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# Hungarian Mercenaries Serving the Pontifical State

A Vatican Source from 1362 and the Beginning of a Discussion

## Abstract

From the 1340s to the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century various types of administrative sources document a growing presence of Hungarian mercenaries in many cities from Central Italy, such as Rome, Ancona, Orvieto or Bologna. The activity of such specialized (and consequently very well-remunerated) military forces can be partly reconstructed, primarily due to the fiscal registers of the Holy See, which often employed Hungarian companies. Certainly, this phenomenon had political basis and can be easily related to the general interest of the House of Anjou of Hungary towards the Italian Peninsula. But if the economic, diplomatic and cultural implications of these relations between the two entities have been investigated, the history of these professional armed forces has so far attracted little attention. This contribution intends to start a discussion on this issue, presenting and analysing a detailed list compiled in 1362, preserved in the Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, within the collections of the Apostolic Chamber. It provides interesting information in relation to where these forces were located, in what particular type of military activity they were specialized, what was the cost of their services and, finally, what was the real ethnic origin of those generically defined “Ungari”.

In 1574 the poet Péter Ilosvai Selymes (ca. 1520 – ca. 1580), published in Debrecen a narrative poem entitled “The Story of the Great Deeds and Braveries of the Fabulous Miklós Toldi”,<sup>1</sup> one of the first original printed-works in the Hungarian vernacular. Based

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1 In original: Péter Ilosvai Selymes, *Az híres nevezetes Toldi Miklósnak jeles cselekedeteiről és bajnokosodásáról való história*, Debrecen 1574.

on folklore, songs and stories circulating in the Eastern plains of Hungary (currently the Bihor-Sălaj area of Romania), the book followed, in a moralizing manner, the heroic deeds and romantic affairs of Miklós (Nicholas) Toldi, a courageous, strong and witty Hungarian soldier in the service of King Louis I of Hungary (5 March 1326 – 10 September 1382), and a companion in his wanderings across Europe's battlefields, in Hungary, the Czech lands and Italy. The story proved to be quite popular, especially among the Hungarian youth, and the book was reprinted again and again during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the details of the King's champion were still vivid, and inspired János Arany's (1817–1882) epic poem trilogy "Toldi, Toldi estéje" (Toldi's Night) and "Toldi szerelme" (Toldi's Love) published between 1846–1879.

Miklós Toldi was thus long regarded as a fictional character, until the late 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Hungarian and Italian records<sup>2</sup> regarding "Nicolaus comes de Thodi Ungarus" have taken this individual out of legend and into historical reality. Toldi's portrait, re-constructed based on historical sources, tells a story just as spectacular as the heroic poems: he was probably a *familiarius* of Simon 'Móroc' Meggyesi (1326–1374), who served in the campaigns of Louis I to Naples from 1350 to 1355. Toldi was a member of the lesser nobility, mentioned as vice-count of Sáros county in 1351, and vice-count and *castellanus* of Bratislava (Pozsony; Pressburg) county in 1354. His Italian presence is documented during the 1363–1364 venture that King Louis I ordered for the defence of the Pontifical State. It did not take a long time to earn a reputation, as is proved by the fact that the most renowned company leader, John Hawkwood (1323–1394) himself, requested Toldi to have their troops united. Thus, the Hungarian soldier became a mercenary and a contracted captain of the *Alba Societas* (or the White Company) in 1365. After quite a few adventurous years in the Italian Peninsula, Toldi returned home in early 1370s and continued his career as head of Bihor county in 1375, and of Szabolcs County in 1383 and 1385. Documents subsequently mention him until 1390.

This original story of the modern 'hero' Miklós Toldi serves as an anecdotal episode illustrating the theme of the present investigation: the presence of Hungarian (considering here the medieval sense of the notion, comprising diverse ethnic groups from the Kingdom of Hungary) mercenaries in 14<sup>th</sup> century Italy (again, anachronistically ac-

2 For further details on the topic, see Elemér Mályusz, A Toldi-monda történeti alapja [The Historical Basis of the Toldi-fable], in: *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 25 (1924), pp. 3–32; Emil Petrichevich Horváth, A nagyszalontai és feketebátori Tholdy-család eredete [Origin of the Tholdy Family from Salonta and Batár], in: *Turul* 51 (1937), pp. 74–81; Bertalan Korompay, Adalékok és jegyzetek a Toldi-mondához [Datas and Notes for Toldi's Legend], in: *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 60,1 (1956) pp. 20–27; Amedeo Di Francesco, Toldi's Tale: A Hungarian Version of Chivalric Ideals, in: *Hungarian Studies Review* 17,2 (1990), pp. 31–38.

