

Chapter 9

The New Monarchy

From our perspective, it is clear that the accession of the Angevins brought a change of dynasty, but what contemporaries emphasised was continuity. Charles derived his right from neither election nor his having been crowned with the Holy Crown. Rather, he considered it to be the lawful inheritance of the Árpádians, his 'pious ancestors of holy memory', that devolved upon him 'by right of birth'. It was surely not by chance that two of his sons were given the names of Ladislaus and Stephen. The close connection with the former dynasty was also expressed by the coat of arms of the Angevins, which was divided into two fields, showing the lilies, their family symbol, on one, and the red and silver bars, used by their predecessors, on the other. The principle of inheritance was an important advantage in developing authoritarian forms of government.

THE PRINCIPLES

The programme of Charles and his supporters, as was that of any new regime in the Middle Ages, consisted of the restoration of the 'good state of the realm'. Whatever the ideas behind this slogan were, holding diets was obviously not one of them. During the years of civil war, Charles had been forced to hold a diet almost every year, though it seems that he disliked them from the beginning. The last diet we know of was convened in 1320. After his victory the king saw no further reason to respect his subjects' expectations. As they complained later, 'he prohibited their traditional assemblies'.¹ Indeed, he did not even hold the annual public courts, prescribed by the Golden Bull.

Instead of the holding of diets, the idea that the king should rule 'with the plenitude of power' (*plenitudine potestatis*) prevailed, and some went as far as to declare that 'his word has the force of law'.² Indeed, he

adopted the habit of granting privileges 'out of his special grace' (*de speciali gratia*), with no regard to the customs of his realm. Although this broad interpretation of royal authority was by no means alien to the Árpádians, its first sophisticated exposition emerged during Charles's reign, and probably derived from the political traditions of the kingdom of Sicily.

In theory at least, decision-making was shared by the monarch and his council, the latter consisting of the 'prelates and barons', that is, the ecclesiastical and lay dignitaries of the kingdom. The list of barons, which had been included in all royal grants since about 1190, went through important modifications after 1323. (It should be noted that in Hungary these lists were purely formal, and are not to be confused with the lists of witnesses that were much in use elsewhere.) Under the late Árpádians most counts still had the rank and privileges of a baron. By 1333 this status was maintained only by the count of Pressburg, the other counts having been gradually omitted from the lists of dignitaries. They were soon to lose the baronial privileges of having a banner and using a distinctive seal. Neither were the office-holders of the queen's court counted among the barons after 1354. The number of the lay barons of the realm was thus established at around twelve, including the Master of the Doorkeepers (*magister ianitorum*), a new dignitary who became a member of the council in 1350. Since he was in charge of the royal palace, from 1380 onwards he was also called, though unofficially, 'Master of the Court' (*magister curiae*). The ecclesiastical barons comprised, as earlier, fourteen prelates, that is, the two archbishops and twelve bishops.

In the absence of a diet, the barons, together with other high dignitaries, were to represent 'the *universitas* of the realm', that is, the Estates. If the king sat in judgement himself, he did this together with members of his council. When making a 'perpetual' (that is, inheritable) grant of an estate or any other privilege he always referred to the counsel (*consilium*) of prelates and barons. His acts became valid only with their formal consent. In 1330, as we have seen, 24 barons and counts pronounced the final verdict against Felician Záh, who had dared to raise his hand against the royal family. As for foreign affairs, in 1328 three prelates and 29 lay office-holders (barons, counts, and castellans) guaranteed in a separate charter, 'in the name of themselves, their descendants and heirs', the Treaty of Bruck, which Charles had signed with the dukes of Austria.³ The peace treaty with the Republic of Venice in 1348 was also confirmed by 20 ecclesiastical and lay office-holders.

