

**Negotiating Interfaith Relations  
in Eastern Christendom: Pope  
Gregory IX, Bela IV of Hungary,  
and the Latin Empire**

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At the beginning of the thirteenth century Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) laid a framework for centralizing papal power over Christian encounters with non-Christians. He enacted legislation to separate Jews from Christians, requiring Jews, for example, to wear distinguishing dress, at the same time that he insisted all should heed his call for their physical safety.<sup>1</sup> He created a definition of orthodoxy that made it possible to identify heresy, called upon bishops to ensure orthodoxy in their jurisdictions, and asserted the rights of popes to replace rulers who refused to comply.<sup>2</sup> He expanded the scope of crusade targets, developed more ways for the faithful to participate in crusades, and attempted to channel funds for these campaigns through the papacy.<sup>3</sup> In every case, Pope Gregory IX (1227-41) not only tried to push forward the programs Innocent had outlined, but also developed new methods to implement them, usually by turning to the mendicant orders. Gregory sought to enforce the legislation over Jews that Innocent had enacted and went further, establishing a campaign against the Talmud, an unprecedented attempt to regulate Jewish belief.<sup>4</sup> He took the definitions of orthodoxy and means for combating heresy Innocent had created and went further, turning power for ensuring orthodoxy over to mendicant inquisitors who answered directly to him.<sup>5</sup> He took the structure of central finance and variable targets Innocent had outlined for crusading and went further, using mendicant preachers to consolidate his control over propaganda and using vow redemption, whereby the crusade indulgence could be earned through cash payments rather than fighting in person, to consolidate his control over finance. At the same time, he called for expeditions against schismatics and heretics in Greece, pagans in the Baltic, Muslims in the Iberian peninsula, Mongols in eastern Europe, Stedinger peasants in northern Germany, and political enemies in Italy.<sup>6</sup> Many historians have found these papal attempts to consolidate control over Christian relations with non-Christians successful, viewing this period

variously as the height of papal monarchy, the high point of papal leadership of the crusading movement, or the birth of a persecuting society.<sup>7</sup>

These drives for control came together in December 1235 when Gregory decided that the crusade he had been preaching for the previous year to Jerusalem should instead fight in the Latin empire of Constantinople, then under attack by its two chief enemies, John Vatatzes of Nicaea and John Asen of Bulgaria. One of the primary elements of Gregory's plan was to persuade King Bela IV of Hungary to come to Constantinople's aid. Hungary was a natural place to look for a rapid relief force for Constantinople. Outside of the crusader states themselves, Hungary was the closest Catholic power to the Latin empire.<sup>8</sup> When Gregory launched his appeal on the empire's behalf, however, his relations with King Bela were poor. The main cause of their conflict was Hungary's non-Christian population. For years Gregory had been pressuring Bela to enforce a stricter separation between Christians and non-Christians in his kingdom. So far Bela had resisted the papal pressure, to his considerable political cost. For Bela, negotiations over support for the Latin empire offered a chance to win concessions from Rome over his treatment of Hungarian minorities. For Gregory, the negotiations posed the question of which threat to Christendom he was more concerned to combat: the internal one presented by Hungarian Jews, Muslims, and "pagans" (mostly Cumans); or the external one presented by the schismatics Vatatzes and Asen. For the modern historian, therefore, the negotiations afford an excellent opportunity to assess one pope's ability to control Christian interactions with non-Christians at the height of papal monarchy.

Modern scholars, most notably Nora Berend, have addressed the conflict between the papacy and Hungarian monarchy over religious minorities in Hungary.<sup>9</sup> They have not, however, taken Gregory's crusading goals into account. Attending to papal crusading policies is crucial, I argue, because Gregory's crusade priorities caused him to change the demands he made about Hungarian minorities in ways that previous historians have not considered. Gregory's desire to induce Bela to take the cross led to an easing of pressure on the royal government to enforce discriminative policies against non-Christian groups in Hungary. The crusade, rather than increasing pressure on minorities, as previous historians have assumed, actually decreased it. By examining Gregory's efforts to induce Bela to launch a crusade against Constantinople's enemies, we will see that the pope's ability to control Christian behavior towards non-Christians fell well short of the powers he claimed.