knowledging the modern term to the medieval realities), more precisely in the service of the Pontifical State, and the reverberations of this source on future research-projects focused on Transylvania's history in the Middle Ages.<sup>3</sup> Foreign mercenaries did not keep their own account books or diaries. The main locus of their activities was outside town walls and often beyond the purview of official accounts. The indirect source in question<sup>4</sup> on this occasion, a 3–page record bearing the running title “Stipendia Ungarorum” in the upper margin of each page, describes the amounts paid between May and August 1362 by the *Camera Apostolica* to 16 marshals and constables – *marescalchi* and *conestabili* – and their units, payments made in cash. The scribe redacts the information in Latin mixed with Italian words, and, as will be shown further on, tries to transpose Hungarian names into their Italian equivalent.

But first, just a few words about the context of the issues and characters depicted in this source.

From around 1340 until the last decade of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, written evidence of various types – royal charters, notarial instruments, letters, fiscal records issued by diverse officials – document an increasing presence of Hungarian mercenaries in several regions of Northern and Central Italy. Certainly, this phenomenon had political reasons and can be easily linked to the general interest of the Angevin House occupying the Hungarian throne towards the Italian Peninsula. But, while the economic, diplomatic or cultural consequences of these Hungarian-Italian relations have been frequently investigated,<sup>5</sup> the

3 The pieces of historical evidence under discussion in the present paper have not been published in any documentary corpus concerning the history of medieval Transylvania, edited either by Hungarian or Romanian scholars, over the past century.

4 Città del Vaticano, Archivio Apostolico Vaticano (= AAV), Camera Apostolica (= Cam. Ap.), Collectoriae (= Collect.) 455, fol. 33r–34r: paper, 37 fol., Gothic cursive writing, on fol. 1r (modern hand) “Nomina stipendiorum existentium / Bononiae et in provincia Romaniolae”, fol. 3r, 4r, 5v, 6v, 8v, 21v, 22–27, 36v, 37r–v empty; various watermarks. This record is mentioned in relation to other account-books compiled around 1364 by Angelo Tavernini, treasurer of the Patrimony of Saint Peter and collaborator of cardinal and papal legate Gil Albornoz, see Armand Jamme, *Du journal de caisse au monument comptable: les fonctions changeantes de l'enregistrement dans le Patrimoine de Saint-Pierre (fin XIII<sup>e</sup>–XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, in: *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome – Moyen Âge* 118,2 (2006), pp. 247–268, here p. 263, note 93. On the wider topic of Pontifical account-books and further bibliography, see Christine Schuchard, *Die päpstlichen Kollektoren im späten Mittelalter*, Tübingen 2000; Armand Jamme, *De la banque à la Chambre? Les mutations d'une culture comptable dans les provinces de l'Etat pontifical (1270–1430)*, in: Armand Jamme / Olivier Poncet (Eds.), *Offices, Ecrit et Papauté (XIII<sup>e</sup>–XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Roma 2007, pp. 97–251.

5 Enikő Csukovits, *Magyarországról és a magyarokról. Nyugat-Európa magyar-képe a középkorban* [On Hungary and on the Hungarians: The Image of Hungarians in Western Europe in the Middle

history of the aforementioned professional armed forces has attracted so far very little attention.<sup>6</sup> Many documents, as yet not examined in detail but preserved in numerous Italian archives, contain rich references to the Hungarian military presence in the Apennine Peninsula during the 14<sup>th</sup> century. These mercenaries, who had remained after the King's 1347–1352 campaigns to conquer the Kingdom of Naples (one of them led by Stephen Lackfi, Voivode of Transylvania)<sup>7</sup> operated mostly in the Northern regions of the Italian Peninsula.