As early as 1318 Charles had refused to confirm the Golden Bull and he was not inclined to respect it later. In sharp contrast to its provisions, he made it clear that 'whenever we take the field the nobles of our kingdom are obliged to join us, according to their customs, at their own

expense.⁴ During the war against the oligarchs the king had become accustomed to proclaiming the general levy every year, and he had no intention of refraining from this practice later. Between 1316 and 1340 there were, as far as we know, only two years when no 'royal campaign' was proclaimed. In 1336 there were two within a single year. (Unfortunately we do not always know the destination of these expeditions.) In such cases it was usual to adjourn all lawsuits until the end of the campaign, which was officially called the 'day of the army's rest' (*dies residentiae exercitus*). From 1329, most expeditions were conducted abroad, and it is almost certain that the nobility was obliged to take part in them.

THE KING AND THE CHURCH

The king's autocratic views dominated his relations with the Church, despite the fact that he owed much to his prelates. At the time that Ladislaus Kán was still tyrannising the bishop of Transylvania and Matthew Csák occupied the estates of the sees of Nitra and Esztergom, it was from the Church that Charles found the support he needed for his survival. In 1313 he bestowed the county of Veszprém upon its bishop hereditarily, while in 1315 the archbishop of Esztergom was given the county of Komárno in a similar way, though it was actually still held by Matthew Csák. Problems began to arise in 1317, when Charles found himself less in need of his bishops. Their wrath was first roused by the treaty that Charles had signed with Matthew Csák, which left the usurped ecclesiastical domains in the hands of the oligarch without the Church's authorisation. In the spring of 1318 the bishops assembled at Kalocsa and allied themselves against 'everybody' trying to encroach upon any of the Church's privileges. They wanted to take measures in order 'to provide for the good state of the realm', and called upon the king to convene a diet where they could put forward their suggestions.⁵ The bishop of Nitra went as far as to excommunicate Matthew and all of his followers, many of whom had gone over to the king's service in 1317.

Charles summoned the assembly as he had been required to do, but he was not a man to forget. As early as 1320 he took Komárno back from the archbishop and gave him the county of Bars instead: a grant of doubtful value, for Bars was still in Matthew Csák's possession. In 1323 he annulled his former grants concerning Veszprém and Bars, and made the prelates the obedient instruments of his power. Around 1338, one of them denounced the king to the Pope, requesting anonymity lest 'the king's wrath should fall upon' him. He briefly summarised the grievances of the nobility, but devoted most of his letter to the acts of injustice committed against the Church. The king,

he claimed, had not permitted canonical elections for 23 years, appointing bishops himself, frequently in the lifetime of their predecessors. On the occasion of an investiture, he had demanded a fee, and at New Year a special gift; he imposed arbitrary taxes upon the people of the Church; he compelled the bishops to go to war every year or even more often; he confiscated the property of deceased prelates and laid his hand upon vacant sees; he granted away patronage rights; he had priests summoned before secular courts and even forced them to fight duels. As a result of all this, the anonymous author added, it was feared that 'a revolt of the whole Hungarian people' would break out.⁶

This was, of course, no more than a dream. Charles enjoyed the unqualified support of his barons and had a firm grip on the reins of power. Neither could the Hungarian Church hope for assistance from Avignon, for in the later part of his reign Charles received as much support from the Holy See as he had earlier. The greed of the cardinals not being aroused by this poor and distant land, they rarely demanded benefices there, and the Pope did not inquire about episcopal elections if he received, more or less, the payments that were due to him.