Mustering Hungarian support for the Latin empire was never going to be easy. In the first place, it was asking a lot for Hungary to take on Bulgaria and Nicaea, the two greatest Balkan powers of the day, at once. Then there was the delicate matter of compensation. Gregory offered spiritual rewards in abundance: anyone from Hungary who went on crusade to Latin Greece would receive the fullest indulgence he could grant, the one usually conferred upon Holy Land crusaders.<sup>10</sup> The pope

justified his largesse by dwelling upon the benefits assisting the Latin empire would bring to the Holy Land. Only through Romania, he insisted to Bela, could western pilgrims return freely from the Holy Land. And if the empire fell back into Greek hands, it would become more difficult to aid the Holy Land, because the Greeks hated the Latins even more than they did pagans.<sup>11</sup> Gregory said nothing, though, about complementing these spiritual benefits with more tangible rewards.

Even if a full crusade indulgence and the satisfaction of having helped the Holy Land had been reward enough for Bela, the pope's proposal had come at an awkward moment for him and the rest of the kingdom's power elite. Bela had ascended the throne just two months earlier, on 14 October 1235.<sup>12</sup> His father Andrew's reign had been long and sometimes chaotic; and Bela's relations with his father and his aged coterie of advisors had not always been easy. There was consequently a need for the young monarch to assert his newfound authority. He purged his father's counselors, whom he accused of conspiring to overthrow him. He rescinded many of the land grants his father had made to his supporters among the minor nobility and in the Church. He ordered that only dukes, archbishops, and bishops could be seated in his presence and had the seats of the barons in the royal council chamber burned.<sup>13</sup> Bela was thus occupied in consolidating his authority domestically when Gregory called on him to go abroad on crusade.

Worse still for Gregory's chances of receiving a positive response, one of the reasons Bela found himself in such a difficult position had to do with the pope himself. During the last years of the reign of King Andrew, Bela's father, Gregory had grown increasingly concerned about the position of non-Christians in Hungarian society generally and in royal administration particularly. Hungary had a small Jewish population, as well as a tiny Muslim population and a modest but growing population of Cumans.<sup>14</sup> These groups, the ecclesiastical hierarchy charged, enjoyed greater liberties and assimilation than was proper in a Christian kingdom. The pope's attempts to bring the status of these groups into line with canonical norms led to a bitter conflict with the Hungarian monarchy that weakened its authority and damaged its interests. If Gregory were to recruit Bela as a defender of the Latin empire, he would first have to overcome the obstacle Hungary's non-Christian communities posed to good papal-royal relations.

Gregory's fears about Hungary's non-Christians were initially sparked by the kingdom's ecclesiastical hierarchy, especially its ranking member, Robert, archbishop of Esztergom.<sup>15</sup> Beginning in the early 1220s, Robert and his colleagues complained steadily to the papal curia that royal policy towards non-Christians violated canon law and harmed Christian society.<sup>16</sup> Muslims and Jews were allowed to hold public office, contrary to the canons of the Fourth Lateran Council.<sup>17</sup> Muslims owned Christian slaves and married Christian women with impunity. More troubling still, many Muslims enjoyed greater liberties under royal law than Christians, numbers of whom converted to Islam for the sake of the superior lifestyle. These complaints (some of which had a factual basis and some of which did not)<sup>18</sup> in

turn comprised just one part of a larger struggle the episcopacy was waging with the Hungarian crown over issues of sovereignty, legal jurisdiction, and above all money—the more usual stuff of church-state conflict.

If the bishops had an overriding concern, it was with royal fiscal policy. In their view, the administration of royal finances had taken a disastrous turn when King Andrew, shortly after his accession, had introduced a policy he called “new institutions.” Basically, this entailed distributing royal domain land to his supporters on an unprecedented scale. With these lands no longer available to produce income for the crown, it became necessary to seek out new sources of revenue. Andrew and his officials introduced new taxes and customs dues, minted new coinage not once but several times a year, and created the Chamber of Salt, which gave to the monarchy the preponderant role in salt commerce previously enjoyed by the Hungarian Church.<sup>19</sup> The right to collect these new revenues was farmed out to the highest (or best-connected) bidder, who was known by the title *comes camere* (count of the treasury). Some Jews and Muslims could be found among their number, though the office was by no means their exclusive preserve.<sup>20</sup> This radical attempt to reform royal finance aroused opposition from nobles who had not benefited from Andrew’s largesse. After a brief revolt, their demands were addressed in the king’s Golden Bull of 1222. The church hierarchy, like the nobles, opposed Andrew’s new policy. One of its key provisions, the creation of the Chamber of Salt, was an obvious blow to its interests, and the farming out of minting rights in particular dug into the revenues of the archbishop of Esztergom, because formerly royal coinage had been struck only at Esztergom and the archbishop had drawn an income from it. The only consolation in all this was that some land found its way into church hands as the result of Andrew’s distributions. In the late 1220s, however, Bela, now firmly ensconced in Transylvania, began to rescind some of these donations. Having previously objected to Andrew’s reforms, the prelates now objected to Bela’s attempts to undo them and resolved to oppose the monarchy at all costs. By the early 1230s their complaints about royal attacks on ecclesiastical liberties and employment of non-Christians were reaching the papal curia, where Gregory readied himself to intervene on the bishops’ side.

