

**DURA HARDI**

University of Novi Sad

Faculty of Philosophy, Department of History

djurahardi@ff.uns.ac.rs

**CUMANS AND MONGOLS  
IN THE REGION OF SREM IN 1241-1242:  
A DISCUSSION ON THE EXTENT OF DEVASTATION**

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**Abstract:** On the eve of the Mongol invasion of Hungary in 1241 in order to defend the country as successfully as possible the Hungarian King Bela IV welcomed Cumans to his state (1239). They had previously clashed with the Mongols in the area of the Black Sea region of steppes and they were threatened by them. However, after the murder of their khan Kotyan, Cumans left Hungary in 1241 and found refuge in neighboring Bulgaria. During the retreat southward they devastated the Hungarian border area of Srem (Marchia) and shortly after that armed Mongols themselves passed through this land. On the basis of the analysis of known and indirect sources still not considered in historiography in the context of this topic and based on the views of historiography the author investigates the possible extent of Cuman and Mongol devastation of Srem and these areas in the south of Hungary from 1241 to 1242. The author of the paper adopts a critical approach towards the news of Master Roger, who was particularly shocked by the Cuman destruction of Marchia. His report was credible, but the writer did not have the opportunity to stay in Srem before or after the invasion. The author believes that the Cuman and Mongol invasion did not fully and dramatically influence the depopulation of Srem and the disruption of the local economic life; instead, this invasion had devastating consequences only in some of its segments.

**Keywords:** Srem (Syrmia), Cumans, Mongols, 1241, southern Hungary, Bela IV, John Angelos.

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The Mongol invasion of Hungary in 1241 to 1242 was an event that left a deep mark in the history of this part of Europe. Due to the size of the armed conflict, the extent of people's suffering, the country and its wealth, and finally due to the cruelty and psychosis of fear that accompanied it, the invasion made a strong impression on the contemporaries of this event, skilled writers such as Master Roger<sup>1</sup> or his spiritual brother and acquaintance Archdeacon Thomas of Split.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, historians to this day

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<sup>1</sup> Rogerius, *Carmen Miserabile*, 543-588; English translation: Master Roger's, *Epistle*: 132-227; compare with the Croatian edition by M. Srdelić translated as: Rogerije iz Apulije, *Carmen miserabile*.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Archid., *Hist. Salonitana*, ch. XXXVI-XXXIX, 132-178; English translation: Archdeacon Thomas of Split, *Hist.*, XXXVI-XXXIX, 252-305; on Thomas of Split as a source for the invasion of Mongols see: Sweeney

have devoted a lot of attention with many arguments to issues related to the Mongol invasion of Hungary and its consequences, one of which is certainly the issue of the extent of the Mongol destruction.<sup>3</sup> In this paper we wanted to give our contribution to this topic, which in our research will be limited to the devastation of this side of Srem or Marchia, which was its second name in the period 1241-1242. In other words, we will focus only on the fate of one border area located on the southern boundary of former Hungary.

During the Middle Ages, because of its strategic position and relative wealth this fertile wine-growing county on the southern slopes of Fruška Gora had incomparably great importance which, figuratively speaking, exceeded the relatively limited space it occupied, determined by the watercourse of two large rivers – the Danube in the north and east and the Sava to its south. On the river and land route, which followed the course of the Danube from central Europe and led to the interior of the Balkan peninsula – towards Istanbul and Asia Minor, or the countries positioned towards the Adriatic coast – Srem was one of the unavoidable stops.<sup>4</sup> For most of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Byzantium and Hungary consistently fought around this border area. However, after the death of Emperor Manuel I Comnenus (1180), his would-be successor to the imperial throne, now in the role of the ruler of Hungary, King Bela III (1173-1196), took advantage of the decline of the Byzantine Empire and definitely rejoined the area between the Sava and Danube with his empire.<sup>5</sup> This side of Srem (lat. *Sirmia Citerior*), located between the two rivers, saw a period of peace and development that would suddenly and violently be interrupted in 1241.

The fate of Srem in the year of the Mongol invasion of Hungary and Central Europe was all the more specific because before Mongols it was devastated by Cumans, a nomadic people whose arrival to Hungary was directly linked to the Mongol threat. Therefore, Srem had the misfortune to be devastated twice by two cavalry armies in a relatively short period of time (between the spring of 1241 and the spring of 1242). This destructive synergy of the Cuman and Mongol devastation of an area did not escape the attention of historians. Even Gyula Pauler noted that, as far as Srem was concerned, the itinerary of Cumans and then of Mongolian forces of Batu Khan was coincidental.<sup>6</sup> In recent years, Stanko Andrić's work dedicated to the *Monastery of the Holy Cross in Frankavila (Mandelos)* devoted a section of the study to the analysis of the Cuman and Mongol devastation of the village Frankavila (and in fact the whole area of Srem).<sup>7</sup> Finally, the devastation of Srem in 1241-1242 as a historiographical fact found its place in the studies of a number of researchers who wrote about Cumans or Mongols in medieval Hungary and explored topics from the history of this part of Europe. For that reason we cannot agree with the statement that this is a well-known fact about which a new and original angle would be difficult to present.<sup>8</sup> However, when

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1982: 156–183.

<sup>3</sup> A review of historiography in: Borosy 1991: 3-20; Font 2011: 691-698.

<sup>4</sup> Andrić 2008b: 29-30.

<sup>5</sup> Makk 1989; Kalić 2007: 31-44.

<sup>6</sup> Pauler 1899: 158-159, 185.

<sup>7</sup> Andrić 2005: 58-61.

<sup>8</sup> Strakosch-Grassmann 1893: 74-75; Miladinović 1903: 116; Hóman 1939: 543, 555; Pavičić Tresić 1942: 64-91; Čirković 1969: 60; *Id.* 2008: 5; Kristó 1986:119; *Id.* 1987: 1424, 1426-1427, 1438; Vásáry 2005: 65; Jackson 2005: 69; Gašić 2010 (1944): 45, 123; Bubalo, Mitrović, Radić 2010: 58; Uzelac 2015: 40.

we recently wrote a paper on the social and economic context of the outcome of a legal dispute in 1253 related to unusual criminal offense – forgery of money – committed precisely in Srem, on the basis of the available data an idea was logically imposed about a discussion in which we would once again consider the question of the extent and consequences of the Cuman and Mongol devastation of Srem.<sup>9</sup> Believing that our assumptions is justified, we had nothing else to do but to take into account the views of our predecessors historians and to dedicate ourselves again to the analysis of the known sources concerning these events in order to eventually arrive at the content of other sources such as the Charter of 1253.