It was between 1281 and 1286 that the first papal tax collector, Gerardo da Modena, had been active in Hungary, presumably with limited success. In Charles's reign, the first collectors arrived with Gentile in 1308. From 1317 onwards it was the task of Rufinus de Civino, archdeacon of Tolna, to collect the annual income of all the vacant benefices and that part of Gentile's *procuratio* that had not been paid. All he managed to raise during his three-year stay were 2960 florins, 1744 of which were used to pay his own allowance. The next levy, which began in 1332 and lasted for six years, was more successful. It was aimed at collecting the papal tithe, that is, the tenth part of the income of all ecclesiastical benefices. The king gave his consent to this exaction upon the condition that one third of the income would be his. The tax collectors went through the kingdom twice a year, squeezed the tithe from every single cleric, and the results of their work were put down on a detailed roll that listed benefices and parishes by diocese and archdeaconry. The document is far from complete, for in some dioceses only four, five or even fewer years are covered, and Nitra and Győr dioceses are missing altogether. Nevertheless, although papal tax collectors were also to visit Hungary from 1350 to 1354 and from 1373 to 1375, this is the only document of its kind to have come down to us and so provides a unique historical source.

CHARLES'S BARONS

The long civil war had led to the destruction of the old elite, and its place was occupied by a newly created one that owed its rise to the

Angevin dynasty. From 1315 onwards new men begin to appear in key positions, and by the time Charles had taken (to use his own words) 'full possession' of the kingdom,⁷ they had come to monopolise the government. Their relationship to the dynasty was completely different from that between the king and the oligarchs. Whereas the latter were claiming to have a share in power by right of their descent, the 'new men' were all the king's own creations, and the power to choose them resided more or less exclusively in him. All that tradition prescribed was that the baron should be of noble birth and wealthy. If the king wanted to raise one of his poorer followers to the status of a baron, he was expected to provide him with suitable domains; but this was in fact the only expectation he had to meet.

The only foreigners upon whom Charles conferred considerable power were Philip Druget, a French knight from Naples, and his kinsmen. Philip had come to Hungary in Charles's company, had played an outstanding role in the suppression of the Aba and in 1317 was given the government of Spis and Újvár. In 1323 he was appointed palatine, and henceforth this office became, so to speak, hereditary in his family. When he died in 1327, he was succeeded by his brother John and then, in 1334, by his nephew William, the eldest son of John. From the outset, Philip had been supplied with lavish grants and when he died the king transferred all his lands to William, so that in 1342 the patrimony of this family comprised as many as nine seigneuries.

Another leading person in the government was Thomas Szécsényi, a nobleman of high birth but modest wealth from Nógrád county. Whereas his kinsmen had joined Matthew Csák, Thomas accompanied the king to the south. His foresight was to yield ample reward in due course. In 1313 he was still castellan of Lubovňa, a castle taken from the Aba, but he was soon given important honours, and in 1321 was appointed voivode of Transylvania. He distinguished himself in the immediate and decisive pacification of this province and by the suppression of a Saxon revolt there in 1324. He governed Transylvania for 21 years with almost unrestricted power, and also Szolnok, a county that had been attached to the office of the voivode since about 1267, and Arad, which for the remainder of the fourteenth century was to be governed by the voivode. He was entrusted with the county of Nógrád in 1335 and that of Trenčín in 1338. His unwavering fidelity was amply rewarded by lands confiscated from his own kinsmen and other rebels. At the time of Charles's death, Thomas Szécsényi was, with his four castles, one of the greatest landowners in the kingdom.

Mikes Ákos was the third pillar of the new regime. He was a descendant of an illustrious kindred, but inherited no more than a few villages and a small monastery near Pest. He first appears in Charles's

service in 1308 as castellan of Óbuda, and was governor of Šariš and Zemplín from 1315 to 1327. He also governed Slavonia from 1325 until his death in 1343. As ban, he played a decisive role in the suppression of the successive revolts of the Babonić and Héder, and acquired a patrimony consisting of three castles and many villages in Šariš, Zemplín, Zala, Slavonia and elsewhere.