In March 1231 the pope authorized the archbishop of Esztergom to impose ecclesiastical sanctions upon those who violated church rights or connived at Muslim and Jewish oppression of Christians.<sup>21</sup> Under pressure from the archbishop Andrew reissued the Golden Bull in 1231 in a revised form.<sup>22</sup> Clauses from the 1222 version considered injurious to church interests, such as those touching on the payment of tithes and the salt trade, were removed. The prohibition on non-Christian office holding was retained. New clauses protecting ecclesiastical liberties in Hungary were added, with lay courts forbidden from hearing cases involving marriage and clerics. Most important of all was a new enforcement clause, which gave the archbishop of Esztergom the right to excommunicate the king or his counselors if they did not respect the liberties accorded by the new bull.

Archbishop Robert was not slow to wield the new weapon the revised Golden Bull had given him. Declaring that the king had ignored the bull's provisions, especially those bearing on non-Christians, in February 1232 Robert placed the kingdom under interdict and excommunicated some of the king's closest advisors.<sup>23</sup> Andrew convinced Robert to lift the interdict temporarily and then appealed to Rome for papal mediation.<sup>24</sup> Gregory dispatched as legate Jacob of Pecorara, cardinal-bishop elect of Palestrina, who arrived in Hungary towards the end of 1232. Jacob sympathized with the bishops, and his discussions with royal officials dragged on until August 1233, when Gregory threatened Andrew with the renewal of the suspended sentences of interdict and excommunication.<sup>25</sup> On 20 August 1233 the king gave way and swore the Oath of Bereg.

Drafted by the legate, the Oath of Bereg addressed three ecclesiastical concerns: justice; non-Christians; and commerce in salt.<sup>26</sup> Andrew swore, not for the first time, that cases relating to marriage or clerks should only be heard before ecclesiastical tribunals. He promised again that Jews and Muslims should no longer be employed in minting, the salt trade, the collection of fines or customs duties, or in any other function that supposedly placed them in a position to oppress Christians. The king was to ensure further that non-Christians and Christians did not live together, whether as a result of non-Christians keeping Christian slaves or marrying Christian women. The legate introduced two new measures to enforce this article. First, in accordance with the Fourth Lateran Council, Jews and Muslims were to wear a sign that distinguished them from Christians; second, the palatine or another high royal official was to conduct an annual inspection of the realm to see that the law was observed; violators would be stripped of their possessions and enslaved. The remainder of the agreement, the bulk of it, in fact, sought to regulate the salt trade. The former dominance of the prelates in domestic salt commerce was re-established and they also obtained a monopoly on the transport of salt earmarked for foreign sale. Andrew agreed to pay 10,000 marks over five years in compensation for ecclesiastical losses in the trade stemming from royal policies.

In a separate oath, Bela obliged himself to uphold Cardinal Jacob's conventions.<sup>27</sup> In February 1234, the legate extracted from Bela an additional oath on non-Christians. Bela swore to remove from Hungary heretics, Christian converts who reverted back to Islam or Judaism, and false Christians. He also undertook to "compel those people in our land who disobey the Roman Church to obey her."<sup>28</sup>

