

Péter BÁLING:

The Orseolos A Genealogical Study

This study examines the lineage of the Orseolo dynasty: the origins of the family and the genealogical data on its members. In the Hungarian historiography the ancestry of the Orseolos was a subject of lengthy debates, the present paper therefore aims to clarify all those questions that arose during these disputes in the light of the available sources. Since Peter – a member of the dynasty – arose on the throne of the Hungarian Kingdom in the 11th century, the study not only discusses in detail the genealogy of the king, but his rule and political role as well.

Keywords: Orseolo dynasty, Hungary, Peter I of Hungary, Venice, genealogy



All those researchers who want to draw Orseolo Peter's authentic portrait are in a difficult situation as the sources – and in many cases the historiography as well – depict the king as a bad person and an incompetent ruler. This short study tries to gather all information, which is available in the sources, and aims to present the true figure of the king through a genealogical study.

All the sources refer to him as Petrus, the Latin name variant of Peter. This name was frequent in the Orseolo family where the king was descended from. According to the chronicle of John deacon – the chaplain of doge Pietro II (991–1009) – Peter I (976–978) was the first from the family to win the highest secular office in Venice.¹ The firstborn son of the doge Peter I was baptized by this name as well as was the Hungarian king's father, the grandson of Peter I. Some sources however refer to him as Otto (1008–1026), but he earned that

¹ *“Patrato vero hoc nequissimo scelere, in sancti Petri ecclesiam convenerunt, ibique communi voto quendam virum, Petrum videlicet Ursoylum cognomine, preclarum generositate et moribus in ducatus honorem sublimare decreverunt.”* – Iohannis diaconi chronicon, p. 26.

name in his childhood, years after his birth.² As it is widely known, the name itself can be derived from the Gospel of Matthew and comes from the term *petra* that means *stone, rock*.³

The lineage of King Peter (1038–1041; 1044–1046) has been the subject of lengthy debates in the older genealogical literature as several hypothesis have been made to correct all the misinformation which can be found in the 14th century chronicle composition.⁴ The source states that Peter was the brother of Queen Gisella, the wife of St. Stephen (1000/1–1038). On his genealogy the following can be read: “*For William, the father of Peter, was the brother of Sigismund, king of the Burgundians; but after the murder of St. Sigismund he had come to the emperor, who had appointed him to rule over the Venetians and had given him his sister Gertrud to wife, by whom he begot Queen Gisella. After Gertrud’s death William took to wife the sister of King St. Stephen, by whom he begot King Peter.*”⁵

The confusing genealogical liaisons of the chronicle are not fully unrealistic as the ancestors on Peter’s mother’s side are correct. Although we know almost nothing about Prince Géza’s daughter – who is referred to as St. Stephen’s sister in the text – it is not surprising that the anonymous compiler knew the lineage of Peter’s mother, since he could use all the information from the available sources of that time. Since it is unknown when the above quoted chronicle chapter was composed, it is difficult to determine the exact source on which the writer could rely. If we accept the statement that the Hungarian historians have unfolded, namely that the beginning of the Hungarian historiography can be associated with the reign of King Coloman the Learned (1095–1116),⁶ then the Annals of the Nieder-

² “*Puero quidem Verona pervento officiose a rege susceptus est, quem chrismatis unctione propriis amplexibus coarctatum fecit munire, et amisso paterno nomine, Otto, id est suus aequivocus, nuncupatus est.*” – Iohannis diaconi chronicon, p. 30.

³ “*Et ego dico tibi, quia tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam, et portae inferi non praevallebunt adversus eam.*” – Matt. 16:18.

⁴ WERTNER 1892. p. 63–64.

