Agaunensis anno 1634–35*, bookcase no. 19, fols. 36/33r–38/35r, Historical Archives of the Abbey of Saint-Maurice d'Agaune, text published in Tóth, "Patronus regis," 94–96.

48 Ibid., 95. For identifying its location, see: Laszlovszky, "Royal Palace," 213–18.



across the kingdom.<sup>49</sup> After referring to the relic-oriented visit of Charles IV to Agaune<sup>50</sup> and to Sigismund's desire to follow in the footsteps of his father,<sup>51</sup> the document contains an account of the miraculous opening of the reliquary. This represented St Sigismund's consent for his new and partial relocation of relics, i.e., a small bone, a piece of the saint's arm, and a skull portion of one of the saint's sons, which King Sigismund took away to Hungary.<sup>52</sup> Although the document mentions only the church in Verőce, it is unlikely that the Pauline monastery was the exclusive recipient of St Sigismund's relics, especially if one thinks that in the moment of the king's pious visit and acquisition of relics, the church in Buda was being built and dedicated precisely to the Burgundian saint. It is unknown what relics the church in Buda possessed, but like the Nuremberg Frauenkirche, which had a side altar dedicated to St Wenceslas,<sup>53</sup> it is highly possible that King Sigismund provided the secondary altar of his foundation with the relics of his personal and the church's associated patron.<sup>54</sup> The existence before 1375 in the Cathedral of the Holy Virgin and St Ladislav in Nagyvárad of an altar dedicated to St Sigismund makes one reflect upon the possibility that part of the saint's relics were intended also for King Sigismund's favorite cathedral. In any case, in 1424, the Cathedral in Nagyvárad housed St Sigismund's relics, transferred temporarily from Prague by King Sigismund, who tried to protect them from the rage of the Hussites.<sup>55</sup>

Choosing Nagyvárad Cathedral for the temporary relocation of St Sigismund's relics was not without motivation. This was the cult center and burial place of one of Hungary's holy kings, St Ladislav, with whose cult Sigismund of Luxemburg became acquainted shortly after he arrived to the Hungarian court

49 Tóth, "*Patronus regis*," 92.

50 "...sed duci petivit devotissime et ardentem ad ecclesiam dicti Sancti Sigismundi, ob cuius reverentiam sic vocatur, quem sanctum visitaverat inclytæ memoriae dictus eius genitor, unde caput exportavit, qui dum rediret ad partes sui Regni Boemiae invenit foelicissimam augustam quae enixerat et peperat praelibatum eius inclytum genitum, quem vocari voluit Sigismundum ob reverentiam Sancti antedicti." *Ibid.*, 94.

51 "...praefatus vero dominus dominus noster foelix accedens ad praelibati foelicissimae memoriae Augusti sui genitoris devotionem, et volens et ardentem cupiens ex causis praemissis, in exaltationem nominis Sancti Sigismundi, devotionem et statum ecclesiae augmentum, ut de eiusdem sancti devotissimis orationibus apud Altissimum sit protinus gaudens..." *ibid.*, 95.

52 *Ibid.*, 95–96.

53 Végh, "Adatok," 26–27.

54 After attending the evening service in the royal chapter's church on January 5, 1501, Polish Duke Sigismund Jagiello was allowed to venerate its relics, though the reference is generic, Divéky, *Zsigmond*, 85.

55 Information occurring in a late-fifteenth-century source, Veit Arnpeck's *Chronica Baiuvariorum* (1491–95), Leidinger, *Veit Arnpeck*, 200. This isolated occurrence led to assumptions that the relics either returned afterward to Prague, Végh, "Adatok," 27, or have never been to Nagyvárad, Tóth, "*Patronus regis*," 88.

(1379) and for whom he maintained high devotion throughout his life.<sup>56</sup> During his reign, King Sigismund was present in Nagyvárad on numerous occasions<sup>57</sup> and, after the death of his wife, Queen Mary of Hungary, and her burial next to the tomb of St Ladislav (1395), the king directed his attention repeatedly toward the cathedral and his holy predecessor's remains.<sup>58</sup> In 1401 and 1434, King Sigismund requested papal indulgences for the pilgrims who visited the cathedral and venerated the holy king's miracle-working relics.<sup>59</sup> He took part himself in such a pilgrimage together with King Wladyslaw II Jagiello, spending fifteen days and celebrating Easter in Nagyvárad. Sigismund's expression of piety toward St Ladislav came after his conclusion of a peace treaty with the Polish ruler (1412).<sup>60</sup> After a fire in the early 1400s that destroyed the cathedral's sacristy and melted down St Ladislav's head reliquary, though left the relics unharmed, King Sigismund was likely involved in the commissioning of the holy king's exquisite new reliquary, kept today at the Cathedral of Győr. He also supported the cathedral's partial rebuilding in the years 1406–07 through the royal confirmation of privileges and donations.<sup>61</sup> It is in one of these charters that King Sigismund entrusted his salvation to the intercession of St Ladislav and expressed his desire to be buried next to the holy king's sepulcher in the Cathedral of Nagyvárad.<sup>62</sup> He maintained his wish even after he became Holy Roman Emperor,<sup>63</sup> a fact that serves to point out to the king's utmost devotion for one of Hungary's patrons. That St Ladislav was indeed important for King Sigismund is illustrated also by the king's keeping of the golden florin with the holy knight's figure on the reverse. In 1427, he also issued a silver ducat with