With Andrew and Bela committed by oath to upholding church rights and observing canonical regulations on non-Christians, the legate felt able to depart for Rome in the spring of 1234. Before leaving, though, he authorized the bishop of Bosnia, the Dominican and close papal ally John of Wildeshausen, to excommunicate the king and place Hungary under interdict if Andrew did not honor his commitments. Apparently the king did not, for the sentences were duly imposed in the late spring. At this point, whether because sanctioning power had been taken out of his hands, or because he had simply come to feel that things had gone too

far, the archbishop of Esztergom switched to the king's side and refused to observe the ecclesiastical penalties. The conflict was now directly between the pope and the Hungarian monarchy. In the summer of 1234, with the legate at his side, Gregory upheld the sanctions and ordered king and archbishop alike to observe them.<sup>29</sup>

The events of the summer of 1234 show that Gregory was prepared to pursue the dispute with the Hungarian crown over ecclesiastical liberties and the status of non-Christians farther than even Archbishop Robert, the churchman who had appealed for papal intervention in the first place, was willing to go. As Gregory stepped up efforts to win Bela's support for the Latin empire, however, he began to display signs of a willingness to compromise on domestic issues in Hungary for the sake of his global priorities. He eased the pressure on the king to respect ecclesiastical liberties and enforce ecclesiastical norms on Hungary's non-Christian communities. After December 1235, papal protests over injuries done to the Hungarian church become less frequent and vehement. True, in January 1236 Gregory informed Bela that the heads of a number of Hungarian religious houses had remonstrated over the revival of the king's program of rescinding his father's donations to monasteries. Rather than dispatching a legate or threatening sanctions, however, the pope merely urged Bela to mind his duty as a Christian monarch and desist from further seizures of church property.<sup>30</sup> Later that year, when Bela complained about monasteries seizing lands from him, Gregory enthusiastically rebuked them on his behalf, revealing newfound sympathy for the king's plight.<sup>31</sup> Bela carried on with his own confiscations through 1238 and into 1239.<sup>32</sup>

Most remarkable, however, was the shift in Gregory's approach to Hungary's non-Christians. After 1235 papal correspondence about Jews and Muslims drops off. Compared to the high volume of writing during the first half of the decade, there is only one letter on the subject during the second half. This letter of December 1239 offered a concession on what had been one of the key issues in the dispute between the papal curia and the crown, the king's right to employ non-Christians as farmers of royal revenues.<sup>33</sup> With papal pressure on him reduced, Bela ignored the Oath of Bereg and employed non-Christians without fear of repercussions through the latter half of the 1230s.

Gregory was going to great lengths to court Bela's favor, yet he received no reply to his invitation to crusade to Constantinople. He therefore decided to offer Bela something he had not offered before—a solid expectation of territorial expansion—which he could only do by targeting Hungary's neighbor to the south, Bulgaria, which he invited Bela to invade in January 1238.

Gregory presented the Bulgarian crusade to Bela as a way of eliminating a schismatic ruler who allowed heresy to thrive in his lands. Schismatics and heretics were "more perfidious than Jews and crueler than pagans":

For while the Jews affixed the Lord to the yoke of the cross one time, heretics crucify him in his members over and over again, wounding him with their insults and opprobrium; and while [the

Jews] believe, in the blindness of their sin, that God the father created everything visible and invisible, [the heretics] believe that the visible world was created by the prince of darkness. Pagans too used to rage as they punished and injured the bodies of Christians...Schismatics also try to tear asunder the seamless tunic of Jesus Christ...namely, the Church.<sup>34</sup>

The principle expounded here, that heretics and schismatics posed a greater threat to Christendom than Jews and pagans, provides a belated rationale for the course of action the pope had pursued in Hungary since 1235, when he put aside his campaign against the kingdom's Jews and pagans to rouse Bela to confront the Greek Orthodox enemies of Latin Constantinople.

This rhetoric had practical import. It meant that Gregory could offer Bulgaria to Bela for occupation under canon three of the Fourth Lateran Council, which authorized the pope to declare the lands of rulers he believed had failed to repress heresy open for conquest by Catholic princes. Now Gregory had Bela's attention. After a lengthy delay the king agreed in a letter of 8 June 1238 to invade Bulgaria.<sup>35</sup> The letter affords a rare glimpse at the crusader's side of a negotiation with the pope. Bela began by declaring how difficult it would be to do what Gregory asked. Asen may have been a schismatic, but he was bound to Bela by bonds of friendship and love. The tsar was "so subject to our orders in all things, that he seems not so much a friend as a subject." If Bela were to attack him, moreover, he would offend his friends and relations in Romania. Vatatzes, to name one, "will reckon that he will be attacked in the person of Asen." That being said, however:

...because nothing ought to be put before divine love and salvation of the soul, in the hope of eternal remuneration and the devotion of the Apostolic See and the sincere esteem which we hope that you have towards us, inspired from the soul we agree...to occupy Bulgaria and other lands of Asen, and with God's aid to subject them to the jurisdiction of the Apostolic See in spiritual matters and to our jurisdiction in temporal matters, unless, as it happens, we will have been hindered by a legitimate impediment.<sup>36</sup>

After this fervent expression of piety (and careful carving out of room to maneuver) Bela set forth his conditions for undertaking the expedition. There were eleven of these. The first was that Bela himself be appointed papal legate in Bulgaria, so that he might delimit dioceses, draw parish boundaries, and appoint bishops. This right, he claimed, was conceded to his blessed ancestor St. Stephen. Furthermore:

if we were to enter into those parts with the legate of the Apostolic See, it will be assumed by all the residents of those parts that we wish to subject them in temporal matters not to us, but to the Roman church, which they would abhor so much, that they



would endeavor to defend to the death many things which we could otherwise obtain without the struggle of a fight. For they frequently used to upbraid us and other Christians, that we were servants of the Roman church.<sup>37</sup>

One has to wonder whether Gregory and the cardinals appreciated such an unflattering description of the state of the Roman church in Bulgaria, which was supposed to have accepted the Roman rite in 1204 and observed it through the early 1230s. Yet Bela needed a bold argument to back up such an audacious request. To put it in perspective, we can recall that Gregory had taken his name in homage to Gregory VII, the pope who some 150 years before had launched the struggle to take church appointments out of the hands of secular rulers. To be sure, many lords continued to exercise *de facto* control over clerical offices during and after the Reform Movement. Nevertheless, in the early decades of the thirteenth century, for a pope to concede the powers of a legate to a king, to give him the right not only to appoint bishops, but to map out the boundaries of their dioceses and the parishes within them, was quite remarkable.

Conditions two through eight on Bela's list were less controversial. He asked that the army be allowed to bear a cross before it as it marched through Hungary towards Bulgaria, "so that by this means the devotion of the people might be increased"; that all crusaders from Hungary be committed to him for the expedition; that mendicant friars take charge of the preaching campaign and grant the Holy Land crusade indulgence to those who took the cross; that a cohort of friars, to be chosen by him, attend upon the army; that a sentence of excommunication be promulgated against anyone who attacked Hungary or conspired against him while the invasion was in course, "lest on account of this service to God we are exposed to injury"; that Bulgaria be laid open for occupation to no one but him; and that he and everyone subject to him be taken under the protection of the Apostolic See.

With his final demands Bela sought to dismantle the apparatus of constitutions, oaths, and enforcement mechanisms the former papal legate, Cardinal Jacob, had erected in Hungary to defend ecclesiastical liberties and enforce ecclesiastical law on non-Christians. Condition nine required the relaxation of all sentences of excommunication incurred by violators of the provisions of the Oath of Bereg. Bela claimed the legate had imposed these sentences for "light" reasons. The legate was a holy man, but his ignorance of conditions in Hungary had caused him to "so fortif[y] his constitutions with sentences of excommunication that almost everyone found himself excommunicated." Therefore the tenth condition demanded the revocation of the legate's order, issued just before leaving Hungary, compelling observance of the Oath of Bereg under pain of interdict and excommunication. Bela himself had been further obliged by the legate to swear to uphold the Oath of Bereg and to expel from Hungary heretics and insincere converts to Christianity. The king did not refer to these oaths explicitly but rather asked, as the eleventh and final condition, that the pope grant him blanket absolution from all the oaths the legate had



made him swear, which “he took from us for light reasons, which we cannot even recall on account of their multitude.” Released from the “heavy burden” of papal constitutions, Bela could restore the country to the rule of “common law and the institutions of the sacred fathers.”