⁵ “*Villemus autem pater Petri regis fuit frater Sigismundi regis Burgundiorum, sed post interemptionem Sancti Sigismundi venerat ad imperatorem, quem imperator collocavit Venetiis et dederat ei sororem suam nomine Gertrud in uxorem, de qua genuit Keyslam reginam. Mortua autem Gertud Uillelmus duxit in uxorem sororem sancti regis Stephani, de qua genuit Petrum regem.*” – Chronica de gestis Hungarorum, c. 70, p. 131; Chronici Hungarici compositio saeculi XIV, c. 70, p. 323.

⁶ GERICS 1961. passim; KRISTÓ 1994. p. 8–22; SZOVÁK – VESZPRÉMY 1999. p. 750–761; SZOVÁK 2004. p. 239–254; THOROCZKAY 2010. p. 23–31.

altaich Abbey,⁷ the works of Wipo⁸ and Hermannus Contractus⁹ can be considered as options. Regarding the *Annales Altahenses* the Hungarian historiography already stated that it was used during the composition of the so-called *Earliest-Gesta*.¹⁰ All the aforementioned works upheld that King Peter was a nephew of St. Stephen. Hermannus, a Benedictine monk from the Abbey of Reichenau even knew that Peter was originated from Venice. Therefore, the unknown compiler of that part of the Hungarian chronicle presumably had some knowledge on Peter's genealogy, then he admixed this information with the Burgundian ancestors of Gisella¹¹ and his own learnings of King Sigismund (516–524). The mention of the Burgundian king is undoubtedly an anachronism, which was pointed out already by Mór Wertner.¹² However, the king's Italian ancestry was well known during the Middle Ages: the *Gesta* of Gallus Anonymous referred to him as Peter the Venetian.¹³

It is all clear now that Peter was a descendant of the Orseolo dynasty, which has given multiple doges to the Republic of Venice. The first members of the family – whose existence can be proved by written sources – were Dominicus (Domenico) and Petrus Urseolo. Their names appear on a Venetian diploma, which was issued in 971 and instructs the cessation of commercial practices with the Saracens.¹⁴ According to *Annales Venetici*

⁷ “*Hoc anno Petrus rex Ungrorum regno est privatus, coniurantibus adversum se suis primatibus. Unde hoc ortum sit, audiat qui velit. Stephanus bonae memoriae rex, avunculus ipsius, cum filius eius patre superstite esset mortuus, quoniam alium non habuit filium, hunc fecit adoptivum ipsumque regni heredem locavit; filium fratris sui digniorem in regno, quia hoc non consensit, cecavit et parvulos eiusdem exilio relegavit.*” – *Annales Altahenses maiores*, p. 24.

⁸ “*Eodem anno Stephanus rex Ungarorum obiit, relinquens regnum Petro, filio sororis suae.*” – *Gesta Chuonradi imperatoris*, c. 38, p. 58.

⁹ “*Ipso anno Stephanus Ungariorum rex, cum ante plurimos annos se cum tota gente sua ad Christi fidem convertisset ecclesiasque et episcopatus construxisset, et in regnum suum probis multissimum operam impendisset, Petrum, sororis sua filium, de Venetia natum, pro se regem constituens, obiit.*” – Herimannus Augiensis *Chronicon*, p. 123.

¹⁰ The *Earliest-Gesta* or *Primary Gesta* is a collective noun for all those historical texts that were written in the Hungarian court between the 11th and 13th centuries. Although these “oldest chronicles” were lost, studies have proven that the compiler of the 14th century chronicle composition could have used them to describe the events of the past as it can be read in the first sentence of the Hungarian Chronicle: “*Anno Domini M-o OCC-o quinquagesimo octavo feria tertia infra octavas Ascensionis eiusdem Domini incepta est ista cronica de gestis Hungarorum antiquis et novissimis, ortu et progressu, victoria eorundem et audacia, collecta ex diversis cronicis veteribus, earundem veritates ascribendo et falsitatem omnino refutando.*” – *Chronica de gestis Hungarorum*, c. 1, p. 2; *Chronici Hungarici compositio saeculi XIV*, c. 1, p. 239; Cf. BAK – GRZESIK 2018. p. 7–10.