56 For Sigismund's veneration of St Ladislav, see: Kerny, "Szent László," 355; eadem, "Begräbnis," 475–76; Szakács, "Saints of the Knights," 319–20.

57 Sigismund's presence in Nagyvárad is recorded fifteen times between 1387 and 1426, Engel, "Utazó király," 70–71.

58 Nagyvárad Cathedral as Mary's burial site appears first in a 1401 royal donation charter, doc. no. I, Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus*, 4: 54–55.

59 For the 1401 papal letters following Sigismund's request, see *Monumenta Vaticana*, 1: 347–48, 367, 373. For the 1434 papal indulgences, see Lukcsics, *Monumenta Hungariae Italica*, 2: 333, 347.

60 Gleditschivs and Weidmann, *Ioannis Dhygossi*, 327; docs. nos. CL-CLII, Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus*, 5: 343–44.

61 For the Győr reliquary, its debated dating and its bibliography, see: Cat. no. 4.91, in Takács, *Sigismundus*, 378–82; László, "Szent László," 157–209. For the 1406 confirmations, see docs. nos. CCXXXIII–CCXXXV, Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus*, 4: 518–28; for the 1407 donations, see doc. no. CCXCII, *ibid.*, 613–14. See also: Bunyitay, *Váradai püspökség*, 1: 227; Balogh, *Varadinum*, 2:42–43.

62 Doc. no. CCXXXIII, Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus*, 4:519–20.

63 For Sigismund's burial, see: Kerny, "Begräbnis," 475–79; *idem*, "Zsigmond halála," 143–59.

the saint's iconic image bearing a crown, crucifer orb, and battle axe.<sup>64</sup> All these facts attest not only to King Sigismund's personal piety toward one of Hungary's patrons, but also to his understanding of St Ladislav as a powerful symbol of the Kingdom of Hungary and an efficient tool for political legitimizing and self-representation.

The possibility cannot be excluded, however, that King Sigismund also revered Hungary's other holy kings, although except for a 1404 royal confirmation of privileges addressed to the Cathedral in Székesfehérvár (i.e., the cult center of St Stephen and St Emeric and traditional burial site of Hungarian kings), no other evidence points out to such devotion.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, St Ladislav, the sacred protector *par excellence* of the Hungarian kingdom, was associated with the king's personal patron, St Sigismund, portrayed under the physical appearance of his protégé in the murals of the Augustinian Church in Constance, which were commissioned and partly ideated by King Sigismund himself during his stay there for the council (1417).<sup>66</sup> No longer identifiable in its entirety, the gallery of enthroned holy kings, princes, bishops, and female saints seems to reflect Sigismund's personal piety for the two holy kings, endorsing also his political and dynastical claims.<sup>67</sup> The association of the two holy kings makes one think of the double dedication to St Ladislav and St Sigismund of the Pauline monastery in *Kysbathe* (*Gerchen*), which Nicholas Zámbo de Mezölak, former Castellan of Óbuda and Master of the Treasury (1382–84, 1385–88), founded prior to the years 1383–84,<sup>68</sup> i.e., sometime after Sigismund's stay at the Hungarian court (1379–81) and close to the time of his marriage to his betrothed, Queen Mary of Hungary (1385). Their marriage, threatened by Elizabeth of Bosnia's intention to marry her daughter to Louis of Orléans, was personally supported by Nicholas Zámbo and others, who openly opposed the queen mother and renounced their allegiance to her (August 1384).<sup>69</sup> The monastery's double dedication to St Ladislav and St Sigismund by a dignitary of the royal court (and supporter of the future king, for that matter) antedates the actions of Sigismund of Luxemburg,

64 Cat. nos. 572–74, 584–85, Huszár, *Münzkatalog*, 93–95.

65 For this document, see: ELTE *Egyetemi Könyvtár*.

66 For these frescoes, see: Kéry, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 44–46; Cat. no. 2.12, in Takács, *Sigismundus*, 161–62.