Historiography draws direct knowledge of the events in Srem in 1241-1242 from two sources. One is directly related to Cumans and second is related to Mongols in this area. We know much more about the Cuman devastation of Srem, which chronologically preceded the Mongol one, because a witness the Mongol invasion, Master Roger, described it in his work *Epistola magistri Rogerii in Miserabile Carmen super Destructione Regni Hungariae per Tartaros* with all important details. As it is known, Roger was a cleric born in Apulia. He arrived to Hungary in the 1230's accompanied by a papal legate and Cardinal, bishop of Praeneste Jacopo de Pecoraria and had a successful ecclesiastical career here. He died as one of the most respected Hungarian prelates on the throne of the Split archdiocese, which he held from 1249 to 1266. At one moment, the Mongol invasion found him in the position of a clergyman in Veliki Varadin (Oradea Mare; Nagyvárad). Although he fell into the Mongol slavery, he was later happily rescued from it. In the literary form of “letters” sent to his patron Cardinal Pecorarius shortly after the invasion (and certainly before 26 June 1244) he wrote an exhaustive account about the devastation of Hungary by Mongols. Historians agree that as a historical source his work is highly reliable, even more so, its extent and importance of data are one of the major sources for the reconstruction of the events in Hungary during 1241-1242. While explaining the tragic events Roger himself logically sought a wider context of political and social events in Hungary itself, which included the inevitable question of the arrival of Cumans, which opened Pandora's box of the latent conflict between Bela IV and his noblemen, the former barons of his father, King Andrew II.<sup>10</sup>

It is not our goal to use this opportunity to talk in more detail about the role of Cumans, a nomadic people of Turkish origin, in the history of Hungary and Southeast Europe in the 13<sup>th</sup> century except to the extent necessary to understand the circumstances that would lead to the future destruction of Srem by Cumans. After all, these are all known facts in historiography.<sup>11</sup> In the wake of the Mongol attack on central Europe, probably in the autumn of 1239, in the period when the Mongol forces led by the commanding officer of the European march Batu khan conquered South Russian cities of Pereyaslav and Chernihiv,<sup>12</sup> Hungarian King Bela IV welcomed to his country the nation of Cumans led by

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<sup>9</sup> Hardi 2015: 245-255.

<sup>10</sup> On Roger and his work with a review of older literature see: Almási 1987: 51-57; *Id.* 1988: 9-14; *Id.* 1994: 576-577; *Id.* 2016: 55-82.

<sup>11</sup> Newer research on Cumans in Hungary and southeastern Europe in: Pálóczi Horváth 1989a (English translation: *Id.* Pálóczi-Horváth 1989b); Berend 2001; Vásáry 2005; Korobeinikov 2008: 379-412.

<sup>12</sup> For chronology of the arrival of Cumans to Hungary see: Pauler 1899: 149, 512 (ref. 130); Solymosi 1986: 146;

their khan Kotyan (Köten).<sup>13</sup> As Roger notes, *it was said that among others there were about 40,000 families*.<sup>14</sup> In other words, this was a mutual alliance.

Already in the early 1230's the experienced khan Kotyan was the most important Cuman ruler in the vast area of the Black Sea steppes, the elder of a few Cuman tribes. Having at his disposal a substantial military power, he played a major role in relations between the South Russian princes.<sup>15</sup> He was an ally and the father in law of the Prince of Galicia, Mstislav Mstislavich. One of his granddaughters, Ana (the daughter of Mstislav Mstislavich) was the wife of the Prince of Volhynia Danilo Romanovič, while his other granddaughter Maria was married to Prince Andrew († 1233/4), the son of King Andrew II and Bela's younger brother, the Hungarian pretender to the throne of Galicia.<sup>16</sup> If we neglect the dynastic connections, Kotyan's importance must have been well known earlier in the Hungarian court, primarily because of the long fight for Galicia on which all Hungarian kings laid their claim. During this struggle Kotyan in fact supported the rivals of Hungary, Mstislav Mstislavich and then Danilo Romanovich. Finally, the connection between Hungary and Cumans was reflected through the spread of Christianity by Hungarian missionaries among one part of the nation. In the area of Cumania, the land on the south-eastern borders of Hungary (Moldavia, Wallachia), a Cuman Diocese was founded (1229), whose jurisdiction extended between the rivers Olt and Seret.<sup>17</sup> Mongols defeated Kotyan's hordes during 1238 and, since he was their old enemy since the time of the battle on the river Kalki in 1223 and since he had no intention to subjugate to them, he decided to seek help and refuge with the Hungarian king.<sup>18</sup> Bela, on the other hand, respected the military force of Kotyan's Cumans and apparently seriously counted on them in the upcoming defense of Hungary from Mongols. His commitment to allow Kotyan and his people to enter the country and settle in its "central parts" (*ad mediculum terre sue*), probably the ones located between the Danube and Tisza, and the Tisza, Tamis and Keres, therefore seemed like a pragmatic decision. It is possible that this decision was supported by one part of the Church since Cumans and their leaders at least formally adopted Christianity when they came to Hungary. On the other hand, as György Györffy concluded, Hungarian noblemen were against this choice, as well as the careful Dominicans whose mission headed by Julijanus had earlier brought reliable news to the Hungarian king from the East (1237), thanks to the Prince of Suzdal Juri Vsevolodovich, that Tatars would also attack his country.<sup>19</sup>

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compare with: Čerepnin 1977: 197.

<sup>13</sup> His name in Latin sources "Kuthen": Rogerius, *Carmen Miserabile*, 553; In Russian chronicles: "Котян": *Ипат'evskaja letopis'*, 717.

<sup>14</sup> Rogerius, *Carmen Miserabile*, 2, 554. In historiography there are various opinions regarding the number of Cumans who entered Hungary in 1239. The interpretations range from 40,000 families to 40,000 warriors. In any case, the number of 40,000 families is exaggerated according to many. A constructive analysis of the possible number of Cumans is offered by Pálóczi Horváth, who believes there could not have been more than 70-80.000. Pálóczi Horváth 1989a: 52-53; also compare with: Berend 2001:71-72.

<sup>15</sup> Nagirnyj 2011: 184-188, 200, 203, 224-225.

<sup>16</sup> Wertner 1892: 454-455; Vojtovič 2006: 522-523, 526; Dąbrowski 208: 506-512, 563-570.

<sup>17</sup> Pálóczi Horváth 1989a: 42; Spinei 2008: 413-445.

<sup>18</sup> More details in Kotyan in: Golovko 2007: 78-87; Korobeinikov 2008: 388-391, 404.

<sup>19</sup> Rogerius, *Carmen Miserabile*, II, XII: 553-554, 559; Pauler 1899: 149; Györffy 1981: 17-19.

However, after they entered the Hungarian soil, local conflicts and hostility started between Cumans, who were cattlemen-nomads, and the agrarian population of Hungary. At a higher political level, conflicts hid the hostility of Hungarian noblemen towards the Cuman military elite, who were under the protection of Bela IV himself. Historiography must again thank Roger's work for further details about the manifestations of the said hostility, which did not quiet down.<sup>20</sup> The highlight of the tension in the Cuman-Hungarian relations probably happened at the most unfavorable moment for Hungary. In early spring 1241 the main part of the Mongol army led by Batu khan successfully crossed the Carpathian mountains and broke the Hungarian resistance in the borderlands. While the Mongolian scouts already devastated the northeastern parts of the country, plundering all the way to Pest, in Pest itself, which was designated as a meeting place for the army of Bela IV and his allies, khan Kotyan was brutally murdered with his entourage. It happened in the days after the Mongol conquest of Vác on 17 March 1241. The reason for this act was the accusation that Cumans and their Khan were the main perpetrators of the Mongol attack on Hungary. Regardless of who the organizer of the crime was, he was a fool even if for one reason. Namely, in order to quiet down the mistrust of Hungarian aristocrats khan Kotyan "agreed" to be a kind of guarantor of the "alliance" with his family and closest entourage. For that reason he was separated from his people and placed in a kind of custody in Budapest under the supervision of Bela IV. Furthermore, the safety of prominent hostages was personally guaranteed by the Hungarian king. Even more paradoxically, the Cumans heard the news of the murder of their master on their way to the military camp in Pest, where they were headed as Hungarian allies in response to the earlier calls. The Cumans' reaction was expected. They turned in the opposite direction and after regrouping their people headed south in order to leave Hungary. Inspired by revengeful wrath for the murder of their khan they ravaged all the areas on their way and killed the people they found there. At one point they crossed the Danube and, as Roger informs us, they went towards Marchia.<sup>21</sup> We have to repeat that for Roger and his contemporaries "Marchia" was a common, second name for the area of the present-day Srem (today in Serbia, to a lesser extent in Croatia), which preserved the memory of the former Hungarian border county in this region (11<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>22</sup> At that time, however, which can be inferred from the meaning of the two Marchia settlements in Roger's writing (*Franka villa; Villa Sancti Martini*), the geographic term of Marchia indicated parts of Sremska and Vukovska Counties to contemporaries.<sup>23</sup> Since he without a doubt informed us that this border area became a destination of the Cuman withdrawal from Hungary, regarding the developments in Marchia, i.e. Srem, Roger further says:

"People of Marchia, knowing of their arrival, gathered and went to meet them so they would enter a conflict with them on the border of Marchia. But they were overpowered and started running, so Cumans took over Marchia and began to destroy it in a cruel retaliation [towards its inhabitants] for the death their his master... And when they destroyed wealthier villages, certainly the senatorial

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<sup>20</sup> Rogerius, *Carmen Miserabile*, III, VII-VIII, XII, XIV, XXIV, 554, 556-557, 559, 560-561, 566-567.

<sup>21</sup> Rogerius, *Carmen Miserabile*, XV-XVI, XXI-XXII, XXIV-XXVI, 561-562, 564-568; Kristó 1984: 1245-1247.

<sup>22</sup> Györfy 1959: 24; Kristó 1988: 456-457; Zsoldos 2000: 112-115.

<sup>23</sup> Rogerius, *Carmen Miserabile*, XXVI, 568; Csánki, 1894: 236, 352-353.

Franka villa (Mandelos), the village of St. Martin (Martinci) and others, and after they collected a lot of money, horses and cattle, devastating the country, they moved to Bulgaria.”<sup>24</sup>

The content of chapter 26 of Roger’s work clearly provides a lot of very important data for the reconstruction of the fate of Srem in 1241. Despite the fact that in his work he described many events he directly witnessed, Roger apparently knew about the situation in Srem indirectly, thanks to the news he received from a source of his, possibly a direct eyewitness of these events. This assumption, however, does not bring into question the credibility of his report. Namely, Roger obviously did not have a chance to travel through Srem before or immediately after the year 1241. This conclusion can be made on the basis of data from another Roger’s work related to Cumans and Srem. This is a description of a state convention which happened in Banoštor after Cumans arrived to Hungary, possibly in the summer of 1240.<sup>25</sup> Here the representatives of the Hungarian barons and Cumans met in order to mute increasingly frequent mutual conflicts on the field. At the meeting it was agreed that the Cumans, who until then had been together and because of their vast numbers represented an armed threat to the Hungarians, would be separated and displaced in individual provinces of Hungary under the leadership of their officers.<sup>26</sup> The place where the convention was held, Banoštor on the Danube in Srem (Lat: Kew, Keu, Monasterium Bani; Hun: Kö), where the seat of the new Catholic diocese of Srem and its center were located since 1229 in an old Benedictine monastery,<sup>27</sup> was located around the river Tisza (*monasterium de Kew circa Ticiam*) according to Roger. This clearly indicates that the writer was not very familiar with these parts of southern Hungary and the position of the capital of the diocese of Srem. In his note Gyula Pauler still charmingly said that for a foreigner such as Roger locating Banoštor around the Tisza was not entirely untrue.<sup>28</sup> According to this author, Bela IV deliberately organized the convention in Banoštor because this place was very close to the territories where Cumans were settled, yet it was secure enough because a large river protected against them.<sup>29</sup>

This digression about the convention held in *circa monasterium de Kew* can still be put in the context of Cuman attacks on Srem, which would follow shortly afterwards. First of all, by appearing in Banoštor Cuman leaders set foot on the soil of Srem quite possibly for the first time and had the opportunity to get acquainted with its position. The second question is whether after the end of the convention the agreement on the division and displacement of Cumans was put into force. Apparently it was not. This possibility, as historians concluded and supported their conclusion by arguments, was denied by later

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<sup>24</sup> „Illi autem de marchia hoc scientes convenerunt in unum et eis obviam exeuntes congressum cum eis in finibus Marchie habuerunt et superati ab eis preveniebant unus alium fugiendo et sic Comani ceperunt Marchiam nequiter expugnare mortem sui domini crudeliter vindicantes. ...Et destructis melioribus villis, scilicet Franka villa senatoria, Sancti Martini et aliis et recepta multa pecunia, equis et pecoribus destruendo terram in Bulgariam transierunt.“ Rogerius, *Carmen Miserabile*, XXVI, 568; compare with: Master Roger’s, *Epistle*, XXVI, 176-177; Rogerije iz Apulije XXVI, *Carmen miserabile*: 58-59.

<sup>25</sup> On chronology see: Strakosch-Grassmann 1893: 14, 217.

<sup>26</sup> Rogerius, *Carmen Miserabile*, VIII, 557.

<sup>27</sup> Csánki, 1894: 234-235; Dinić 1978 (1931): 276-277; Gašić 2000 (1944): 43-45; Koszta 2000: 45.

<sup>28</sup> Pauler 1899: 513 (ref. 130).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

sources.<sup>30</sup> In any case, Cuman legions were much stronger than the regional Hungarian army. As Roger informs us, during their withdrawal Cumans encountered the army of Bulcsú (Lat. Bulza; Hun. Bulcsú), the Bishop of Csanád, and aristocrat Miklos, the son of Barz from the family of Szák (Nikolaus filius Barz; Szák),<sup>31</sup> who rushed to join Bela IV. A fierce battle began in which almost all Hungarians died by the Cuman sword.<sup>32</sup> The same would later happen to forces prepared to defend Srem.

In the meantime, as we have learned from the said account by Roger, Cumans gathered their people, crossed to the right bank of the Danube and headed for Marchia, i.e. Srem. The gathering of Cumans must have certainly happened south of Pest, in the areas between the Tisza and Danube rivers. The assumption that they crossed the Danube somewhere near Erdut is not impossible.<sup>33</sup> This is how they would avoid another crossing of the great river one, this time the Drava River, which was always risky in the enemy country. For example, such a crossing existed near the Osijek fortification on the old military road where Crusaders used to travel during the 12<sup>th</sup> century, but Roger says nothing about such an itinerary. On the Danube, between Sonta and Erdut there was indeed a well-established medieval raft whose existence was recorded even before the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, it is possible that later the Mongols crossed the (frozen) river here, as indicated by the toponym data.<sup>34</sup> Since we were informed that after crossing the river they headed for Marchia, we should rule out the possibility that the crossing happened somewhere in the area between southern Bačka and Srem; instead, it took place further to the north. This possibility is also indicated by the fact that the population of Marchia was informed on time about the arrival of Cumans. They had enough time to gather the available soldiers and come out, obviously, to the western borders of region area in order to prevent them from entering, as was logically concluded by Gyula Pauler and Stanko Andrić.<sup>35</sup> Roger's statement was more than credible here because for a medieval man, especially if he was a local master and ruler, it was always safer and more effective to fight away from his home and property in order to avoid devastation. On the other hand, in his comments on Roger's work Hansgerd Göckenjan briefly stated that the battle happened somewhere on the northern borders of Marchia.<sup>36</sup> Further in the paper we shall discuss who was able to organize the defense of Srem at that time. After the defenders of Marchia suffered defeat and started running, Cumans began the devastation and plundering of the whole area. We can only speculate how long they stayed in the region of Srem before they crossed into Bulgaria. In any case, the length of their stay affected the degree of suffering of these areas. Meanwhile, on 11 April 1241, Mongols destroyed the army of Bela IV on the river Sajó. After the defeat, the entire Hungarian territory on the left bank of the Danube was left at the mercy of the Mongol armies, who

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<sup>30</sup> More details in: Pauler 1899: 513 (ref. 130); Pálóczi Horváth 1989a: 42-43; also compare with: Berend 2001: 87-88.