The rivalry among the city-states of Italy and the Pontifical State attracted adventurers and soldiers, regardless of their nationality, in a quest to find their fortune in the service of one town or another. There were no clear-cut alliances in the long Italian conflict, Guelph and Ghibelline families and towns rapidly changing loyalties. The peace of Brétigny in 1360, that put an end to the Anglo-French hostilities,<sup>8</sup> also made thousands of English mercenaries move southwards in the service of pope Innocent VI (18 Decem-

Ages], Budapest 2015; Armando Nuzzo, *Olasz-magyar diplomáciai kapcsolatok (1301–1550)* [Italian-Hungarian Diplomatic Relations (1301–1550)], in: *Világtörténet 1* (2017), pp. 139–151; Katalin Prajda, *Florentines' Trade in the Kingdom of Hungary in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries. Trade Routes, Networks, and Commodities*, in: *Hungarian Historical Review 6,1* (2017), pp. 36–58; ead., *Network and Migration in Early Renaissance Florence. Friends of Friends in the Kingdom of Hungary (1378–1433)*, Amsterdam 2018.

6 Historians' interest in the mercenary companies dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and one of the first to cover the specific topic of Hungarian troops in the Italian Peninsula was Ercole Ricotti, *Storia delle compagnie di ventura in Italia*, Torino 1847, vol. 2, pp. 63–94. I must also mention the excellent paper of Pál Lukcsics, *Magyar zsoldosok a pápaság szolgálatában a XIV. században* [Hungarian Mercenaries Serving the Papacy in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century], in: *Hadtörténelmi közlemények 33,1* (1932), pp. 125–157, who based his investigation of the *Introitus et Exitus* (= *Int. et Exit.*) registers of the AAV, the Italian chronicles of the Florentine Filippo Villani and the Hungarians chronicles (John of Tárnavé and "Chronicon Budense"). See also: Gyula Kristó, *Az Anjou-kor háborúi* [The Wars of the Angevin Era], Budapest 1988; Carla Corradi Musi, *The Hungarian Military in Northern Italy during the Reign of Louis the Great*, in: *Hungarian Studies Review 17,2* (1990), pp. 11–20; Attila Bárány, *The Communion of English and Hungarian Mercenaries in Italy*, in: János Barta / Klára Papp (Eds.), *The First Millennium of Hungary in Europe*, Debrecen 2002, pp. 126–141; László Veszprémy, *Az Árpád- és Anjou-kor csatái, hadjáratai* [The Battles and Campaigns of the Arpadian and Angevin Eras], Budapest 2008; Attila Bárány, *Nagy Lajos nápolyi hadjáratai és a Százéves Háború* [Louis the Great's Neapolitan Campaigns and the Hundred Years War], in: László Pallai (Ed.), *Emlékkönyv Barta János 70. születésnapjára*, Debrecen 2010, pp. 25–39.

7 András W. Kovács, *Voievozii Transilvaniei în perioada 1344–1359* [Voivodes of Transylvania between 1344–1359], in: Dumitru Țicu / Rudolf Gräf / Adrian Magina (Eds.), *Itinerarii istoriografice: Studii în onoarea istoricului Costin Feneșan*, Cluj-Napoca 2011, pp. 37–65.

8 Alfred H. Burne, *The Crecy War: a Military History of the Hundred Years War from 1337 to the Peace of Bretigny in 1360*, Oxford 1955.

ber 1352 – 12 September 1362), who diverted them from Avignon towards the political and military interests of the papacy in the Peninsula.<sup>9</sup> The commander of the English troops was John Hawkwood, the most successful military captain and perhaps the most well-known figure of his day.

According to contemporary sources, the Hungarians were considered, besides the Englishmen, the most relentless mercenaries, sometimes addressed to as the ‘devils incarnated’.<sup>10</sup> The Hungarian soldiers formed in 1360 the company called *Magna Societas Ungarorum*,<sup>11</sup> under the command of Miklós Athinai from Voćin, Croatia (“Nicolaus filius Iohannis de Othim Comes et Capitaneus Generalis”), and his officers – *marescallus* and *consiliarius* – were István Becsei from Bečej, Serbia (“Stephanus filius Becche”) and Mihály Oláh (“Michaelis dictus Elach”) – probably from Transylvania or Slovakia. Medieval terminology makes it difficult to distinguish between nation and ethnicity in premodern times as the Latin terms *natio* (nation) and *gens* (people) were often used interchangeably. Sometimes, the native regions of Hungarian mercenaries are mentioned in lists of wages, such as “Petrus de Ardel” or “Michaelis de Ardel” (Erdélyi Mihály) mentioned in 1358 and 1359,<sup>12</sup> the same as “Michaelis dictus Elach” (Olach), in the *banderium* of Miklós Athinai in 1361.<sup>13</sup> In these cavalry units also served “Giorgius de Erdella / Ardale” (Erdély / Transylvania), “Ladislaus de Dobocho” (Dăbâca, today in Transylvania, Romania) and “Salomon de Seghesvar” (Sighișoara, today in Transylvania, Romania).<sup>14</sup> The ethnicity is occasionally a distinctive mark, such as for “Andreas de