67 Gramm, "Kaiser Sigismund," 391–406, reports also that the Austrian and Hungarian coat of arms appeared once and twice, respectively, next to the painted figures; it is possible, therefore, that another Hungarian holy king was included initially in the series of saints, but this can no longer be identified.

68 Molnár, "Zöld Kódex," 219–20; *Documenta Artis Paulinorum*, 2:209, and 3:31–35. For Nicholas Zámbo's career, see Incze, "My Kingdom in Pledge," 31–34.

69 Engel, *Realm of St Stephen*, 196–97.

but shows that others were aware as well of the benefits this *sancta et fidelis societas* (i.e., between the sacred protector of Sigismund's adoptive country and his personal patron saint) could have in making a newcomer accepted as the new King of Hungary.

### *St Sigismund of Burgundy and the Holy Kings of Hungary in Religious Mural Painting*

Several murals preserved in churches throughout medieval Hungary feature the country's traditional patrons, i.e., St Stephen, St Emeric, and St Ladislav, atypically associated with a fourth holy king, whose identity is most likely that of St Sigismund of Burgundy, the king's personal patron saint. A closer examination of these frescoes and the background of their commissioners is destined to suggest possible explanations for the way in which St Sigismund's cult was transferred from the royal milieu to the aristocratic one. The collective representation of Hungary's three holy kings was the consequence of their joint cult, which took shape around the middle of the fourteenth century in the royal milieu and gained popularity during the reigns of Louis the Great of Anjou (1342–82) and Sigismund of Luxemburg,<sup>70</sup> when the veneration of *sancti reges Hungariae* spread considerably among the noblemen of the kingdom.<sup>71</sup> By imitating the devotional practices of the royal court, the nobility also replicated the patterns of artistic patronage, decorating many of its churches with the image of *sancti reges Hungariae*. The veneration and subsequent commissioning of murals with their image functioned as a strong statement of the noble donor's political allegiance. This allegiance could be directed either toward the king, as an expression of loyalty toward the ruler, who rewarded the nobleman generously for faithful service, or directly to the kingdom, whenever the king's person was no longer considered suitable to represent it.<sup>72</sup> However, the strong political component of these depictions did not exclude the personal veneration of the royal saints by the frescoes' commissioners, many of them being named after or having their family members named after them.<sup>73</sup>

70 Năstăsoiu, "*Sancti reges*," 26–30; idem, "Political Aspects," 94–100.

71 Klaniczay, "Noblesse," 511–26; Szakács, "Saints of the Knights," 319–30.

72 The powerful symbol of St Ladislav was used against the king in 1402, when the Hungarian aristocracy conspired against Sigismund of Luxemburg and swore an oath on the saint's relics; the anti-Sigismund coalition supported the claim of Ladislav of Naples to the Hungarian throne. Doc. no. 401, Ipolyi, *Codex Diplomaticus*, 7: 439–40; Bunyitay, *Váradi püspökség*, 1: 221.

73 Such cases are discussed in Năstăsoiu, "*Sancti reges*," 49, 55, 63, 68.

The collective depiction in mural painting of *sancti reges Hungariae* usually places in a single composition the three holy rulers from the House of Árpád:<sup>74</sup> St Stephen (r. 1000/01–38), the founder of the Christian Kingdom of Hungary, who merited his sanctity for ruling as *rex iustus* and converting his people to Christianity; St Emeric (1000/07–31), the son of the former, a pious and chaste prince, whom was educated to become a virtuous Christian ruler, but died before succeeding his father; and St Ladislav (r. 1077–95), ideal ruler and knight, the country’s defender against pagan enemies, and *athleta patriae*.<sup>75</sup> Their highly conventional and stereotypical portrayal shows from a frontal perspective the full, standing figures of the holy kings characterized by hieratical appearance, static attitudes, and emphatic gestures.<sup>76</sup> The murals show with slight variation a similar picture: an old, white-bearded St Stephen with crown, scepter, and orb; a young, beardless St Emeric with orb and lily or lily-shaped scepter, the symbol of his chastity; and a mature, brown-bearded St Ladislav holding a battle axe, a reminder of his chivalric bravery.<sup>77</sup> The different ages of the royal saints—old for St Stephen, mature for St Ladislav, and young for St Emeric—could be an influence of the Three Magi’s iconography, which similarly shows the wise men at the three ages of kingship.<sup>78</sup> As the great number of preserved frescoes attests, this age differentiation is, in fact, not an attempt to individualize the three characters, but rather a standardized and uniform depiction. Either dressed in elegant court costumes or as full-armored knights, the three are depicted as kings, being equally invested with royal insignia (crown, scepter, and orb).<sup>79</sup> Despite the great uniformity and repetitiveness of the murals, there was also room for variation and innovation. In some cases, the unity of the group was disrupted, the saints being placed on separate, though conceptually unifying wall surfaces (e.g., the pillars of the triumphal arch) on which the *sancti reges Hungariae* stood in relation to one another.<sup>80</sup> In other cases, there were not the usual three, but four