How far would Gregory go to accommodate a potential defender of the Latin empire? Very far indeed, as it turned out. In early August 1238 the pope lauded Bela’s resolve to attack Asen and issued orders granting almost all the king’s demands.<sup>38</sup> Gregory’s greatest concession by far was to give Bela the control he wanted over the church in a post-conquest Bulgaria. The pope insisted, though, on maintaining at least the veneer of ecclesiastical authority. Instead of granting authority to delineate dioceses, create parishes, and institute bishops directly to Bela, Gregory would confer these powers on a legate of Bela’s choosing, who would faithfully follow the king’s advice. As the pope insisted, “Even if it is not what you requested to the letter, we have conceded to you [the power you wanted] in effect.”<sup>39</sup>

There were other demands, however, to which Gregory was less willing to accede so completely, even if he tried hard to disguise the fact. He hesitated before the prospect of permanently abandoning Cardinal Jacob’s constitutions, as Bela had proposed. True, these had been allowed to lapse as the recruitment of the king went forward, but doing away with them entirely would deprive the papacy of a powerful source of leverage in Hungary. In order to avoid a flat denial, Gregory resorted to a time-honored negotiating expedient. He asked for more information about the constitutions, claiming ignorance of their contents.<sup>40</sup> He was equally subtle on the question of Bela’s oaths. At stake, of course, were not promises extracted for “light reasons,” but the mechanism that bound the king to cherished if momentarily dormant papal policies. The pope would not absolve Bela from all the oaths the legate had made him swear, but only from those the provincial prior of the Dominicans of Hungary and the minister of the Franciscans of Esztergom province deemed detrimental to the king’s soul.<sup>41</sup> Could these worthy friars be counted on to rule that the king’s oaths on non-Christians posed no risk to his spiritual well-being and were therefore in force? Gregory was putting his close ties with the mendicant orders to a stern test. He came closer, however, to meeting the demand that all of Cardinal Jacob’s sentences of excommunication be lifted. He released those who took the cross against Asen from the ban, but kept it in place upon those who would not.<sup>42</sup>

Besides crusading privileges and relief from ecclesiastical punishments, Gregory had offered Bela two inducements medieval kings usually prized: more land and greater control over church offices and properties. Tempting to most monarchs, these rewards fit Bela’s needs particularly well. King Andrew’s conflicts with the ecclesiastical hierarchy and alienations of royal estates had weakened the monarchy to the benefit of church and nobility alike. By increasing royal domain lands and providing Bela with a church of his own to dominate, the conquest of

Bulgaria would strengthen the crown at the expense of its two main rivals for domestic supremacy.

Still, Bela's response was slow to come; and when it did, on 13 January 1239, it was polite but non-committal.<sup>43</sup> Bela had come to realize that attacking Asen would be an expensive and laborious business. Yet he was nonetheless prepared to put forward his person and goods for Jesus Christ, to offer his creator a "living sacrifice," to "exchange this present life with its pleasures for an eternal one," to invade Bulgaria, in a word, if only the pope would provide him with more "aid, counsel, and favor." He accordingly dispatched the bishop of Győr to Rome for further discussions. Apparently these were not successful, because we hear nothing more of a Hungarian invasion of Bulgaria. Gregory, it seems, could still not offer enough to move the cautious monarch.

No crusade against the schismatics Vataztes and Asen resulted from the pope's recruitment drive in Hungary. Nor, contrary to what we might expect, did these efforts lead to violence against perceived enemies of the faith within the kingdom. Scholars have tended to see crusade preaching as a reliable generator of violence against non-Christian groups in regions where it took place, even when such groups were not the stated targets of a given promotional campaign.<sup>44</sup> But in Hungary in the 1230s Jews, Muslims, and "pagans" do not appear to have come under physical attack or fallen prey to other forms of victimization, such as financial exploitation, as a result of Gregory's recruitment campaign for the Latin empire. If we bear in mind some of the circumstances surrounding the campaign, we can see why this was so. For one thing, Hungary's Jews and Muslims were not as heavily represented as minorities in other regions of Europe in occupations that brought them into contact with crusaders, such as moneylending.<sup>45</sup> For another thing, there were not very many crusaders on hand to attack the kingdom's non-Christians or loot their property, since the preaching campaign did not win many recruits. Given the paucity of crusaders in Hungary, the lack of crusader violence against non-Christians there is not surprising.