<sup>31</sup> Compare with: Zsoldos 2011: 291, 333.

<sup>32</sup> Rogerius, *Carmen Miserabile*, VIII, 556-557.

<sup>33</sup> This was an opinion of Gyula Pauler and is accepted by Stanko Andrić. Pauler 1899: 158; Andrić 2005: 59.

<sup>34</sup> Rokai 1983a: 157, 165.

<sup>35</sup> Pauler 1899: 158; Andrić 2005: 59.

<sup>36</sup> Göckenjan, Sweeney: 1985: 208 (ref.133).

entered the country in an organized manner from different directions at the same time.<sup>37</sup> In that period the Cumans were already in Srem. As we have seen, Roger told us that here they destroyed more important settlements, some of the prominent ones being *Franka villa senatoria* and *villa Sancti Martini*, i.e. present-day settlements of Mandelos and Martinci. The status (especially because of the attribute “senatorial” in the name of Franka villa) and the location of these settlements are undisputed for historians.<sup>38</sup> In addition, Roger also mentioned the data concerning the structure of movable wealth of the inhabitants of Srem, which had fallen prey to Cumans. In addition to cash or, in our opinion, generalized mention of goods (*pecunia*), these were horses and cattle.

Perhaps it is not impossible to determine the place where the Cumans left Srem and according to Roger “went to Bulgaria.” In the opinion of Aleksandar Uzelac, a medieval village of Kumanija in the parish (district) Bitva, situated along the river Sava in Mačva, most likely guarded the memory of the place where the fugitives from Hungary crossed the river.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, opposite the parish Bitva, on the left bank of the Sava in Srem, on the foundations of ancient Sirmium, lay Mitrovica, a place where the river was usually crossed by the usual medieval travelers who went to the Balkans.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, István Vásáry believes that after Srem, the first Bulgarian territory where Cumans went had to be Braničevo and Vidin.<sup>41</sup>

Leaving aside the Cuman devastation of Srem, which occurred probably in the spring or during the summer of 1241, we must state that Srem was on the other side of the Danube, among those areas of Hungary which remained inaccessible to the Mongol invaders in the first wave. The defense of the western parts of the country which was organized along the right bank of the Danube, as well as those towards Austria, was successfully overtaken by a curia judge Pál, the son of Écs from the family of Geregye (Pál Geregye, Écs fia) in the second half of 1241.<sup>42</sup> Srem was on the periphery of Hungary and, after the Cumans left, we can assume that its people tried to gather and re-establish a normal life as much as possible. However, the winter of 1241/1242 was extremely cold. The Danube froze, which allowed the Mongol armies to cross the river in January (before 2 February) 1242<sup>43</sup> without major difficulties and attack the areas on the other side of the Danube. The Mongols divided their army into two parts. While Batu khan besieged the remaining Hungarian cities located between the Danube and the Austrian border, a part of the army led by Batu’s commander Kadan went in pursuit of Bela IV. The Hungarian king was in Slavonia with his court at that time, from where he escaped to Dalmatia on the Adriatic coast, first to Split and then to the more secure Trogir. The starting points in the analysis of the further course of the Mongol

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<sup>37</sup> Kristó 1986:120-129.

<sup>38</sup> Csánki, 1894: 236, 352-353; the newer locations and the comment on the status of two settlements in Srem in Roger’s work: Vásáry 2005: 65; Andrić 2005: 59-60.

<sup>39</sup> Today it is impossible to locate the missing toponym of Kumanija. In one Serbian diplomatic source from the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century (the charter of Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović) there is mention of a village located in the parish (district) Bitva. Uzelac 2009: 15; Uzelac 2015: 40; Dinić 1978 (1953): 46.

<sup>40</sup> Čirković 1969: 59-71.

<sup>41</sup> Vásáry 2005: 65.

<sup>42</sup> Zsoldos 1991: 59.

<sup>43</sup> Solymosi 1986: 148-149.



invasion of Hungary and neighboring countries are two sources used by the researchers, the indispensable Roger and Archdeacon Thomas of Split.<sup>44</sup> Although these authors did not mention Srem with respect to the military operation of the Mongols after crossing the frozen Danube, the general opinion in historiography is that the Mongols “passed” through Srem. In the light of the general situation, another devastation of Srem was implied. This probably happened in March 1242, during the withdrawal of the majority of the Mongolian army from Hungary led by Batu khan. Following the Danube along its right bank, the Mongols, like the Cumans before them, inevitably arrived to Srem, from where they went to Bulgaria. There Batu met with Kadan, who left the unsuccessful siege of Trogir and Dalmatia at the end of March and after crossing the Serbian lands arrived to the Bulgarian Danube area.<sup>45</sup> However, it is worth noting that Gyula Kristó believes that Kadan started his pursuit of Bela IV from the Tisza River region and penetrated Slavonia through Srem and Mačva.<sup>46</sup>

There is an immediate source about the Mongol devastation of Srem, as we have already pointed out, which because of its content primarily attracts the attention of the researchers investigating the rich church history of Srem.<sup>47</sup> On 18 September 1247, “only” six years after the Mongol invasion, Pope Innocentius IV sent a letter to the three Hungarian prelates, Archbishop of Kalocsa and the bishops of Transylvania and Csanad. The contents of the letter reveal that the Pope was addressed by the Bishop of Srem together with the center of his church. The highest representatives of the Srem clergy complained that because of the “complete destruction of those parts by the Tatars” – where their church was located in Banoštor (Ku) – they “no longer have a place to take shelter in case of emergency” (*ut cum ipsi, destructis penitus partibus illis [ecclesie de Ku] per Tartaros, non habveant locum ubi necessitas tempore valeant se tueri*). Therefore, they begged Innocentius IV to move their church headquarters either to the Benedictine Monastery of St. Gregory or to the Benedictine Monastery of St. Demetrius, since both monasteries were suitable to build fortress in them. Then the Pope ordered the Archbishop of Kalocsa to examine the possibility of moving the diocese together with his colleagues the bishops of Csanad and Transylvania and to inform him about it.<sup>48</sup> The relocation of the Srem diocese to new headquarters happened soon after that (the first mention in sources in 1252), but this time it was not the two above-mentioned monasteries, but the old Episcopal Church of St. Irenaeus of the Greek rite, located in a fortress in Srem and in the eponymous village of St. Irenaeus on an island in the Sava river, opposite the monastery of St. Demetrius (Sremska Mitrovica).<sup>49</sup>

The papal letter from 1247 is multiply significant for our topic. Despite the fact that it

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<sup>44</sup> Rogerius, *Carmen Miserabile*, XXXVIII-XL, 583-588; Thomas Archid., *Hist. Salonitana*, XXXVIII-XXXIX, 172-178.