9 William Caferro, *Italy and the Companies of Adventure in the Fourteenth Century*, in: *The Historian* 58,4 (1996), pp. 794–810; Duccio Balestracci, *Le armi, i cavalli, l'oro. Giovanni Acuto e i condottieri nell'Italia del Trecento*, Roma 2003; William Caferro, “The Fox and the Lion”: the White Company and the Hundred Years War in Italy, in: Donald J. Kagay / Andrew Villalon (Eds.), *Hundred Years War: A Wider Focus*, Leiden-Boston 2005, pp. 179–210; id., *John Hawkwood: An English Mercenary in Fourteenth-Century Italy*, Baltimore 2006.

10 Bárány, *The Communion* (see note 6), p. 141.

11 Gyula Rázsó, *A zsoldosintézmény kezdetei Magyarországon a XIV. században* [The Beginnings of the Mercenary Institution in 14<sup>th</sup> Century Hungary], in: *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 7,2 (1960), pp. 107–143.

12 Pál Lukcsics, *Magyar zsoldosok Itáliában a XIV. században* [Hungarian Mercenaries in Italy in the XIV Century], in: *Turul* 3–4 (1928), pp. 128–129 quotes the names of 28 Hungarian soldiers, collectors and scribes identified in AAV, Int. et Exit. 266, 268, 276, 279, among them “Valente Ungarus”, “Johannes de Aram literatus”, “Michael de Ardel”.

13 Gusztáv Wenzel, *Magyar diplomáciai emlékek az Anjou-korból* [Hungarian Diplomatic Monuments from the Anjou Era], Budapest 1875, vol. 2, doc. 417.

14 Lukcsics, *Magyar zsoldosok* (see note 6), pp. 128, 144–145.

Secullo” (Székely).<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the mercenaries were so ethnically diverse and came from so many parts of the Hungarian Kingdom, that under the name “Ungari” they might have been in great proportion Slav, Cuman, Bulgar, Tatar or Vlach from Slavonia, Serbia, Croatia and Transylvania. The various troops of *stipendiarii* allied themselves with or fought against each other according to their individual interest.

In 1361 *Magna Societas Ungarorum* signed a treaty<sup>16</sup> with King Frederick of Sicily (1355–1377) against the German company of Hanekken Baumgarten (Italian: Annichino di Mongardo), one of the captains of Konrad von Landau, the commander of the German mercenary Great Company. In the service of the Sicilian King, the Hungarians also vowed to protect the Pope and the papal territories from Avignon to Rome and Venice.<sup>17</sup> On April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1363, this Hungarian contingent, allied with the Englishmen in the White Company, defeated Konrad von Landau’s army, made up primarily of German and Hungarian mercenaries in the service of Milan’s Visconti family, at the Battle of Canturina, North-West of Milan. It is said that the Hungarians in Landau’s Great Company refused to fight their fellow countrymen in the White Company and withdrew from the field, thus leaving the Germans at a disadvantage. Even Landau lost his life. It is, however, a mistake to generalize and to consider the Hungarians soldiers motivated by political ideals in the modern sense of the term, or the German mercenaries’ enemies of the Avignon papacy. The 26 “Introitus et Exitus”-registers and 10 “Collectorie”-volumes investigated at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by German scholars<sup>18</sup> recorded over 750 names of German captains employed by the pope and active in the Italian Peninsula, together with an additional 1 400 cavalymen over the entire 14<sup>th</sup> century – they were often employed together with Hungarian detachments, probably due to their comple-

15 “Andreas de Secullo” was a tithe-collector mentioned in a notarial document issued in Bologna in 1360, see Edgár Artner, *Hungary as Propugnaculum of Western Christianity. Documents from the Vatican Secret Archives* (ca. 1214–1606), Budapest-Roma 2004, pp. 72–73, doc. 75.