What is surprising, though, is that Gregory's crusade preaching actually eased, rather than intensified, the pressure on non-Christian communities in Hungary. In her groundbreaking study of these groups, Nora Berend argued that the papacy's hostility towards them in the 1220s and 1230s was underpinned in part by its commitment to an antagonistic approach towards non-Christians in a variety of countries at that time, a belligerent stance manifested above all in advocacy of crusades.<sup>46</sup> Combating Muslims in Spain and the Holy Land, the popes were inclined to look upon them as a menace in Hungary as well. Through 1234, Gregory's enthusiasm for laws that degraded the legal, social, and economic status of non-Christians in Hungary is not in doubt. In 1235, however, as he looked to recruit an expedition for the Latin empire, he was faced with the predicament that his relations with Bela, Hungary's most prized recruit, were poor, and that one important reason why this was so had to do with his uncompromising stance on non-Christians. As I have tried to show, the pope's solution was to allow the regulatory regime that had caused so

much friction between himself and the royal administration to fall into abeyance. In this case, papal interest in crusading diminished papal interest in enforcing prejudicial laws against Hungary's Jews and Muslims. Since Bela showed more interest in negotiating his release from these regulations than in enforcing them, these communities found themselves under less compulsion to adhere to rules that sought to damage their position in Hungarian society.

The diversion attempt in Hungary thus reveals a two-fold breakdown in papal control over Christian relations with non-Christians, one unintended, the other self-inflicted. Beyond the borders of Hungary, and Christendom itself, Vatatzes and Asen suffered no harm as the result of Gregory's attempt to set the force of Hungarian arms against them. Within the kingdom itself, Muslims, Jews, and "pagans" enjoyed a momentary reprieve from the papal effort to undermine their standing.

#### Notes

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- 1 *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman P. Tanner, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1990), 1:266 (canon 68 of the Fourth Lateran Council); *The Apostolic See and the Jews*, ed. Shlomo Simonsohn, 8 vols. (Toronto, 1988-91), no. 71 (*Constitutio pro Iudaeis*, 15 September 1199).
- 2 *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 1:230 (canon one of the Fourth Lateran Council), 233-35 (canon three).
- 3 For Innocent's non-Holy Land crusades, see Helmut Roscher, *Papst Innocenz III. und die Kreuzzüge* (Göttingen, 1968), pp. 170-253. Two recent overviews of Innocent's crusade policies are Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A Short History* (New Haven, 1987), pp. 119-49; and Christopher Tyerman, *The Invention of the Crusades* (Toronto, 1998), pp. 30-41.
- 4 On the unprecedented nature of the campaign against the Talmud, see Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley, 1999), p. 317.
- 5 See *Ille humani generis*, Gregory's bull of 22 November 1231 to the Dominicans of Regensburg: Kurt-Victor Selge, "Texte zur Inquisition," *Texte zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte* 4 (1967), 45-47.
- 6 The only systematic overview of Gregory's crusade activity to date is Richard T. Spence, *Pope Gregory IX and the Crusade* (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1978).

- 7 On the papal monarchy, see Walter Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages: A Study in the Ideological Relation of Clerical to Lay Power*, 2nd ed. reprinted with minor corrections (London, 1965), p. ix; and his *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. with introduction by George Garnett (London, 2003), pp. 32-35. More recently, see Kenneth Pennington, *Pope and Bishops: The Papal Monarchy in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Philadelphia, 1984), pp. 3-9, 17; Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050-1250* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 1-2; Agostino Paravicini-Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*, trans. David S. Peterson (Chicago, 2000), pp. xvii, 60. On papal leadership of crusading, see Christoph Maier, *Preaching the Crusades: Mendicant Friars and the Cross in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, UK, 1994), pp. 1, 166; James M. Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade 1213-1221* (Philadelphia, 1986), p. 4; Riley-Smith, *The Crusades*, pp. 119-20. On the birth of a persecuting society, see R[obert] I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 100-53; R[obert] I. Moore, *The First European Revolution, c. 970-1215* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 160-98.
- 8 As Gregory himself explained in his initial approach to Bela, the empire "could be more easily and quickly aided by the men of Hungary, since they are closer to it [i.e. than men from other parts of Christendom]": *Les registres de Grégoire IX. Recueil des bulles de ce pape publiées ou analysées d'après les manuscrits originaux du Vatican*, ed. Lucien Auvray, 4 vols. (Paris, 1896-1955), no. 2872 (*[V]etera [M]onumenta [H]istorica Hungariam Sacram Illustrantia*, ed. Augustin Theiner, 2 vols. [Rome, 1859-60], no. 249).
- 9 Nora Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom: Jews, Muslims, and 'Pagans' in Medieval Hungary, c. 1000-c. 1300* (Cambridge, UK, 2001), pp. 149-168; Pál Engel, *The Realm of St. Stephen: A History of Medieval Hungary, 895-1526* (London, 2001), 96-99; Gyula Kristó, *Histoire de la Hongrie médiévale: Le temps des Árpáds*, trans. Chantal Philippe (Rennes, 2000), pp. 133-41.
- 10 *Registres*, nos. 2872 (*VMH*, no. 249), 2911.
- 11 *Registres*, nos. 2872 (*VMH*, no. 249).
- 12 Kristó, *Hongrie médiévale*, p. 138.
- 13 For these measures, see Engel, *Realm of St. Stephen*, pp. 98-99; Kristó, *Hongrie médiévale*, pp. 138-39.
- 14 Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom*, pp. 63, 67, 71-72.
- 15 Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom*, p. 155.
- 16 The accusations of the bishops come down to us in the papal letters that repeat them. In this paragraph, I summarize complaints mentioned in the following papal letters: *Regesta Honorii papae III*, ed. Pietro Pressutti, 2 vols. (Rome, 1888-95), nos. 3301, 3296, 5611 (*VMH*, nos. 58-59, 127); *Registres de Grégoire*