<sup>45</sup> Compare with: Strakosch-Grassmann 1893: 173; Pauler 1899: 185; Hóman 1939: 555, mapa:544/545; Spuler 1965<sup>2</sup>: 24; Györffy 1981: 23; Kristó 1986: 115 (map), 131; *Id.* 1987: 1424 (map), 1439; Vásáry 2005: 69-70; Andrić 2005: 58.

<sup>46</sup> Kristó 1986: 115 (map); *Id.* 1987: 1424 (map), 1438; this hypothesis is accepted by Andrić 2005: 58.

<sup>47</sup> Györffy 1959: 72; Čirković 1969: 60; *Gašić* 2000 (1944): 45; Koszta 2000: 45-46, 74; Andrić 2008a: 152-153.

<sup>48</sup> Theiner, VMH, I: 205; F, IV/1, 475-476.

<sup>49</sup> Csánki, 1894: 238-239; Györffy 1959: 72-73; Čirković 1969: 60; Koszta 2000: 45-46, 74; Popović 2003 (1967):85; *Id.* 2003 (1980): 292-293; Andrić 2008a: 152-153.

does not mention the Cumans, it actually provides a summary and circumstantially objective description of the situation in Srem after two waves of devastation (1241-1242). The Mongols, as we have learned, “totally devastated” the seat of the Diocese of Srem in Banoštor (*ecclesiam de Ku*) and those parts of Srem (*partibus illis*) which were apparently located in its vicinity. Our assumption is that these were certainly areas located between the northern slopes of Fruška Gora and the right bank of the Danube. Mihajlo Miladinović once remarked that during the Tatar invasion, in addition to Banoštor, most of Srem was devastated although, as he added, there is no evidence for such a claim.<sup>50</sup> Meanwhile historiography made valuable archeological discoveries in the works of Sándor Nagy and Nebojša Stanojev. It was determined without a doubt that Mongols in this part of Srem attacked the renowned Benedictine monastery of St. George in Dumbovo (Lat. Dombo; Hun. Dombó).<sup>51</sup> Dumbovo was located 15 kilometers east of Banoštor, on the northern slopes of Fruška Gora, in what is now the village of Novi Rakovac. Two of the local churches, the abbey of Saint George and the parish church dedicated to all the saints were destroyed during 1241-1242 and were later renovated in the Gothic style.<sup>52</sup>

In addition, Miklos Takács made an acceptable assumption about the Mongol devastation of the Cistercian abbey Belafons (Lat. Belaefons). This monastery was originally built (after 1234) in Ekerd (Lat. Vkurd) near the present-day Petrovaradin fortress and in the 14<sup>th</sup> century was named after Petrovaradin (*Monasterium de Varadinipetri*).<sup>53</sup> Takács relies on a popular historiographic belief that during the retreat from Hungary the Mongols used the old military road which followed the right bank of the Danube along the Roman Limes.<sup>54</sup> In this case, the devastation of the rich Srem monasteries and church headquarters like Banoštor, near-by Dumbovo and Belafons, whose stone towers were a landmark on the route of the invaders, seemed quite logical. In 1246 scarce resources, on the other hand, talk about a plan to move the Belafons monastery. This happened soon because a new fort was built on the Petrovaradin rock, with a new Cistercian monastery under an old name in its center and with Bela IV as its founder and protector.<sup>55</sup> Our judgment is that the region of Srem between Fruška Gora and the Danube, where Banoštor and Dumbovo were located, suffered heavy Mongol devastation. Whether Srem suffered because of the majority of the Mongol troupes when Batu retreated in the spring of 1242 or if the devastation was carried out by a third Mongolian expedition that took advantage of the Danube freezing in the winter of 1241/2 to cross from Bačka to the other side of the Danube and devastate the local areas is difficult to say. A cynic would note that the inhabitants of Srem at the time did not care.

But let us return again to the analysis of the papal letter from 1247. Its contents give us valuable information that some areas of Srem remained completely spared from the

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<sup>50</sup> Miladinović 1903: 116.

<sup>51</sup> Csánki 1894: 243.

<sup>52</sup> Nagy 1985: 16; Stanojev 2000: 397-400; the analysis of archeological results in the context of written sources with newer interpretations is offered in: Tóth 2001: 359-367; Andrić 2006: 160-182.

<sup>53</sup> Pataki 1942: 19-55; Hervay 1984: 133-140.

<sup>54</sup> Takács 1989: 18

<sup>55</sup> A review of sources and commentary: Erdujhelji 1894: 50-43; Pataki 1942: 34-36; Hervay 1984: 136; Takács 1989: 18, 26-27; Koszta 2000: 59.

Mongol destruction. Such was the case with the prominent, apparently rather Orthodox than Benedictine monastery of St. Demetrius (*Monasterium Sancti Demetrii*) and the eponymous merchant village that formed around it.<sup>56</sup> The Benedictine Monastery St. Gregory (*Monasterium Sancti Gregorii*) on the southern slopes of Fruška Gora (now the village Grgurevci)<sup>57</sup> was also spared the devastation together with its possessions and the settlements that belonged to it and it will be discussed soon. Finally, the fate of the relocation of the seat of the Diocese of Srem from Banoštor to the Church of St. Irenaeus in the fortified town (and the settlement?!) surrounded by the Sava River from all sides, in which during the 13<sup>th</sup> century the center of the Srem parish would be located again, indicates that neither the Cumans nor the Mongols managed to harm this village.<sup>58</sup> The question is whether they tried at all or if they bypassed it for some reason.

Before we continue our discussion, we have to consider the question of who was able to organize a defense of Srem against the attacks of the Cumans and possibly later the Mongols. As far as the Cumans are concerned, our source, master Roger, did not know that Marchia was defended by a prominent aristocrat willing to fight Kotyan's people. But on the other hand, according to him, "the ones from Marchia" (*illi de Marchia*), its villagers we guess, were still not surprised. In fact, we know that they gathered on time and went to meet the enemy in order to clash with them somewhere on the borders of their territory. There is a possibility that the leadership of the defense of Srem was assumed by the local noblemen, the abbots of local monasteries and the elders of the villages in which foreigners (hospites), who enjoyed a certain self-government (a village such status was *Franka villa*, or *Mandelos*).<sup>59</sup> However, we still believe that in the conduct of war and the defense of an area, and Srem was no exception, the most respected local lords and also representatives of the state government, or at least their people skilled with weapons, had the main say. This line of thinking is not entirely original. Even Gyula Pauler thought that during the retreat from Hungary the main part of the Mongol forces went along the Danube and passed "through the region of Kaloyan" and then went from here to Bulgaria.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, according to Sima Ćirković, "John Angelos' disappearance almost coincides with the devastation of Srem by the Cumans."<sup>61</sup> Prince John Angelos, or Kaloyan, as was the Greek version of his name, was the son of a Hungarian princess and former Empress Margerete-Mary, the daughter of Bela III, and Byzantine emperor Isaac II Angelos (1185-1195; 1203-1204). As a close relative of Bela IV and the ruling dynasty Arpad, John was truly a most distinguished nobleman and master of these areas of southern Hungary. Thanks to the succession of his mother Margarete he bore the title "master of Srem" (*Dominus Syrmiae*). It probably implied his authority both over Srem between the Sava and the Danube (*Sirmia Citerior*), i.e. eastern parts of Marchia,<sup>62</sup> and over Srem south of the Sava (*Sirmia ulterior*),

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<sup>56</sup> Ćirković 1969: 69-69; on the status of the monastery with a review of the attitudes of historiography: Andrić 2008a: 153.

<sup>57</sup> Csánki, 1894: 253.