74 For this iconography, see: Poszler, “Árpád-házi szent,” 170–87; Gogáltan, “Holy Kings,” 103–21; Kerny, “Magyar szent XIII.–XVII.,” 80–123; Năstăsoiu, “*Sancti reges*,” idem, “Political Aspects,” 93–119. For other studies, see below.

75 For their cults, see Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 114–294.

76 Năstăsoiu, “Political Aspects,” 101.

77 There is the tendency to place St Stephen centrally, but there are also exceptions, idem, “*Sancti reges*,” 74, 77, 88.

78 Marosi, “XIV–XV. századi,” 34–36; Kerny, “Magyar szent XIV,” 75–76.

79 Năstăsoiu, “*Sancti reges*,” 45–65, 72–93; idem, “Political Aspects,” 100–19.

80 Idem, “*Sancti reges*,” 55–62, 75, 80, 84, 89, 91–92; idem, “Political Aspects,” 107–14.

royal saints, whom were depicted either together, within a single composition, or formed a coherent iconographic unit despite their obvious spatial separation.



Fig. 1 – Holy bishop, St Ladislav, St Stephen, St Sigismund, and St Emeric, either before 1404/5 or 1420s, fresco, middle register of the sanctuary's southern wall, Lutheran Church in Almakerék (Mălâncrav, Romania)

On the southern wall of the sanctuary of Nicholas Apafi's family church in Almakerék (Mălâncrav, Romania), painted either shortly before 1404/05 or in the 1420s,<sup>81</sup> a unitarily conceived group of saints is surrounded by a decorative frame (Fig. 1). The standing figures with elegant postures and fashionable court costumes are: an old holy bishop with mitre and crozier, identified either with St Gerard, St Nicholas, or St Adalbert;<sup>82</sup> the mature, brown-bearded St Ladislav with crucifer orb and battle axe; the old, white-bearded St Stephen with scepter and crucifer orb; another mature, brown-bearded holy king with the same attributes as St Stephen; and the young, beardless St Emeric with blond, curly hair, holding an orb and originally a lily (now faded away).<sup>83</sup> Because the accompanying inscriptions are no longer visible, it is difficult to ascertain the identity of the mature holy king placed between St Stephen and St Emeric and depicted with

81 For the church's bibliography up to 2000, see Gogăltan, "Church in Mălâncrav," 305–13. For the Apafi's artistic patronage, see: eadem, "Patronage;" eadem and Sallay, "Church of Mălâncrav," 2:181–210. For the murals' recent overview, see: Jenei, "Peintures murales," 47–76.

82 For the complex issue of the holy bishop's identity, see: Năstăsoiu, "Holy Bishop."

83 Gogăltan, "Holy Kings," 114.



generic royal attributes.<sup>84</sup> Anca Gogâltan identified him hypothetically as St Sigismund on the basis of the historical background of the frescoes, the donor's attachment to the king, and the efforts of Sigismund of Luxemburg to promote the cult of his patron throughout the kingdom.<sup>85</sup> St Sigismund was indeed depicted as a middle-aged holy king, dressed in royal garments, holding scepter and orb, and not having other distinguishing attributes.<sup>86</sup>

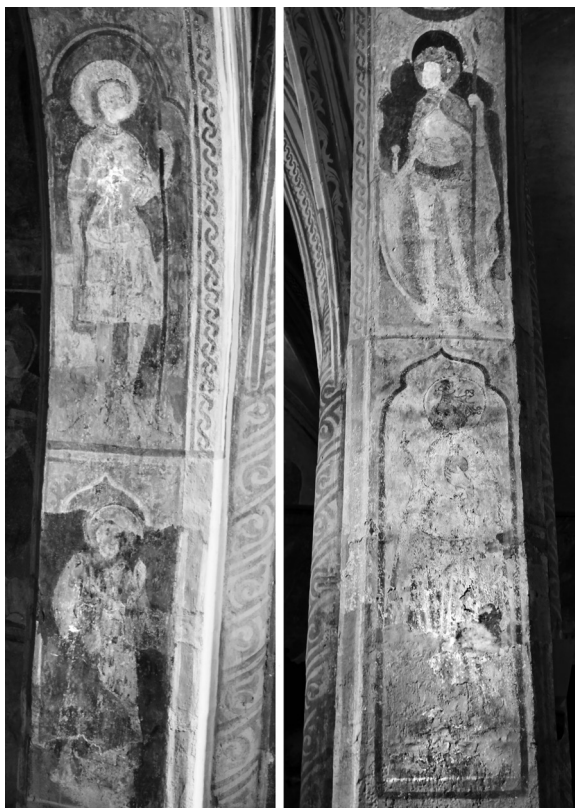


Fig. 2 – Holy kings, 1420s, fresco, eastern and western pillars of the southern aisle, Lutheran Church in Csetnek (Štítník, Slovakia)

