

AUTHORITY AND POWER IN THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH, C. 1000–C. 1500



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Edited by

THOMAS W. SMITH



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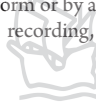
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*For Barbara Bombi and Emilia Jamrozik,
two inspirational scholars of the medieval Church*





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Papal Legates in Thirteenth-Century Hungary: Authority, Power, Reality

Throughout the thirteenth century, papal legates intervened in Hungary on numerous occasions and for a multitude of reasons. As the instruments of papal authority, they had to deal with various internal and external conflicts, such as the fight against heresy in the Balkans, foster relations with the neighbouring orthodox churches, and improve the state of the Hungarian clergy. The present study explores the manifestation, deployment, and limitations of papal authority in the person of the legate so as to assess the nature of the papacy's *plenitudo potestatis*, or fullness of power, in its relations with the Kings of Hungary in this period.¹

Any attempt to shed light on the perception of papal power in thirteenth-century Hungary must begin with an important example from the first half of the century which sheds light on the special relationship between the Kingdom of Hungary and the practice of papal legation. In June 1238, King Béla IV (1235–70) answered the admonitions of Pope Gregory IX (1227–41) concerning the need for a Hungarian campaign to help the Latin Empire of Constantinople.² Béla stated that he was willing to lead his army south against the Bulgarian and Greek rulers despite his kinship with them, but he requested the office of legation for himself for this endeavour.³ The petition was justified with a reference to the rights of St Stephen (997–1038), the first King of Hungary, who was portrayed as an apostolic legate in his legend written

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- 1 For this notion in canon law, see Watt, *Theory of Papal Monarchy*, 75–105. For the papal legates as representatives of the popes, see recently Müller, 'Omnipresent Pope', 201–10.
- 2 Potthast, nos 10508, 10535; *Les Registres de Grégoire IX*, ed. by Auvray, nos 4056, 4155. See Lower, 'Negotiating Interfaith Relations', 54–58; Dall'Aglio, 'Crusading in a Nearer East', 180–83.
- 3 *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae*, ed. by Fejér, IV.1, 112; *Regesta regum*, ed. by Szentpétery and Borsa, no. 642. See Ruess, *Die rechtliche Stellung*, 235–36; Szűcs, 'A kereszténység belső', 162–63.

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