16 See note 13.

17 See additional details on the topic in Albert Sautier, *Papst Urban V. und die Söldnerkompagnien in Italien in den Jahren 1362–1367*, Zürich 1911; William Caferro, *Slaying the Hydra-headed Beast: Italy and the Companies of Adventure in the Fourteenth Century*, in: Donald J. Kagay/Andrew Villalon (Eds.), *Crusaders, Condottieri and Cannon: Medieval Warfare in Societies around the Mediterranean*, Leiden-Boston 2003, pp. 285–304; Kenneth Fowler, *Great Companies, Condottieri and Stipendiary Soldiers. Foreign Mercenaries in the Service of the State: France, Italy and Spain in the Fourteenth Century*, in: Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada (Ed.), *Guerra y diplomacia en la Europa Occidental: 1280–1480*. Estella, 19a 23 de julio de 2004, Pamplona 2005, pp. 141–162.

18 Karl Heinrich Schäfer, *Deutsche Ritter und Edelknechte in Italien während des 14. Jahrhunderts*, Paderborn 1911.

mentary fighting techniques. As part of cosmopolitan companies, which were in fact small private armies under the allegiance of a *condottiere*, it is estimated that until 1365 about 1 600 to 2 000 Hungarians fought side by side with 4 000 Englishmen<sup>19</sup> in a long series of battles.

The Hungarian typical company was divided into small units, usually around 20 men and horses, all light cavalymen and bowmen, who shot arrows from their mounts and accompanied a squad of heavily armoured horseman supported by a squire and page, commonly known as “Lancia” (‘lance’). Five lances were usually combined to form a *posta* (‘position’), and five *poste* formed a *bandieria* (‘banner’). However, in 14<sup>th</sup> century papal sources the term *posta / post(a)e* defines the unit formed by an equipped man and his horse, as explained in a papal register: “armigeri equites seu poste complete.”<sup>20</sup>

Waging war was not a cheap endeavour.<sup>21</sup> The average cost of a *lancia*, a knight and accompanying auxiliaries doubled from the 1260s to the 1390s and spiked in the 1430s to ten times the rate two centuries earlier. Budgets of the Camera del commune of Florence, together with the records of the Archivio Apostolico Vaticano (AAV, formerly ASV) show that in the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century a German mercenary captain at the head of a ‘banner’ of 20 horsemen – the standard cavalry unit at the time – earned 30 florins a month. His cavalry men received 8 florins a month each. The captain’s wage represented nearly double that of an Italian cavalry captain with the same size of unit. The wage of their Hungarian counterparts, the *conestabiles* (captains) and archers-cavalymen (*postarii*) was about the same: 7 or 8 florins for the horsemen and 16 florins for a captain commanding a 19/20/21-men unit. As a comparison, the English captains earned around 50 florins, while common footmen earned around 8–12 florins a month. By 1380, John Hawkwood was cashing in 500 florins monthly from the Florentine Republic. The major difference in wages can be noticed only in the monthly instalments of the unit captains, while the soldiers were indemnified quite the same, regardless of their nationality, company or weaponry.

The Avignon Papacy was experiencing difficulties within its own Italian domain in the sixth decade of the *Trecento*. The departure from Italy to France in 1305 created a

19 Barany, *The Communion* (see note 6), p. 141.

20 AAV, Cam. Ap., Collect. 463, fol. 305v.

21 The following assertions are based on William Caferro, *Mercenaries and Military Expenditure: The Costs of Undeclared Warfare in XIV<sup>th</sup> Century Siena*, in: *Journal of European Economic History* 23,2 (1994), pp. 219–247; id., *Warfare and Economy in Renaissance Italy, 1350–1450*, in: *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 39 (2008), pp. 167–209; id., *The Florentine Army in the Age of the Companies of Adventure*, in: *Millars: Espai i historia* 43,2 (2017), pp. 129–150.

power vacuum that was filled by local strongmen who often disobeyed papal authority and fought with one another. In 1353 the new Pope, Innocent VI, sent envoys to prepare the return of the papacy from Avignon to Rome. This implied an armed offensive against the ruler of Milan, Bernabò Visconti and the Ghibellines. The Italian party already had Hungarian mercenaries in their service so, when King Louis I, at the Pope's request, sent a sizable Hungarian mercenary contingent to relieve the besieged city of Bologna, Hungarians in both camps met face to face. Simon 'Móroc' Meggyesi was one of the Hungarian leaders – his cruel actions in battle gaining him in fact the nickname "Simone della morte".<sup>22</sup> Many Hungarians were captured after the 1360 battle at Bologna: in two deeds executed before a notary in 1361, preserved in Mantua,<sup>23</sup> as well as in another entry in the Vatican registers,<sup>24</sup> there are lists of Hungarian prisoners, as well as the coats of arms of their families. By the time Innocent VI died, on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 1362, the papacy and all related administrative papal institutions were still in Avignon, on French land.