84 Identified initially with St Louis IX of France, Drăguț, “Mălincraiv,” 87–88; idem, “Mediaș,” 13–14. The Transylvanian analogies upon which he relied (Beszterce, Medgyes, Marosszentkirály, Marosszentanna, and Szék) are, in fact, holy kings, whom are difficult to identify in absence of inscriptions and personal attributes. An exception is the holy king in Szék, who holds a ring and raven, the attributes of St Oswald, King of Northumbria, who appears also in the recently uncovered murals in Szászivánfalva that were executed by the same workshop that produced the sanctuary frescoes in Almakerék; however, the fourth holy king in Almakerék cannot be St Oswald, due to his lack of personal attributes.

85 Gogâltan, “Holy Kings,” 117–21.

86 Studničková, “Kult Sigismund,” 299–39; idem, “Kult Zikmunda,” 283–23; idem, “*Sancta et fidelis*,” 446–53.

Four holy kings, two on each pillar and in superposed registers, seem to have faced each other originally on the pillars separating the nave from the southern aisle of the church in Csetnek (Štútnik, Slovakia), but currently only three of them are visible. The mural decoration of the church's southern aisle was commissioned by Ladislav Csetneki during the 1420s, the decade in which the pillar frescoes were painted.<sup>87</sup> The figures are poorly preserved and their individual identification is problematic, but one can notice a mixture of knightly, courtly, and royal elements in their costumes and attributes (Fig. 2). The saint on the eastern pillar's upper register has chainmail under his tight tunic and holds an attribute with long handle (?) and shield. His counterpart on the western pillar is



Fig. 3 – St Sigismund, 1420s, fresco, lower register of the western pillar, Lutheran Church in Štútnik (Slovakia)

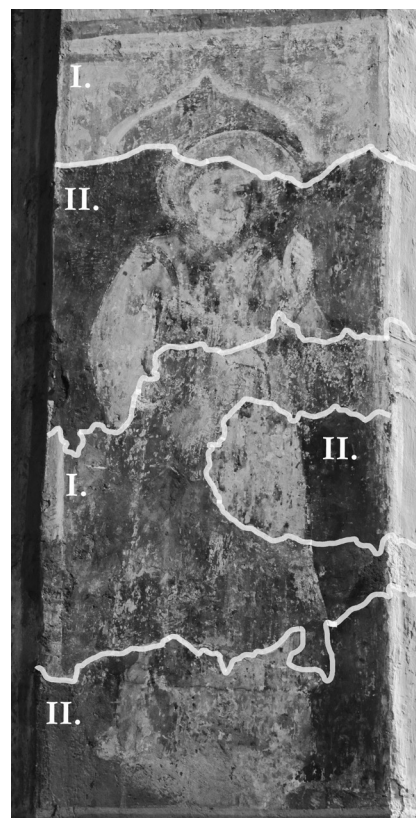


Fig. 4 – Drawing with succession of paint layers: (I) holy-king layer, (II) holy-monk layer; lower register of the eastern pillar, Lutheran Church in Štútnik (Slovakia)

87 For the murals' dating and commissioner, see: Dvořáková, *Středověká malba*, 154–60; Prokopp, *Középkori freskók*, 31–40; Togner, “Nástenné malby,” 687–89.

fully armored, wears a crown or ducal hat, props a shield and sword against the ground, and holds a similar, long-handled attribute with destroyed upper side, which could be either a spear, halberd, pollaxe, or banner. Below him (Fig. 3), a mature holy king in court costume and crown holds a crucifer orb and badly preserved attribute, probably a scepter. He has curly hair and beard covering only the lower part of his jaw. The representation facing him on the lower register of the eastern pillar was later replaced by the figure of a holy monk, but the partial detachment of the paint reveals that there was another, earlier saint painted there (Fig. 4). Several noticeable details suggest that this older figure represented a saint dressed in a red-brown vestment with a relatively large sleeve.<sup>88</sup> His left arm was bent as for holding an attribute, probably a scepter or orb by analogy with his counterpart, who holds precisely these attributes. His halo, partially visible next to that of the holy monk, has the same color and outline as the halo of the saint facing him; both were placed under decorated, trefoil arches (Fig. 3–4). These features indicate that the two figures on the lower registers of the pillars are coeval, as they are with those on the upper registers. Faced with this evidence and given the dating of the murals, one can hypothesize that in Csetnek as well, the traditional, Hungarian royal trio was enriched with another holy king, although individual identification of the saints is no longer possible. However, the holy king's curly hair and distinctively shaped beard (Fig. 3) recall the features of St Sigismund as they appear on the fresco in Constance and, implicitly, those of Sigismund of Luxemburg, whose facial traits were conferred often by medieval painters to the patron saint of the King of Hungary and Holy Roman Emperor.<sup>89</sup>