For a time, Donch of Zvolen was also a powerful figure in the government, but his career shows how little confidence the king had in those who had come from the other side. Donch's father, Count Dominic of Zvolen, had once supported King Wenceslas, while his uncle, Demetrius, held Šariš against Charles and fell fighting him at Rozhanovce in 1312. Donch, who 'inherited' Zvolen from his father, changed sides in 1314 and from that point on faithfully supported the new king in all his wars. Yet he was never able to dispel suspicion, and Charles slowly but surely deprived him of his power. In 1330 he took Orava from Donch by means of an exchange, then in 1338 removed him from his office. Charles even dismembered the county of Zvolen in 1339, its districts of Turc and Liptov being governed henceforth by counts of their own. Finally, in 1341, he seized Donch's private seigneuries in the north and gave him Válcou in the distant Crasna county instead.

THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD

The true nature of Angevin government is still somewhat elusive. Modern historians have devoted much time to the study of the law courts and chancellery, but almost none to that of government itself. That in the late Middle Ages the king's 'court' (*curia*) and his 'palace' (*aula*) were still carefully distinguished has so far escaped attention. There is good reason to believe that this distinction was crucial, but little is known about its real nature. It may be supposed that by *aula* was meant the 'private court' of the king (more or less the equivalent of what was called the royal household elsewhere), while the *curia* denoted the king's 'public court', and was more or less identical with his council where he was assisted by the prelates and barons. These definitions are, for the moment, hardly more than guesswork, but they are helpful in describing Angevin government at work.

The court, at least in theory, was open to every nobleman. When Charles made peace with the Héder in 1339, he explicitly permitted them 'to present themselves before him, at a convenient time, either in his court or anywhere else where he should stay, to remain in his company and render him proper services' in the manner of other faithful men.⁸ In fact, only those persons who held offices or became paid members of the royal household were able to do so. The Héder

were kept out of the court, together with all those whose past was not immaculate. They might enjoy their wealth peacefully, but they could not hope for offices as long as the Angevins reigned.

It is certain that an early form of the royal household had already existed under the Árpádians. From the twelfth century onwards we know about noblemen who were in, or were entering, the king's personal service. In the thirteenth century we often hear of 'youths of the household' (*aulae iuvenes*), who accomplished certain commissions on the king's behalf. Nevertheless, the royal household in its fully developed form appears in the time of Charles I. While 'household youths' occur as early as 1311, 'pages' (*aulae parvuli*) are mentioned from 1321 and 'knights' (*aulae milites*) from 1324. Within this hierarchy, which seems itself to be a new invention, the page clearly occupied the lowest and the knight the highest place, promotions being, of course, possible. We know of about ten 'youths' who were promoted to knights, and in one case we can follow a full career from the status of page to knighthood. As regards the 'youths', a study of individual careers proves that the term had nothing to do with age. We know of several members of the household who were referred to as 'youths' for many decades. In fact, the term seems to have been the equivalent of 'squire' (*écuyer, Knappe*); that is, the 'youths' were men-at-arms who had not, or not yet, been dubbed. Earlier the term must have had a different meaning, because, as mentioned above, in the Árpádian *aula* there had been 'youths' but no knights.

The first of Charles's knights were chosen from among his foreign followers. There were Austrians, Croats, Czechs and Poles, but no Hungarians before 1336. Up to 1342, 60 persons bearing one of the household titles are known (including not only the king's establishment, but also those of the queen and the dukes, Louis and Stephen), but since the references are casual there must have been many more of them. As regards their function, few differences between the three ranks (knights, youths and pages) can be discovered. Apart from constituting the king's permanent escort, they frequently acted as the ruler's personal deputies. They delivered written or verbal orders to the chancellery and to the provinces. The knights were also sent on diplomatic missions. On the whole it could be said that members of the household acted in the ruler's place whenever this was desirable, and that matters of little significance were not infrequently given special emphasis through the presence of a royal envoy. Later on they were to play an important role in the organisation of military campaigns. Nothing is known about their allowances apart from the fact that the knights were often given small honours to live on. Their expenses must have been met by the treasury, and they probably received some form of regular payment, but this is no more than conjecture.