<sup>58</sup> Csánki, 1894: 238-239; Kristó 1988: 456-458.

<sup>59</sup> Compare with: Csánki, 1894: 236.

<sup>60</sup> Pauler 1899: 185.

<sup>61</sup> Ćirković 2008: 5.

<sup>62</sup> We believe that John Angelos possibly owned this side of Srem, i.e. the local Srem parish which was probably

a region that was named Mačva in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>63</sup> In addition, at the same time John was the mayor of the adjacent Bačka parish on the other side of the Danube (1238-1242) and so these peripheral parts of the country were put under the rule of one man.<sup>64</sup> To begin with, we know that the “master of Srem” survived the attack of Cumans and Mongols on Srem and Hungary. Namely, in the sources John Angelos was mentioned last time in his capacity as a king’s dignitary after the invasion of 16 November 1242.<sup>65</sup> So, hypothetically speaking, he was able to organize the defense of Srem. Another question is whether in these times of war he stayed in his parish or if he came to join Bela IV with his own armed escort, like many other noblemen, before the battle on the river Sajó and after it still managed to survive the burden of the Tartar invasion.

An important eyewitness, Thomas of Split, in his work individually cited numerous Hungarian church prelates and secular barons who arrived to Split accompanied by Bela IV while fleeing before the Mongols in February 1242. Among them there was no name of the king’s cousin John Angelos, but that does not mean that he was not among *the flower of the Hungarian remains* who were in the king’s company.<sup>66</sup> For example, thanks to Mora Vertner’s prosopographic research, we know that John’s half-brother William of Saint Omer, the youngest son of Margarete who was born from her third marriage with a reputable Latin Baron Nicolas de Saint Omer, at the time of the invasion as a member of the royal court and the king’s companion, arrived with him to Dalmatia. William, who also seemed to carry the title of “dux Sirmii”<sup>67</sup> was the fiancé of Bela’s older daughter Margaret and was a member of the royal family on two bases. In these difficult days, he died soon after his fiancée and was buried in the Cathedral of Trogir.<sup>68</sup> Besides John Angelos, another regional lord “was invited” to defend Srem considering his status and power and this was the bishop of Srem. Unfortunately, who occupied the position of the bishop of Srem from 1241 to 1242 and what his fate was remains unknown for historiography because of *argumentum ex silentio*.<sup>69</sup> We shall conclude this section with the statement that if John Angelos spent a tumultuous year in which the Mongols attacked Hungary in the company of his cousin Bela IV, which of course it was not impossible, then the chances for the defense of Srem were substantially reduced.

In an attempt to answer the question of the extent to which Srem was devastated in 1241-1242, as we pointed out in the introduction, another source will be a focus of attention. This is a confirmation charter of Bela IV issued in Győr on 3 October 1253.<sup>70</sup> Although the reason for the emergence of the document was the confirmation of the acquisition of certain estates in Srem by a member of the family of the archbishop of Kalocs, its contents which

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either founded or restored after the conquests of Bela III in the 1180’s. This issues deserves a separate discussion.

<sup>63</sup> On John Angelos: Wertner 1892: 388-389; *Id.* 1903: 598-600; Rokai 1980: 167-171; On Srem citerior and ulterior: Dinić 1978 (1931): 273-284; Rokai, Takács 1994: 421-422; Ćirković 2008: 3-20; Zsoldos 2011: 207.

<sup>64</sup> Zsoldos 2011: 127.

<sup>65</sup> F, IV/1, 258-264; RA, No. 723.

<sup>66</sup> Thomas Archid., *Hist. Salonitana*, XXXVIII, 173.

<sup>67</sup> F, III/2, 366; RA, No. 510; O verodostojnosti dokumenta: Rokai 1983a: 121-127.

<sup>68</sup> Wertner 1892: 406-411; *Id.* 1903: 604-605; Rokai 1983a: 121-127.

<sup>69</sup> Gašić 2000 (1944): 49; Zsoldos 2011: 95.

<sup>70</sup> F, IV/2: 171-172; Smičiklas, IV: 539-540; RA: No. 998.

described the circumstances that preceded this act are much more interesting for our topic. From the contents of the Charter we have learned that Laurentije, vilicus or the Elder of Bešenovo (*Laurentius villicus de Bessenev*), the village that belonged to the Church of St. Gregory, along with his son Dimitrije and Jovan, a son in law of a certain Grgur, also from Bešenova, were caught in the act of the crime of counterfeiting money by the royal chamberlains of Srem, Le(o)pold and his associates (*per camerarios nostros Sirmienses, Leppoldum scilicet et socios eiusdem in manifesto crimine fabricationis false monete deprehensi*). Informed about the crime, the ruler authorized his chancellor, the archbishop of Kalocs Benedict, who was also the Baron with the whole Srem under his rule, to investigate the facts in relation to this event. In accordance with the jurisprudence of his time, the possessions of the convicted came into the hands of the Archbishop as a royal judge and partly of the royal chamberlains who represented the injured party. The rest of the charter describes the fate of confiscated goods and the ruler legally formalized their final status. The confiscated possessions of the elder of Bešenovo Laurentije, which consisted of several houses, vineyards, a hay-loft and wine presses (*domos et quasdam vineas, fenetum et torcular ipsius Laurentii*) as well as other good of the defendants, both those that were given to the Archbishop and those that the royal chamberlains acquired, as we learn, were sold to the Archbishop and the Archbishop gave them to his master of treasury Ivan. This gift was added to some other Ivan's possessions. After the archbishop's appeal the stated goods acquired by his master of treasury Ivan were confirmed by Bela IV through the release of a special privilege.<sup>71</sup>

To begin with, a source reveals that the settlement "Bessenev," present-day Bešenovo, located on the southern slopes of Fruška Gora (whose name preserves the memory of the presence of another nomadic people on the ground Srem, Pechenegs), belonged to the Church of St. Gregory (*Bessenev que ad ecclesiam sancti Gregorii pertinent*). The name of the church dedicated to St. Gregory undoubtedly identifies a nearby Benedictine monastery of St. Gregory, which was located on the site or in the vicinity of today's settlement of Grgurevci.<sup>72</sup> This was the same monastery mentioned in the correspondence of Pope Innocentius IV with Hungarian prelates, which was a candidate for the new seat of the Diocese of Srem in 1247. A decade after the Mongol invasion Bešenovo had a very interesting economic life of the "local" population. Apparently, Bešenovo was inhabited by hospites – "foreigners" who lived on the monastery property enjoying a certain autonomy and freedom definitely acquired before the time of the invasion in 1241. They were led by a relatively wealthy and influential *villicus Laurentius*. He and his accomplices were economically strong enough, associated with a broader transport of money and trade, and above all, in terms of craft, proficient enough to be engaged in the crime of forging money, which was unusual for ordinary lay people who would arrive to the area after a potential disaster of this settlement in 1242. At the very least, the data from 1247 and 1253 clearly indicate that the Benedictine monastery of St. Gregory and the settlements in its immediate environment, in particular Bešenovo, were not destroyed.

A favorable picture of economic life in Srem, based on our source from 1253, further

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<sup>71</sup> We have taken the interpretation of the contents of the charter from our paper: Hardi 2015: 245-255.

