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FACULTY OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY
DOCTORAL SCHOOL: "HISTORY. CIVILIZATION. CULTURE"

POPES AND GLOSSATORS
THE KINGDOM OF HUNGARY AT THE CENTER OF
ECCLESIOLOGICAL AND LEGAL CONCERNS
IN THE LATIN WEST

(Doctoral Thesis)
Summary

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Cluj-Napoca
2025

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This dissertation belongs to the field of the history of medieval canon law and offers an in-depth exploration of how the Kingdom of Hungary became integrated into the ecclesiological and juridical network of the Latin West. The thesis presents a detailed analysis of the interaction between the Holy See and the ecclesiastical and lay authorities of the Hungarian kingdom, with particular emphasis on how this kingdom was received and conceptualized in the juridical thought of the late Middle Ages. At the core of the research lie two fundamental works of medieval canonistics: the *Summa aurea* by Hostiensis (Henry of Segusio) and the *Apparatus in quinque libros Decretalium* by Pope Innocent IV, both considered essential instruments for understanding the Church's political and juridical doctrines in the 13th and 14th centuries.

Through the commentaries elaborated in these two treatises, the author analyzes how key legal concepts—such as *plenitudo potestatis*, *ius commune*, the legitimacy of succession, the relationship between sacred and profane power, and the instruments of control over episcopal appointments—were developed, glossed, and applied within the context of the Hungarian kingdom. These works are treated not only as doctrinal texts, but as manifestations of a living juridical discourse, which responds to practical challenges of the time and regulates concrete relationships between the Papacy and kings, as well as between local canons and the Apostolic See.

A central case study in the dissertation is a concrete legal conflict concerning the episcopal election in the Diocese of Esztergom at the beginning of the 13th century. This dispute was resolved by the decretal *Bonae memoriae II* issued by Pope Innocent III. The case, classified as a *postulatio*—a juridical procedure used when an election was flawed by procedural irregularities—was later glossed both by Hostiensis in the *Summa aurea* and by Innocent IV in the *Apparatus*. Their interpretations illustrate how the Hungarian case was transformed by medieval glossators into a canonical precedent with implications for the entire Latin Christendom. Hungary, therefore, is not portrayed as a peripheral entity, but rather as a legal laboratory, where canon law principles were tested, applied, and reinterpreted.

Methodologically, the research combines critical readings of Latin canonical sources with rigorous historical contextualization. It makes extensive use of manuscripts, critical editions, papal correspondence, tax registers, and legal documents preserved in archives in Rome, the Vatican, Germany, and Hungary. The author proposes a synthesis between traditional hierarchical historiography—represented by scholars such as Ullmann, Gaudemet, and Kuttner – and

contemporary approaches in canonical microhistory, which focus on manuscripts, specific cases, and local legal practices. In this light, the dissertation becomes a point of convergence between central ecclesiological doctrines and their practical application in geographically peripheral Christian territories.

The thesis reconstructs the development of the plenitude of papal power – from its justification in late Roman law, through the *Decretum Gratiani*, and culminating in the 13th-century treatises and glosses by Hostiensis and Innocent IV, who systematized and institutionalized the doctrine. The *Summa aurea* in particular offers a complete theoretical construction of the relationship between spiritual and temporal authority, while the *Apparatus in quinque libros Decretalium* represents an exceptional gloss on papal decretals, including interpretations of legal cases from various Christian realms – among which Hungary is explicitly mentioned. The attention devoted by both jurists to Hungarian matters is neither incidental nor superficial, but systematic and well-argued, confirming the kingdom's centrality within the juridical vision of the Roman Curia.

The work also includes a critical reevaluation of traditional readings of the decretal *Duo sunt* by Pope Gelasius I. It argues that its interpretation as the doctrinal foundation of medieval hierocracy is a later historiographical construction, disconnected from the original context of the epistle. A contextual reading is proposed, based on other letters by Gelasius and the doctrinal climate of the 5th century, suggesting that the papal intention was not to assert supremacy, but rather to delimit cooperative spheres of influence between sacred and secular authorities.

Special attention is given to the complex relationship between the Holy See and the Kingdom of Hungary from the 11th to the 13th centuries: the Christianization process, integration into the papal fiscal system, the Gregorian Reform, episcopal conflicts, the appointment of archbishops, tensions with the local nobility, and the enforcement of canonical discipline. It is argued that Hungary was an active agent in the medieval ecclesiological architecture, and that the legal documents generated in this context were analyzed and glossed by major canonists of the period. In this regard, works by Paulus Hungarus or commentaries concerning Esztergom are not isolated textual occurrences but rather evidence of institutional integration into the universal juridical discourse of the Church.

One of the thesis's essential contributions lies in highlighting the normative and interpretive function of medieval glossators. These scholars did not merely explain papal

legislation but actively contributed to the shaping of law, transforming glosses into tools of theological, legal, and political authority. In the commentaries of Hostiensis and Innocent IV, the author identifies not only juridical erudition but also a coherent theological vision of the medieval world: a hierarchically organized society, in which the Pope is “the single head” (*unum caput*), and the kingdoms are members of the same “body of the Church,” all subject to supreme spiritual authority.

In conclusion, the dissertation demonstrates that through a comparative analysis of glosses, decretals, and their local applications, one can reconstruct a complex image of papal authority and gain a deep understanding of medieval canon law as a dynamic and adaptable system, present even in the farthest regions of Latin Christendom. The Kingdom of Hungary emerges as an active canonical space, reflected, interpreted, and normatively structured in the fundamental treatises of medieval jurists—attesting not only to the authority of the Holy See but also to the flexible and responsive nature of its legislative reach in medieval Europe.

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