The structured order of the household shows that in many respects Charles's 'palace' resembled its Western counterparts. The knightly way of life, the beginnings of which is evident during the Árpádian era, now became firmly rooted in Hungary. The first tournament is thought to have been held in 1318, and they became regular events thereafter. From 1324, the king granted 'coats of arms' (that is, helmet crests) to his knights, then in 1326 he founded the Order of Saint George, one of the earliest chivalric orders in Europe. We know nothing about it except for its statutes, but it was probably intended to bring together the barons and knights of the court. It was during the fourteenth century that the armoured figure of Saint Ladislaus, albeit anachronistically idealised, became the model of knighthood, and during Louis's reign his effigy was put upon the reverse of the king's coins. On the whole the court of Charles and his son can be regarded as the most specific manifestation of chivalrous culture in Hungary, in as far as such a culture can be spoken of there at all. If the spiritual values of chivalry are counted among its defining criteria, then it must be conceded that nothing of the sort can be found in the Angevin court, neither lay poetry nor any sort of chivalrous ethos. The members of the court may have lived according to chivalrous ceremonies, and they certainly had a markedly aristocratic view of the world; but they remained essentially Hungarian noblemen, belonging to an archaic world that was inextricably intertwined with pagan and patriarchal traditions.

THE ROYAL RESIDENCE

Up to the end of the fifteenth century the kings of Hungary spent most of their time on the move, not staying in one particular place for more than a few months. Within the realm, the most frequent destinations were the royal 'hunting places' (*loca venationis*) in the mountains, such as Damásd in the Börzsöny (from 1339), Zvolen (from 1340), Diósgyőr in the Bükk (from 1343), and Gerencsér in the Vértes (from 1362). There is no evidence that the ruler travelled through his kingdom regularly, nor was it customary, at least from the time of the Angevins, to visit the royal domains merely to live on their supplies. The king went abroad for meetings with neighbouring princes or, more often, for campaigns, which were traditionally led by him in person.

Although the king was normally on the move there had long existed a location that deserved the name of permanent residence in the 'middle of the kingdom' (*medium regni*). Such was the role of Esztergom during the early centuries and of Buda in the thirteenth. Visegrád was to fulfil this role from 1323, when Charles established his residence

there, until around 1406, with a short interruption between 1346 and 1355 when Louis moved to Buda. It was at the foot of the castle hill at Visegrád, within the walls of the town, that a new palace was built. It was to here that the king regularly returned from his journeys; it witnessed Felician's assassination attempt in 1330; and in 1335 it was sufficiently splendid to serve as the scene of the memorable meeting between the rulers of Poland, Bohemia and Hungary. The royal treasury was also deposited here, while the regalia were guarded in the castle. The crown of Poland was brought here for a short time in 1370.

The queen also resided at Visegrád, together with her following. Although, as was later to become clear, Elizabeth was strongly inclined to exercise power herself, her husband did not allow her much opportunity to interfere in government. In accordance with custom he allowed her to have her own household, and allotted to her important parts of the royal demesne, including the counties and domains of Bereg, Csepel, Segesd and Virovitica, 'for her support' (*pro sustentatione*). The lords who directed the queen's household, like her *magister taxarnicorum* and her *iudex curiae*, belonged to the highest office-holders of the kingdom, but they were mostly chosen by Charles rather than by Elizabeth.

About 1330 registers began to be used for the recording of documents that were being issued by the chancellery. The inspiration probably came from Naples. About the same time the countersign of the keeper of the great seal (and later that of the keeper of the secret seal too) appears on documents issued by the chancellery and presented to the ruler for sealing. Meanwhile, as one by one the central organs of government and the judicial courts moved to Visegrád, the town began to play the role of a primitive capital. It was only natural that the prelates and barons would want to have a house or piece of land in the vicinity of Visegrád, in order to have a permanent residence near the king.