<sup>72</sup> More details with a literature overview: Hardi 2015: 247-248.

reflects the fact that the King's chamber was active here and was led by Chamberlain Leopold and his associates (*camerarii nostros [Regis] Sirmienses*), who exposed the criminal offense of the people from Bešenovo. The Royal chamber or the treasury of the income of the Hungarian rulers was an institution responsible for the replacement and mintage of money whose officials collected revenue from urbura<sup>73</sup> in the mining areas. As a rule, it was leased annually, mostly to foreigners who were bankers and also experts in precious metals. Historiography has long noted that this was the oldest source that testified to the existence of the Srem chamber, which was one of the oldest district chambers and mints in Hungary.<sup>74</sup> As Dezső Csánki concluded, the headquarters of the chamber and the mint were probably located in the fortress on a Srem island (*castrum Syrmiensis*), like the new headquarters of the Srem diocese and parish.<sup>75</sup>

If we again compare our information from 1247 and 1253, it appears that the villages of St. Demetrius on the left bank and of St. Irenaeus on the right bank of the Sava, built on the foundations of ancient Sirmium, present-day city of Sremska Mitrovica, did not only survive the attack, but economic and commercial life took place there in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and longer. Namely, these two settlements were the natural center of both this and that side of Srem. The work of the royal chamber and mint surpassed the significance of a border region of Srem and was closely linked with economic ties to Hungary, Serbia, Bosnia and Dubrovnik, from where precious metals and other commodities arrived. The surviving documents tell us that at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century in the village of St. Demetrius there was a strong colony of merchants from Dubrovnik who, as argued by Dušanka Dinić-Knežević, already arrived to the southern borders of Hungary before the Mongol invasion.<sup>76</sup>

However, one does not need to be a historian to accept the argument that the military devastation of a country does not have to *a priori* mean the disappearance of trade and economic activities on its territory. One such example directly relates to the Mongols. The destructive devastation of Kiev in 1240 by Tartars was confirmed both in the sources and archaeological excavations.<sup>77</sup> This circumstance did not shake merchants, who soon after the destruction of the city once again found themselves there. The papal legate, Franciscan Johannes de Plano Carpini, during his delegation to the capital of the Mongol Empire, Karakorum, stayed in Kiev on two occasions. This excellent diplomat left a testimony in his *Historia Mongolorum* that he traveled to Kiev together with (Silesian) merchants of Wroclaw. In the town, where he arrived probably in early 1246, he met a number of traders from Poland and Austria. On the way back again, some time in the second third of 1247, in Kiev he saw *mercatores de constantinopolim qui per tartaros in rusciam venerunt*. He singled out the names of those who were greater and more important in his view, who were the “merchants of Constantinople,” but who originated from Venice, Accra and Pisa.<sup>78</sup> It is obvious that only five years after the destruction Kiev restored its significance as an

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<sup>73</sup> The payment of royal annual revenue which consisted of 1/10 of the mine ore and 1/10 of the refined metals (translator's note).

<sup>74</sup> Truhelka 1897: 9, 146; Hóman 1916: 458; Horváth, Huszár 1956: 22; more details in: Hardi 2015: 249-251.

<sup>75</sup> Csánki 1894: 238-239.

<sup>76</sup> Dinić-Knežević 1986: 13-21; Ćirković 1969: 62-63; more details in: Hardi 2015: 250.

<sup>77</sup> Ipat'evskaja letopis': 784-785; Ivankin 1990: 1329-147; *Id.* 1996:192-245.

<sup>78</sup> G. da Pian del Carpine, *Historia Mongalorum*: 120-121; Karpin 1913: 106.

international commercial center.<sup>79</sup> From a historical distance we can only hope that the said *customers* were not slave traders, which was the activity that probably flourished in those years in the Russian countries.

Did the chamberlains of the Royal Srem Chamber operate in the area that still felt the heavy consequences of the devastation of the Cumans and Mongols in 1253? As a kind of negation of this possibility, which should not be excluded definitely, we shall confront two arguments. We have already said that two medieval settlements in Sremska Mitrovica, where the headquarters of the Chamber most likely were located, were not destroyed unlike Kiev. The second argument is perhaps crucial for our topic. Namely, the content of the Charter of Bela IV from 1253 listed goods that were confiscated from the money forger vilikus Laurentije from Bešenovo. Since the land on which the settlement of hospites from Bešenovo was built belonged to a nearby Benedictine monastery of St. Gregory, the immediate possession of the reputable vilikus, who became the subject of a judicial seizure, included his house (*domos*), vineyards (*quasdam vineas*), one hay barn or shed which apparently contained a wine press in his possession (*fenetum et torcular ipsius Laurentii*). The mention of vineyards and the wine press testifies of only one thing. The Cumans and later the Mongols definitely did not devastate the area around the present-day Srem villages of Grgurevaci and Bešenovo on the southern slopes of Fruška Gora. Viticulture as a special branch of agriculture and wine production were not the kind of activities that could just be restored after such a devastation. The essence of this production was not only in the vineyards as a special, longevous agriculture, but in the valuable wine-growers. Wine production was a special skill and it implied the knowledge and technology jealously guarded and passed down from generation to generation. Laurentije and the residents of Bešenovo, at least based on the information about the wine press, were professional medieval winemakers both before and after the Mongol invasion. Finally, their economic activity was not limited only to the production of wine and indubitably wine trade, but brazenly entered the forbidden area of the state monopoly of minting. Besides winemaking, they therefore tried the activity which also required some experience and special tools (*omnia instrumenta eorum*).<sup>80</sup>

In light of the facts presented so far, one factor still is causes confusion. Namely, Roger's testimony tells us that the Cumans devastated Mandelos (*Franka villa*) and Martinci (villa *Sancti Martini*). We know from other sources that the monastery of St. Demetrius and the monastery of St. Gregory were spared destruction. We believe that the location of these medieval toponyms could be drastically different from the position of the homonymous modern towns of Srem. Today Grgurevci is located about four kilometers from Mandelos toward the northeast and Bešenovo is about eight kilometers to the east. Both today and in the late classical age and the Middle Ages, Martinci has stood along the route that leads to Sremska Mitrovica, which is reached after about two hours of walk from the west. In comparison to Roger's report about the merciless destruction of Marchia (*Comani ceperunt Marchiam nequiter expugnare...et destructis melioribus villis...*

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<sup>79</sup> Compare with: Ivakin 1996: 200-201.

<sup>80</sup> F, IV/2: 171; Smičiklas, IV: 540; see: Hardi 2015: 245-255.

*destruendo terram*),<sup>81</sup> we are somewhat confused by the obvious lack of a systematic approach of the Cumans in their enterprise because it seems that the heirs of khan Kotyan were in a great hurry (?!). However, in the absence of other sources we must believe Roger. The credibility of his testimony is indirectly indicated, with the necessary caution, by the fact that *Franka villa* disappeared from written sources for a longer period of time. Its first mention after the description of the devastation from 1241 refers only to the last years of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>82</sup> Despite the suffering, the signs of continuity of life in this city were seen, as concluded by Stanko Andrić, in the preserved name of the local monasteries (*Monasterium sancta Crucis*) and patronage rights over it by an aristocratic family (Monoszló: Mojslav).<sup>83</sup> In addition, the population of the village did not lose its earlier status (*hospites*). Dezső Csánki noted the first data on of Martinci (*Scenthmartun*) in diplomatic material only under the year 1323.<sup>84</sup> The recent (unfortunately unpublished) studies of historical toponymy of Srem (Györffy György – Engel Pál) remain inaccessible. It therefore follows that the Cumans devastated only parts of Marchia. Also, in our opinion, it is very possible that the early 1240's the monastery of St. Demetrius and the settlement of the same name were well fortified and thus successfully resisted the Cumans and possibly the Tatars, who came later.<sup>85</sup>