In early 1362 most of the commercial, cultural and religious traffic was headed towards Avignon and the papal curia lodged there. Except for the pilgrim route, Rome was not exactly prosperous and had the aspect of a quasi-deserted town, with large uninhabited areas within the city walls. However, this fact did not impede Romans from waging war against their neighbouring settlements. During the rule of Lazarus de Cancellariis, senator of Rome in 1362, the Romans waged war with Velletri,<sup>25</sup> a commune now in the Metropolitan City of Rome, on the Alban Hills, in Lazio. They subdued the rebellious town in May 1362, tore down a portion of its walls, and carried its gates as trophies to Rome. Additionally, as another Vatican source suggests,<sup>26</sup> the troops

22 Magda Jászay, *Párhuzamok és kereszteződések. A magyar-olasz kapcsolatok történetéből* [Parallels and Intersections. From the History of Hungarian-Italian Relations], Budapest 1982, p. 104; Pál Engel, *Magyarország világi archontológiája, 1301–1457* [Secular Archontology of Hungary, 1301–1457], 2 vols., Budapest 1996, vol. 2, p. 156.

23 Mantova, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Gonzaga, b. 48: 12 November 1361; 12 December 1361; 9 January 1362; 22 July 1362; 25 June 1365, quoted in Corradi Musi, *The Hungarian Military* (see note 6), p. 14, 18.

24 AAV, Cam. Ap., Collect. 202, fol. 12–13, Collect. 203, fol. 13.

25 Ferdinand Gregorovius, *History of the City of Rome in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge 2010, pp. 405–406.

26 AAV, Intr. et Ex. 266, quoted in Augustin Theiner, *Codex diplomaticus domini temporalis S. Sedis, Roma 1878*, vol. 2, p. 402: "[1362] Die viii. April solvi Angelino magistri Iohannis de Viterbio apud Urbem, misso ad conducendum gentes equestres (Theotonicos et Ungaros) ad stipendia nove tallie militum Patrimonii, pro defensione terrarum Ecclesie in provincia Patrim. propter adventum Societatis Anechini de Monguardo, que dicitur ventura etc, 3. flor."



of Hanekken Baumgarten were heading for Rome in April 1362, compelling Angelo Tavernini, treasurer of the Patrimony of Saint Peter between 1350–1376, to hire German and Hungarian soldiers for the defence of the Patrimony of Saint Peter. War outside the gates was complemented by internal unrest: in the summer of 1362 the commoner Lelius Bonadota (or Lello Pocadota) led a popular revolt against the Roman aristocrats,<sup>27</sup> and had them banished outside the city. Again, the German and Hungarian mercenaries were employed by the governor as a means to quell the disturbances.

Returning now to the source in question, the way in which information is structured within the register, doubled by the palaeographical considerations, indicates its affiliation with other documented account books drawn up by treasurer Angelo Tavernini.<sup>28</sup> An endorsement of this identification is given by the closing chapter of the register, on fol. 28v: “Stipendia mei thesaurarii. Ego Angelus thesaurarius secundus solvi ...”. The contents of the register, more precisely of the 3 pages in question, cover the wages of the Hungarian mercenaries who were stationed between May and August 1362 in Rome: the captain – marshal/ *marescalco* – of the Hungarian troops, Iohannes Stephani, is mentioned in the first paragraph, with a monthly pay of 70 florins – a very high sum of money. His lieutenants, the *conestabili*, commanding each 19 poste (man and horse unit), receive 16 florins a month, a payment double to that of a *posta*: 8 florins (“8 florenos pro posta computata dicto conestabilo paga dupla pro parte sua mensis”). The list continues on the next two pages in the same manner, naming in total 15 Hungarian unit-leaders: “Sulcus Ianis, conestabilus et marescalcus”, and lieutenants (*conestabili*) “Laurentius Symonis, Symon Georgii, Blasius Petri, Deonutius, Micle Panfn, Nicolaus Michelis, Iohannes Thomaxii, Iohannes Nicolai, Michael Georgii, Iohannes Egidii, Lancellectus Andriacii, Nicolaus Diaboli, Iulianus Stefani, Iohannes Martini”. There is no mention of a notary or scribe, as one may find in a larger company. All payments are made in advance, in two-month instalments, until August 1362, totalling about 5,000 florins.