In the frescoes of the church in Lónya, either painted or commissioned by a certain *mag(iste)r nicolaus* in 1413,<sup>90</sup> two holy kings were integrated to the sanctuary's now-incomplete row of standing apostles (Fig. 5). Dressed in fashionable court costumes, the two standing figures with crown and crucifer orbs are identified by inscriptions: ·s(anctus)·*dux*/·*emeri*[c]*us* and ·s(anctus)·/*rex*/[s]*tepha*/*nu*[s]. Their facial features are damaged, though one clearly see that the

88 Detail encountered in the court costume of the saint facing him; the military costumes in the upper registers are tight.

89 Sigismund of Luxemburg was identified visually with his personal patron, the emperor's iconography crossing often the borderline between the sacred and profane, between religious piety and personal representation, Kéry, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 41–52. For other examples, see: Marosi, “Zsigmond-portrék,” 133–41; idem, “Saints at Home,” 197–98; Szabó, “Emperor Sigismund,” 24–31, 85; Tátrai, “Darstellung Sigismunds,” 143–52; Cat. no. 2.12, in Takács, *Sigismundus*, 161–62.

90 Lángi, “Előzetes beszámoló,” 357–74; Jékely and Lángi, *Falfestészeti emlékek*, 184–213, 457.





Fig. 5 – St Emeric and St Stephen (southern wall), and St Sigismund (southern pillar), 1413, fresco, southern wall of the sanctuary, Calvinist Church in Lónya (Hungary)



Fig. 6 – St Sigismund, 1413, fresco, southern pillar of the triumphal arch, Calvinist Church in Lónya (Hungary)

former is brown-haired and holds a white lily, whereas the latter has white hair and beard, and holds a mace-like scepter. They are placed on the sanctuary's southern wall, in the proximity of the pillar of the triumphal arch, where another partially preserved holy king is placed under a canopy (Fig. 5–6). This one has a similar crown, mantle, crucifer orb, and scepter with flower-shaped ending. His face is completely damaged, but the accompanying inscription identifies him as *·s(anctus)·/·sigism[undus]*. The sanctuary's 1413 decoration is now incompletely preserved and St Ladislav is missing; however, given his great popularity, it is unlikely that the holy knight was not depicted inside the church. The eastern and northern walls were decorated with standing apostles, the only place for the hypothetical depiction of St Ladislav being the triumphal arch's northern pillar, i.e., as St Sigismund's counterpart.<sup>91</sup>

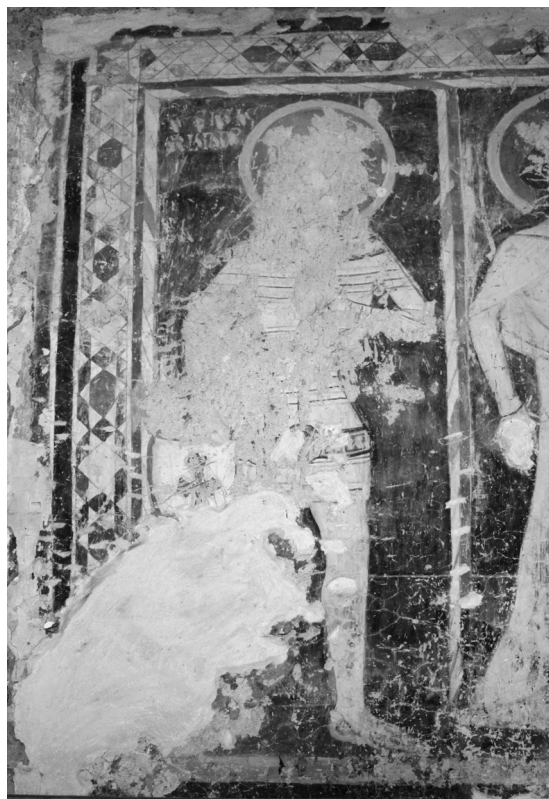


Fig. 7 – St Sigismund, c. 1400, fresco, lower register of the nave's northern wall, Calvinist Church in Bádok (Romania)

91 Năstăsoiu, “*Sancti reges*,” 57–58, 69, 80; idem, “Political Aspects,” 114. The corresponding layer of paint fell down in this area, making visible the sanctuary's earlier decoration; although incompletely preserved, the northern wall's decoration seems to have consisted entirely of standing apostles.