THE ROYAL DOMAIN

The authority of the Angevins was based upon an immense royal domain. At the time of his death, Louis still had at his disposal 23 per cent of the kingdom's land, not counting the free and mining towns, the lands of the Saxons, the Cumans, the Jász and the Székely. Including these, the king's direct lordship extended over as much as one third of the kingdom.

It was during the Angevin period that a new concept of royal property was developed. According to this, the king was to be considered the lord of all lands that were not owned by the nobility or the Church.

The former distinction, fundamental and quite clear, between the royal demesne and 'castle lands' disappeared. Every property that the king could dispose of at will was regarded as 'royal estate' (*possessio regalis*), regardless of its previous status. Its inhabitants came to be termed the 'king's tenants' (*iobagiones regales*) or the 'king's people' (*populi regales*), whatever their previous status had been, whether 'castle folk', *udvornici*, *tavernici*, tenants or serfs of the king.

Since the reign of Andrew II, there had been several attempts to track down those lands belonging to the king that had been unwarrantably alienated. After the consolidation of his rule Charles also sent out commissions in order to identify such property. From this the new idea of the 'king's right' (*jus regium*) was born under Louis I. This right was declared to be inherent in all lands for which the validity of another's rights could not be proved. It concerned above all those estates that had once been in royal hands and for which their granting away could not be documented. In such lands, so ran the argument, the king had 'latent' rights, and those who usurped them were termed 'concealers of royal rights' (*celatores iurium regalium*) and were to be punished with the full rigour of the law. It was also laid down as a principle that such lands could be reclaimed by the Crown regardless of the time that had elapsed since their alienation.

The principle of 'royal right' furnished legal grounds for the extension of the royal domain and proved to be a dangerous weapon in the hands of the king's skilled lawyers. From about 1370, when it was first applied, nobody could feel safe, not even families who had peacefully owned their land for several generations. The descendants of 'castle warriors' were especially threatened, for it was often easy to demonstrate that they were not 'real nobles' (*veri nobiles*), and that the land they thought to be their own in fact belonged to the king. The legal insecurity caused by the search for 'latent royal rights' only began to settle in about 1410, when charters transferring the royal rights 'which may possibly be hidden' in property became available.

The normal unit of the royal domain was a seignury consisting of a castle and its appurtenances. The number of fortresses erected before 1320 can be put at between 360 and 400. Most of them had been held by the oligarchs or by noble kindreds allied to them, but many castles were destroyed during the civil war, and no more than 260 to 270 had a legalised status at the end of Charles's reign. It is likely that about 40 new castles were built between 1342 and 1382.

During the war and the years of the consolidation that followed many large estates and most castles changed hands. Nearly 50 castles were taken from Matthew Csák and his adherents between 1313 and 1321; about 40 were confiscated or acquired by way of exchange from the Héder before 1340; ten were seized from the Aba, ten from the

Babonić, ten from the Kán and nine from the Borsa, not to mention other rebels. Although, interestingly enough, no executions are mentioned during or after the war, loss of property was the usual punishment for everyone who had in some way been involved in the troubles on the wrong side. Retaliation was mainly directed against the oligarchs and their partisans, who as a matter of course lost everything they had. (The astonishing degree of patience that the king showed towards the Héder is hard to explain.) Even lands that had been seized by the oligarchs passed to the king rather than to their original owners. Charles seems to have attributed to their loss to carelessness and was reluctant to hand back such properties, even to his own partisans.

Charles was willing to divide a few of these acquisitions among his followers as perpetual grants, but he kept the lion's share for the Crown. At the time of his death there were at least 160 castles in royal hands, and Louis still had possession of 150 of them in 1382, not counting his castles in Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia. In every part of the kingdom there stood at least one royal castle to make the might of the Angevin monarchy tangible for everyone. In Transylvania and Slavonia, in the counties along the western frontier and around Timișoara all the important castles were governed by royal officers. Royal presence was even more manifest in the former province of Matthew Csák, where practically all of the 30 or so castles were in royal hands.