There is no indication in the 1362 list of the ethnicity or home-region or town of these Hungarian soldiers. The only name that might resemble a known and documented Hungarian captain of the *Magna Societas Ungarorum* (Szamosi Lancz / Lanzalottus de

27 Samuel K. Cohn Jr., *Lust for Liberty: The Politics of Social Revolt in Medieval Europe, 1200–1425*. Italy, France, and Flanders, Cambridge-London 2008, p. 287, note 112; Carlo Ciuciovino, *La cronaca del Trecento italiano. Giorno per giorno l'Italia di Albornoz dei Visconti Lacerata dalle compagnie di ventura*, Roma 2016, vol. 3, p. 503.

28 Samples of Tavernini's writing from AAV, Intr. et Ex. 266 and AAV, Registra Avenionensia 274 in Jamme, *Journal de caisse* (see note 4), pp. 261, 265 (facsimile of the folios in question). See also Theiner, *Codex diplomaticus* (see note 26), pp. 394–402, doc. 365.

Samosce), is Lancellectus Andriacii. The Hungarian name ‘Lancz’<sup>29</sup> could have meant ‘chain’ or ‘lancer’ – a type of cavalryman who fought with a lance. However, the name resemblance between the two seems only a coincidence. “Diaboli” can be a nickname related to the ruthless military techniques of the Hungarian cavalry. The 15 names of Hungarian soldiers do not seem to be related to the *Magna Societas Ungarorum* either – this company had just signed a contract with the Florentine Republic, an ally of the papacy at that moment, on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1362.<sup>30</sup> They may as well have been former soldiers left behind from the army of Nicholas Lackfi (?–1368), the leader of the Hungarian royal contingent that came in 1357 to the aid of the pope and had returned home in the spring of 1359.<sup>31</sup> Among other Hungarians mentioned throughout the investigated register, soldier “Iohannes Iohannis”,<sup>32</sup> lieutenant and scribe “Iohannes de Aram Litteratus”,<sup>33</sup> tithe collector “Andreas de Secullo”<sup>34</sup> or constable “Valente Ungarus”<sup>35</sup> also appear in various other contexts around 1353–1358.<sup>36</sup>

The most important information, missing from the 1362 record is the mission of the Hungarian mercenaries. The contracted sums of money are all related to a common form of salary or wage for a short term, with no reference to nourishment for men and horses, or clothing. There is also no indication of a bribe, such as was accustomed in other cities where records indicate sums varying from 2.000 to 10.000 florins offered to the captains of the companies,<sup>37</sup> who were asked in return not to pillage the countryside and destroy crops. Were they in any way involved in the conflict between the Romans and the communards of Velletri? The role of the Hungarian light cavalry was to support

29 Lancz / Lanzallotus / Lancellectus may all be versions of Lancelot, one of the renowned Knights of the Round Table in the Arthurian legend. It is found used as a forename in England from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards (see Elizabeth Gidley Withycombe, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names*, Oxford 1973, pp. 181–182). However, the Hungarian use of this name indicates a likely Italian influence (for the history of the personal names in 14<sup>th</sup> century Hungary, see Mariann Slíz, *Cult of Saints, Politics and name-giving in Angevin Hungary*, in: *Rivista Italiana di Onomastica* 26,1 (2020), pp. 197–211).