In his Bohemian iconography, St Sigismund was depicted as a middle-aged holy king, dressed in royal garments and holding scepter and orb, though not having other distinguishing attributes. However, in the recently discovered murals of the church in Bádok (Bădești, Romania), which were painted around 1400 on the lower register of the nave's northern wall,<sup>92</sup> St Sigismund was depicted also under a knightly guise (Fig. 7). His partially preserved figure shows a full-armed knight holding a white shield decorated with a red cross in his right hand, whereas his left hand, bent in front of his chest, probably held an orb (now destroyed). The saint's features are no longer preserved, his head having been intentionally damaged at some later point; however, the upper side of the damaged area has the shape of a crown, which the holy knight originally had on his head.<sup>93</sup> If it were not for the accompanying inscription that clearly reads *S(ANCTVS)·SIGIS/MVND(VS)*, this holy warrior would easily pass for St Ladislav due to his pronounced knightly appearance. It was probably the iconographic type of this popular Hungarian patron that the painter of the small rural church used when conceiving the appearance of the new saint, whose cult was only emerging in medieval Hungary.<sup>94</sup> However, St Sigismund is depicted in Bádok as part of a series composed of St Catherine of Alexandria, St Helena, St John the Baptist, and the Madonna with Child, a sign that he was not exclusively associated with Hungary's holy kings.<sup>95</sup>

As attested by the above-discussed murals, St Sigismund of Burgundy could be depicted either as a holy king or a holy knight and could be placed in the company of either *sancti reges Hungariae* or other popular saints. His image in these churches reflects his certain popularity at the turn of the fourteenth and

92 Jékely and Kiss, *Középkori falképek*, 8–25; Jékely, “Bádok falképei,” 194–208; idem, “Ateliers,” 32–37.

93 A similar, crown-shaped damage on the head of the neighboring St Catherine supports the idea of intentional destruction, for whatever reasons.

94 Marosi, “Saints at Home,” 194–98. Doubting that the painting was executed immediately after 1387, he proposed a dating one quarter of a century later; the figure's knightly appearance, however, could equally indicate an earlier dating to a period when painters were not very familiar with the new saint's iconography, copying thus that of St Ladislav. As shown earlier, St Sigismund's cult made its presence felt in Hungary in the 1370s–1380s; subsequently, the dating of the frescoes before 1400 is highly possible.

95 Another fragmentarily preserved example can be added hypothetically to this list. In the early- fifteenth-century murals of the church in Zsíp, the holy kings on the pillars of the triumphal arch are probably St Ladislav and St Emeric (northern pillar) and another mature holy king with dark hair (southern pillar), a detail which does not fit the iconography of the old, white-haired St Stephen. The paint layer corresponding to St Ladislav's pendant is completely lost, but iconographic analogies (Zsigra, Tornaszentandrás, Poprád, and possibly Csécs) suggest that St Ladislav could be faced by St Stephen, whereas St Emeric's pendant, the dark-haired holy king, could be St Sigismund. For a discussion of this case, see Năstăsoiu, “*Sancti reges*,” 57–58, 60–61, 69, 93; idem, “Political Aspects,” 110–11, 114, 116–17, 119.