Charles was determined to increase this already immense network by every possible means. As early as 1323 he ordered the revision of all of his previous grants and rescinded those that he judged to have been inappropriate. An effective means of increasing royal lands were the exchanges that he imposed upon his own subjects. His method was quite simple: he took much and gave less in return. In 1326 he gave two castles to the Csák in place of four, then in 1327 John Babonić received one instead of two (or three), and in 1341 Donch of Zvolen was given one in exchange for at least two. It was also by means of exchanges that Charles liquidated the remnants of the territory of the Héder in 1339–40. They were forced to hand over their numerous castles along the western frontier and in return were given three in the heart of the kingdom where they could do less harm.

The appurtenances of a castle comprised a specified number of villages or hamlets together with all their revenues, including payments and services due from the tenants, incomes from fairs, markets, tolls, forests, fishing places or other seigneurial rights. An average seigneurie might comprise 14 villages and extend to 44,000 acres, but there was naturally much disparity in size. For example, between 1387 and 1390 as many as 28 villages belonged to the castle of Neuhaus (Vas county) and 27 to that of Topolčany (Nitra county),

while only four were attached to Sirok castle (Heves county) and three to Somló (near Doba, Veszprém county).

THE HONOURS

Government of the kingdom was founded upon the royal castles, which were divided, as under the Árpádians, among the barons and counts. These men exerted authority of a general nature over a well defined territory, consisting of one or more counties, and were also in command of several castles, most of which were located within the province entrusted to them.

The barons and counts held their dignity in the form of a royal 'honour', which meant that they enjoyed all the royal revenues that went with their office. Among these revenues were the fines that were due to the lord of an honour in his capacity as judge, but it seems that most of his income came from the seigneuries of the royal castles held by him. As far as can be determined, none of the revenues of an honour ever reached the royal treasury. Rather, they served to maintain the royal dignitary: he paid his retinue from them and had to provide for the custody of his castles, but he was free to expend the rest as he pleased. A vivid example is provided by an account, covering two months in 1372, made by the receiver of Benedict Himfi, who at that time was count of Timiș. It is clear that Himfi enjoyed all the revenues that were due from Timișoara, a royal castle, and its numerous appurtenances, including peasant services, tolls and markets, as well as one part of the tax due from the royal towns of Timișoara and Șemlacu Mare. From all these sources he covered the daily expenses of his household, took a sum when he went to see the king, gave occasional allowances to his retainers, sent money to his wife, and held festivities on account of the name-day of his grandson. The accumulated evidence of many further documentary references demonstrates that Himfi's case was not exceptional, that all the lords who held a royal honour enjoyed its revenues in the same way.

Most of the counties and the greater part of the 150 to 160 royal castles were held by the greatest lords. The voivode of Transylvania and the bans of Slavonia and Mačva had their own provinces to govern, while the other counties and castles were divided among the palatine, the judge royal and other dignitaries according to the needs of the moment. They all governed their honours in more or less the same way. Most of their time was probably spent with the king. They visited their respective provinces only when their presence was needed for some reason. Each of them had a staff of retainers at his disposal, mostly noblemen of modest origin who would serve their particular

lords through many decades. When a baron was appointed to an honour he sent his men to govern it in his name. He usually paid them by allowing them a share of its income. When he was replaced by another baron, he withdrew his personnel to give way to those of his successor, but he was normally given another honour and so was able to transfer his men there. In the eyes of foreigners the honours of the Angevin era could, therefore, appear to be temporary fiefs. This is what the Florentine, Matteo Villani, appears to have thought around 1350, when he stated that 'the baronies in Hungary are neither hereditary nor lifelong, but are given and taken back according to the ruler's will.'⁹