30 Wenzel, *Magyar diplomacziái emlékek* (see note 13), doc. 424.

31 He would become Voivode of Transylvania (1367–1368), just as his brother, Stephen (see note 7).

32 AAV, Cam. Ap., Collect. 455, fol. 13r.

33 Ibid., fol. 6r.

34 Ibid, fol. 6r and 12v.

35 Ibid., fol. 10v.

36 Lukcsics, *Magyar zsoldosok* (see note 6), pp. 128–130, 138, 140, 148. See also note 12.

37 See Caferro, *Italy and the Companies of Adventure* (see note 9), *passim*.

the heavy armed units and foot soldiers, move quickly across the battlefield and shoot arrows at a considerable distance – taking this specific tactic into consideration, it would be difficult to imagine the horsemen involved in a siege operation, that involved tearing down stone walls, such as was the case at Velletri. Were they contracted alone, or in conjunction with their usual partners, the German or English soldiers? Since 1361 Arezzo, Cortona, Florence, Naples, and the Papacy had formed an alliance, presumably against the Milanese enemy. German-Hungarian troops had been sent on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1362 to protect Bologna, as another papal register informs.<sup>38</sup> The specific presence of Hungarian mercenaries in this town is also documented by internal records for quite a while, till the late 1390s, because of the disturbance they created.<sup>39</sup> It seems so far that the Hungarian units in Rome were part of a larger, pontifical-remunerated, defensive force dealing with the deleterious effects of internal factors, and further investigation may reveal additional German / English infantry and heavy-cavalry units on the payroll of the Papal State, perhaps in preparation for an offensive campaign.

As the title of the present paper states, the aim of this outline is to initiate a discussion regarding the role of papal sources in the more accurate reconstruction of personalities and situations. The complexity of this specific type of record allows the apprehension of multiple vantage points: historians may emphasise the fiscal aspects present throughout the registers, the palaeographical quirks, the generous anthroponymical and archontological data, and numerous other features. Just to draw a parallel with the story of Miklos Toldi, the legendary hero descended into reality, one might add substance to another historiographical enigma, that of the two years spent by John Hunyadi / Iancu de Hunedoara in Italy around 1431–1433 among the soldiers supposedly sent by the Hungarian King Sigismund to assist Filippo Visconti, the ruler of Milan, against Venice. This information, taken for granted by modern scholars,<sup>40</sup> is based on a sole mention

38 AAV, Cam. Ap., Collect. 247, fol. 254v: “1362 April 30 solvi Angelino magistri Iohannis de Viterbio misso apud Urbem et ad partes Campanie ad conducendum gentes equestres Theotonicorum et Ungarorum ad stipendia domini ... legati pro defensione civitatis Bononie et ad explorandum, quot gentes poterant reperiri in dictis partibus ... 10 fl.”

39 Information provided by Armand Jamme (CNRS, Lyon, France), who conducted research in various Italian archives. I would like to express here my gratitude for various suggestions to Dr. Jamme, as well as to Mihai Kovács (UBB, Cluj-Napoca, Romania).

40 Florio Banfi, Hunyadi János itáliai tartozkodása [John Hunyadi's Italian Sojourn], in: Erdélyi Múzeum 5,39 (1934), pp. 261–273; Jászay, Párhuzamok és kereszteződések (see note 22), pp. 131–132; Pál Engel, Hunyadi pályakezdése [Hunyadi's Early Career], in: id. (Ed.), Honor, vár, ispánság. Tanulmányok az Anjou-királyság kormányzati rendszeréről, Budapest 2003, pp. 512–526.

in Antonio Bonfini's (1434–1503) “*Historia Pannonica*”,<sup>41</sup> compiled towards the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It is considered that in Milan he made the acquaintance of the condottiere Francesco Sforza and studied the updated military art of Italy; on his return home, Hunyadi was considered the best warrior in Southern Hungary. Yet, there is no other documentary evidence of young John Hunyadi's presence in Milan. A targeted research in the Vatican archives, corroborated with the investigation of urban records and correspondence (such as the Lombardian city), might shed new details or even change the perception of a character or event accepted so far by historiography.

The task of investigating Vatican archival records concerning ‘Hungarian’-related information is intended only as the first step in a much broader effort to embrace other Italian archives, such as those of towns like Florence, Modena, Ancona, Milan, Siena, Pisa and Bologna, and substantiate the evidence into a coherent construction relevant for the reassessment of Transylvania's medieval history. Nevertheless, this is not a ‘one-man job’ – as any researcher who is conversant with the Vatican archives knows, the immense volume of information requires a larger team, involved in a short to medium-term project. The results will contribute to a broader understanding of the relationship between the papacy and / or Italy, and the medieval Hungarian Kingdom, as there seem to be more connections between the two political entities than first imagined.

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41 Antonio Bonfini, *Historia Pannonica*, Basel 1568, p. 448: “Dec. III, lib. 4: Servivit ... in Italia duos annos, sub duce Philippo Mediolanensi prima stipendia meruit, nam Sigismundum in Italiam secutus remansit”.