fifteenth centuries. By looking at the donors of the frescoes whenever such information is available, one can hypothetically reconstruct the transfer of St Sigismund's cult from the royal level to that of the nobility. Nicholas Apafi, the donor of the frescoes in Almakerék, was *aule miles* (1410–41), *comes* of Vranduk, Srebrenik, Dubočac (1414–18), and Biertan (1418–40), his presence being attested in Constance during King Sigismund's stay for the council (1418). Sigismund then issued a series of charters granting privileges to Biertan and confirming some land possessions inherited by the wife of Nicholas, himself called *fidelis noster dilectus egregius miles Nicolaus filius Apa de Almakerek* and commended for his great bravery and remarkable assistance during the king's military campaigns in Bosnia.<sup>96</sup> Present then in Constance was also Ladislav Csetneki, the commissioner of the murals in Csetnek, who was an illustrious prelate holding throughout his career the ecclesiastical offices of Canon of Esztergom (from 1397), Provost of Budafelhévíz and Esztergom-Zöldmező (1408–24), governor of the Archdiocese of Esztergom (1420, 1439), *comes* of the royal chapel (1423), chancellor to the queen (1432–37), and Bishop of Nyitra (1439–48).<sup>97</sup> Whereas almost no information has survived on the notables of Bádok (and Zsíp), it is known that the owners of Lónya belonged at the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to the kingdom's lower nobility.<sup>98</sup> One can also add to these figures that of Nicholas Zámbo de Mezőlak, Master of the Treasury and early supporter of Sigismund of Luxemburg, who dedicated his monastic foundation in *Kysbathe (Gerchen)* to both St Ladislav and St Sigismund, i.e., precisely to the patrons of the country and the future king. Consequently, the presence of St Sigismund in the company of the three *sancti reges Hungariae* was inspired by the high devotion of Sigismund of Luxemburg for both his personal patron and the kingdom's holy protectors. This inspired, in turn, a similar piety among the country's noblemen, who were either in close or distant connection with the king and belonged equally to the higher and lower levels of nobility.<sup>99</sup> They emulated the devotional and artistic patterns of the royal court, illustrating in their churches the Hungarian-Bohemian *sancta et fidelis societas* and being aware

96 For Nicholas' activity, see Gogáltan and Sallay, "Church of Málánrav," 181–86; for the 1418 documents, see doc. no. 1835–37, Gündisch, *Urkundenbuch*, 63–67.

97 For overviews of his career, see: Prokopp, *Középkori freskok*, 31–33; Szakács, "Saints of the Knights," 325; Jékely, "Regions," 163.

98 Nagy, *Magyarország családai*, 7: 156–68; Karácsonyi, *Ersten Lónya*. See also doc. no. 125, 130, 136–37, 147, 159–61, Neumann, *Bereg megye*, 63–65, 68, 72.

99 For Hungarian nobility's devotion for the *sancti reges Hungariae*, see: Klaniczay, "Noblesse," 511–26; Szakács, "Saints of the Knights," 319–30; Fedeles, "Várad kegyhelye," 163–82.

of the utmost devotion of the king for St Sigismund. They sometimes made obvious the link between the ruler and his personal patron by lending the features of the former to the latter, as likely happened in Csetnek. That the cult of the Burgundian royal martyr and his representation in the company of Hungary's holy kings were inspired by King Sigismund's piety and were determined by the political transformations of the time is likewise obvious from the chronological distribution of the mural ensembles. This coincides exclusively with the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg and endorses Péter Tóth's opinion that *patronus regis* was, in fact, *patronus regni* at least as long as the king was reigning.<sup>100</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The reputation of St Sigismund of Burgundy spread to Hungary shortly after the *translatio* of the saint's relics to Prague, after which the piety of Hungarian pilgrims travelling abroad was immediately directed toward the new Bohemian patron. However, his cult started to take shape in Hungary only through the consistent efforts of Sigismund of Luxemburg to promote his personal patron throughout his kingdom, acquiring and distributing St Sigismund's relics across Hungary and founding churches in his honor. It is precisely during the period coinciding with the reign of King Sigismund that the murals bearing representations of St Sigismund were painted: from the late 1300s to the 1420s. The king's actions to promote his patron saint were meant to establish and ensure the solidity of St Sigismund's new Hungarian cult and they show striking similarities with those undertaken by the king's father, Charles IV of Luxemburg. This one managed in only five years to transform St Sigismund into one of his country's sacred protectors by associating from the beginning the holy newcomer with Bohemia's traditional patrons, especially St Wenceslas. No direct evidence of joint promotion by the Hungarian king of St Sigismund and the three holy kings has survived, although the king's reverence for both his personal patron and St Ladislav is undeniable. His obvious emulation of his father's efficient strategies for promoting the cults of saints makes it highly possible that King Sigismund attempted to establish, like his illustrious parent, a new *sancta et fidelis societas* within his kingdom, one that was meant to ensure the status of Hungarian patron for St Sigismund. Except for the temporary relocation of the royal martyr's relics to the cult center of St Ladislav in Nagyvárád and their

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100 Tóth, "Patronus regis," 80–96.

depiction in the Constance frescoes, there is no other sign of such an explicit association. The possibility cannot be excluded, however, that King Sigismund's high devotion for the two royal saints made St Sigismund to be placed more than twice in St Ladislas' holy and faithful companionship and, through him, in that of the other *sancti reges Hungariae*, the usual iconographic companions of St Ladislas. Only such a situation could make possible the iconographic association of St Sigismund with the holy kings of Hungary during King Sigismund's reign and his later inclusion among the patron saints of the Hungarian Kingdom in *Legende sanctorum regni hungarie in lombardica historia non contente*.

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