- IX, no. 561 (*VMH*, no. 168).
- 17 *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 1:266 (canon 69).
- 18 Some Muslims and Jews did serve as revenue farmers for the crown: see Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom*, pp. 120-27.
- 19 Kristó, *Hongrie médiévale*, p. 126.
- 20 Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom*, p. 124.
- 21 *Registres*, no. 561 (*VMH*, no. 168).
- 22 *VMH*, no. 187.
- 23 *VMH*, no. 187.
- 24 *VMH*, no. 180.
- 25 *Registres*, nos. 1498 (*VMH*, no. 195), 1499.
- 26 *VMH*, no. 198.
- 27 *VMH*, nos. 199, 208.
- 28 *Acta Honorii III et Gregorii IX e Registris Vaticanis Aliisque Fontibus*, ed. Aloysius L. Tàutu (Rome, 1950), no. 201.
- 29 *Registres*, nos. 2036 (*VMH*, no. 213), 2060 (*VMH*, no. 214). See also Z. J. Kosztolnyik, *Hungary in the Thirteenth Century* (Boulder, Colorado, 1996), p. 114.
- 30 *Registres*, no. 2917 (*VMH*, no. 251).
- 31 *Registres*, no. 3296 (*VMH*, no. 262).
- 32 Kristó, *Hongrie médiévale*, p. 139.
- 33 *Registres de Grégoire IX*, no. 5000 (*VMH*, no. 313).
- 34 *Registres de Grégoire IX*, no. 4056 (*VMH*, no. 283).
- 35 *VMH*, no. 308 (dated 8 June 1239 by Theiner, although the dating clause of the letter clearly states 8 June 1238).
- 36 *VMH*, no. 308.
- 37 *VMH*, no. 308.
- 38 *Registres*, nos. 4489 (standard emblazoned with cross), 4490 (religious processions by clergy), 4484 (all Hungarian crusaders can commute vows to service against Asen; friars will preach cross; Holy Land indulgence made available), 4486 (Bulgaria to be conceded to no one but Bela), 4487 (Bela and family taken under papal protection).
- 39 *Registres*, no. 4482 (*VMH*, no. 295).
- 40 *Registres*, no. 4484 (*VMH*, no. 299).
- 41 *Registres*, no. 4484 (*VMH*, no. 299).
- 42 *Registres*, no. 4482 (*VMH*, no. 295).

- 43 Jean L.A. Huillard-Bréholles, "Examen des chartes de l'église Romaine contenues dans les rouleaux dits rouleaux de Cluny," *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la bibliothèque impériale* 21 (1865), 363.
- 44 This idea is often expressed broadly. Mark Cohen, discussing twelfth-century Jewish-Christian polemic, writes, "This was the period of the Crusades, a time of increasing anti-Jewish hostility in Europe." See Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1994), p. 142. Jeremy Cohen argues that "the very idea of holy war against the enemies of Christ" was a danger to all of European Jewry. See Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, pp. 150-51. Nuanced discussions of the impact of crusading on European Jewish communities can be found in *Juden und Christen zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge*, ed. Alfred Haverkamp (Sigmaringen, 1999).
- 45 Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom*, p. 120.
- 46 Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom*, p. 156.



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