For such a 'barony', the honour of the voivode of Transylvania may serve as a model. It included judicial authority over the seven counties of the province and, under the Angevins, there was also the seignorial rights over the eight castles and other domains in Transylvania that were at that time in royal hands. The voivode was represented by a count in each county and by a castellan at the head of each of his castles. Justice at the highest level was administered by the *vicevoivoda*, the voivode's general deputy. All his officers were chosen from among his retainers. When Thomas Szécsényi was voivode from 1321 to 1342, he brought ten of his men from Nógrád and Gemer counties where his family estates lay, seven were recruited from other counties in Hungary, and only five are known to have been nobles living in Transylvania. The authority of the ban in Slavonia was very similar. Like the voivode, he was usually sent from Hungary and brought most of his men from there. Supreme judicial authority was exercised by his deputy, called the *vicebanus*, while he governed his counties and his fourteen or fifteen castles through his counts and castellans.

In 1320 Charles I's new acquisitions south of the River Sava were conferred upon a baron who henceforth bore the title of 'ban of Mačva' (*banus Machoviensis*). He held not only Mačva proper, but also some neighbouring counties, such as Vukovar and Bodrog (from 1320), Srem (from 1323), Baranya (from 1328), Bač (from 1333) and Tolna (from about 1376). Within his province he exercised a military and judicial power similar to that enjoyed by the voivode, and he governed the counties entrusted to him through his deputies. His office was to survive the loss of Mačva proper in 1411 and only ceased to exist in 1479.

Besides being the supreme justice of the kingdom, the palatine had an honour in which he exercised powers similar to those of the voivode and the ban. He enjoyed its revenues, appointed his retainers as castellans and counts, and led the nobles of his province to the royal army in wartime. In contrast to Transylvania or Slavonia, however, the province entrusted to the palatine was not a fixed one. He was given counties

that were available at a particular moment, and on more than one occasion these did not form a coherent block. From 1323 to 1342, when the dignity was borne by the Druget, the honour of the palatine was of very considerable extent. At the time of Palatine William's death, he had under his command no fewer than nine counties, covering the whole of north-eastern Hungary from Heves to Ung, with fourteen or fifteen royal castles. Nicholas Kont, who was palatine from 1356 to 1367, governed the counties of Bihar, Spis, Šariš, Trenčín, Nitra, Sopron and Vas simultaneously. Although they lay dispersed in four blocks, in all parts of the kingdom, they comprised more than fifteen royal castles and so as a whole formed a rich honour of enormous extent.

It was something of a principle that all the barons should be given honours appropriate to their dignity. The judge royal held the region of Žilina, with six castles, for many decades. The counties of Trenčín, Bač and Bihar formed the honour of the *magister tavarnicorum*, Demetrius Neksei, until his death in 1338. The remaining counties and castles were similarly distributed among the less influential members of the king's retinue in the form of royal honours. Most of them had no more than a single castle to command, but there were counts and even castellans who were richly endowed with royal domains. To the honour of Pressburg, five castles were continually attached, while the count of Varaždin (also called the count of Zagorje) commanded over ten. Counties and castellanies were often united in one hand. The castellan of Drégely held as a rule the office of count in Hont, that of Levice was count of Bars, while the castellans of Adrian and Mukačeve were counts of Szabolcs and Bereg respectively. It was by allotting royal castles or comital dignities as honours that the king rewarded the services of his favourite knights: even the keeper of the secret seal was given a castellany of his own.

CHAMBERS AND FINANCES

In Hungary the royal revenues were covered by the general term of the 'chamber', which originally meant the king's treasure that was guarded at Esztergom. For a long time it was the only place where coins were struck and where all the royal revenues were collected. During the course of the thirteenth century the administration of the revenues was decentralised. Some of the provinces were given a chamber of their own, which collected local revenues and struck coins from them. Henceforth, the word 'chamber' referred to a number of financial institutions all over the kingdom, and the totality of them was identical to the royal treasury. The chamber of the diocese of Cenad, later transferred to