While ending our discussion, we must say that, unlike in neighboring Bačka, medieval toponyms that would indicate the presence of the Cumans and the Mongols in Srem remain unknown. Two toponyms *Tatarew* in present-day Bačka, as well as the names of the two, now lost, medieval villages on the Danube, one around the present-day Bački Breg and another around Sonta, seem to have preserved the memory of the place where the Tatars crossed the big river in 1241-1242.<sup>86</sup> In Srem, the location with the significant name Tatar Hill (Tatarsko brdo) near Sremska Kamenica was named after other Tartar armies that participated in some more recent campaigns (1716), as a testimony of the commitment of this nation to the military actions throughout history.<sup>87</sup>

Although we are aware that many issues related to the devastation of Srem by the Cumans and the Mongols in 1241-1242 were not completely answered in this paper, we believe that based on everything said so far we can present some new conclusions in relation to the current thinking in historiography. The most important one is that Srem (Marchia) did not suffer a complete and drastic destruction and depopulation, but only some of its parts were devastated. The Cumans went through Srem in the spring of 1241. On this occasion, as we know, unfortified settlements located on major roads, like Mandelos and Martinci, were destroyed. The Mongols invaded Srem only after the Danube froze in early 1242. On that occasion the part of Srem between the northern slopes of Fruška Gora and the right

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<sup>81</sup> Rogerius, *Carmen Miserabile*, XXVI, 568.

<sup>82</sup> See: Csánki 1894: 236; Andrić 2005: 61.

<sup>83</sup> Andrić 2005: 60-61.

<sup>84</sup> Csánki 1894: 352.

<sup>85</sup> For example, in his map Hansgerd Göckenjan determines the direction of the retreat of Mongols from Hungary, as far as Srem is concerned, along an old Roman road which led from Osijek towards Mitrovica. Göckenjan, Sweeney: 1985: 318 (map).

<sup>86</sup> See: Rokai 1983: 165.

<sup>87</sup> Popović 1950: 70; Bešlin 2014: 482.



bank of the Danube was severely devastated. The Tartars were especially focused on wealthy monasteries and church centers such as Banoštor, Dumbovo and possibly Belafons. This devastation can be clearly proven on the basis of written sources and archeological discoveries and is probably related to the direction of withdrawal of the majority of the army of Batu khan. However, some other areas of Srem, such as those around the monastery of St. Gregory (Grgurevci and Bešenovo) on the southern slopes of Fruška Gora, did not feel the effects of devastation. Two villages in Srem, St. Irenaeus and St. Demetrius, formed around two prominent churches on the territory of present-day Sremska Mitrovica, successfully defended themselves from possible attacks by the Cumans and perhaps the Mongols. These were the settlements that were the political and economic centers of the region (of both this and that side of Srem) which were apparently fortified at the time of the invasion regardless of their status (*villa*).<sup>88</sup> Shortly after the invasion (1253), precisely in the areas of Mitrovica, Grgurevci and Bešenovo, the information we have access to tells us of the smooth economic life – the work of the Srem Chamber of money and wine production. The Lord of this and that side of Srem, the king's cousin, Greek Prince John Angelos, survived the attack of the Cumans and Mongols. It will remain a mystery whether the *Dominus Syrmiae* directly participated in the defense of his country or if he, like his younger half-brother William of Saint-Omer, accompanied King Bela IV.

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## ЂУРА ХАРЏИ

Универзитет у Новом Саду, Филозофски факултет, Одсек за историју

### КУМАНИ И МОНГОЛИ НА ТЛУ СРЕМА 1241-1242. ГОДИНЕ: ЈЕДНА РАСПРАВА О РАЗМЕРАМА ПУСТОШЕЊА

#### Резиме

Уочи монголске најезде на Угарску 1241. године, угарски краљ Бела IV је, ради што успешније одбране своје државе од очекиваног напада, у земљу позвао Кумане (1239). Кумани су, међутим, 1241. године напустили Угарску и и склонили се у Бугарску. Током повлачења у правцу југа опустошили су угарску пограничну област Срем (*Marchia*) да би недуго након тога и сами Монголи поново с оружјем прошли кроз ову земљу. Аутор рада истражује размере куманског и монголског пустошења Срема (1241-1242). Куманско пустошење Маркије је у свом делу *Carmen Miserabile* описао очевидац најезде, великоварадински каноник Рогерије. Његов извештај је веродостојан, али по свему судећи писац није лично боравио у Срему. Кумани су у Срему разорили насеља која су се налазила на значајнијим путевима путу Манђелоса и Мартинаца (пролеће 1241). Монголи су продрили у Срем тек након залеђивања Дунава, почетком 1242 године. Том приликом настрадао је део Срема који је лежао између северних обронака Фрушке горе и десне обале Дунава. Вероватно је његово страдање било повезано са правцем повлачења главнине војске Бату кана из Угарске (март 1242). У овом делу Срема, посебну пажњу Татарима су привукли богати манастири и црквена средишта попут Баноштора, Думбова и вероватно Белафонса/Петроварадина. О страдању седишта сремске бискупије у Баноштору (*ecclesiam de Ku*) и околних предела (*partibus illis*) сведочи писмо папе Иноћентија IV из 1247. године. На уништење бенедиктинске опатије у Думбову (Нови Раковац) недвосмислено указују археолошка истраживања (Ш. Нађ, Н. Станојев). Садржај папског писма говори и о местима која су остала поштеђена разарања и била су потенцијални кандидати за ново седиште бискупије. Реч је била о доминиканском Манастиру светог Гргура (Гргуревци) на

јужним обронцима Фрушке горе и православном Манастиру светог Димитрија у Сремској Митровици. Како је ново средиште бискупије постала стара епископска Црква светог Иринеја смештена у сремској тврђави на савском острву насупрот Светог Димитрија, аутор мапира области Срема које нису страдале у најезди. Средином XIII века, насеља Светог Иринеја и Светог Димитрија, образована око две угледне цркве на подручју данашње Сремске Митровице представљала су политичко и економско средиште области (овостраног и оностраног Срема). У најезди нису разорена, по свему судећи јер су већ у то време била утврђена без обзира на свој статус (*villa*). Сliku потпуног страдања Срема негира једна повеља Беле IV из 1253. године. Настала је као епилог судског процеса у ком су била заплена добра фалсификатора новца из сремског насеља Бешенова. У документу се помиње рад Сремске коморе новца чије је седиште вероватно било у месту (и тврђави) Светог Иринеја, такође и виногради и преса за вино у Бешенову, насељу хоспеса (*hospites*) које је припадало управо манастиру у Гргуревцима. Подаци указују на живу привредну активност у Срему коју најезда није угрозила. Посебан акценат се ставља на винограде и винарство, делатност која је подразумева континуитет и посебна знања. Господар оовостраног и оностраног Срема, краљев рођак Јован Анђео је преживео напад Кумана и Монгола. Остаће непознаница да ли је непосредно учествовао у одбрани својих поседа или је попут свог млађег полубрата Виљема од Сен Омера прагио Белу IV. Аутор закључује да Срем ипак није претрпео потпуно и драстично разарање и депопулацију, већ да су настрадали само поједини његови делови.

**Кључне речи:** Срем, Кумани, Монголи, 1241, јужна Угарска, Бела IV, Калојан Анђео.

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ISTRAŽIVANJA – JOURNAL OF HISTORICAL RESEARCHES 27, 84-105