¹¹ WEINFURTER 2002. p. 14–35

¹² Mór Wertner discussed in detail all those views from the older historiography that sought to discover Peter's Burgundian ancestry as it is described in the Hungarian chronicle composition. See WERTNER 1892. p. 64–72.

¹³ “[...] *Petrus Ueneticus Vngarie regnum recepit, qui ecclesiam sancti Petri de Bazoario inchoavit, quam nullus rex ad modum inchoationis usque hodie consumavit.*” – Galli Anonymi *chronicae et gesta*, lib. 1, c. 18, p. 41–42.

¹⁴ FRA XII. nr. 14, p. 28. Petrus' name also appears in the diplomas of 960 and 971, this time however he bore the title of *dux*. FRA XII. nr. 13, p. 23, resp. nr. 15, p. 31.

Breves – which is unfortunately a late, 13th century source – Domenico and Peter were brothers.¹⁵ From the chronicle of John deacon it is known that Peter earned his office after doge Pietro Candiano's reign was swept away by an uprising.¹⁶ The source also tells that Peter was married, his wife was called Felicia.¹⁷ Peter I renovated all the buildings that were damaged in the previous uprising and assessed tax on the Venetians to compensate the dowry of Waldrada, the widow of the late doge Pietro Candiano (959–976).¹⁸ Soon after, under the influence of a mysterious figure named Guarinus – the chronicle identifies him as the abbot of Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa – he retired from secular life and in 978 – under the cover of the night – moved to the aforementioned monastery. From his marriage three children are known. The only son inherited his father's name, unfortunately we do not have any information about the two daughters of Peter I. John deacon's chronicle mentions only their husbands: Iohannis Maureceni (Giovanni Morosino) and Iohannis Gradonico (Giovanni Gradenigo).¹⁹ According to another late

¹⁵ “[...] *Petrus Ursiulus* [...] *et Dominicus Ursiulus frater eius* [...]” – *Annales Venetici breves*, p. 70.

¹⁶ “*Octavo decimo quidem sui honoris anno, una cum filio parvulo quem de predicta Hwalderada habuit, tali ordine interfectus est. Dum illo longo tempore Venetici ob austeritatem sui exosum haberent facultatemque per dendi sedulę machinarent, quadam die facta conspiratione in illum insurgere adorsi sunt. Palatium tamen, quia bellicosus, licet paucis, militibus illum stipatum noverant, nulla ratione ausi sunt penetrare. Tandem nequam consilium invenientes, propinquas domos, quae econtra palatium citra rivolum consistebant, igne mixto picino fomento accendere studuerunt, quatinus flamarum flexibilia culmina vicinum palatium attingere et concremare possent. Unde factum est, quod non modo palatium, verum etiam sancti Marci sanctique Theodori, nec non sanctae Mariae de Iubianico ecclesiae et plus quam trecente mansiones eo die urerentur. Is autem dux cum ignis calorem fumique suffocationem diu inter palatium ferre nequiret, per sancti Marci atrii ianuas evadere cum paucis conatus est; ubi nonnullos Veneticorum maiores una cum generis afinitate suum expectantes periculum repperit; quos ut cernens taliter allocutus est: ‘Et vos, fratres, ad exciij mei cumulum venire voluistis? Si aliquid in verbis vel in rebus publicis deliqui, meae insperate a vitae spacium rogo, et omnia ad vestrum velle satisfacere promitto.’ Tunc ipsi sceleratissimum et morte dignum eum affirmantes, diris vocibus clamaverunt, quod nulla evadendi in illo possibilitas foret Et instanter mucronum ictibus undique illum crudeliter vulnerantes, diva anima corporeo relicto ergastulo, superum petiit solita. Filium siquidem, quem nutrix ab incendii poena liberavit, a quodam nequissimo cuspide transverberatus est, pariterque milites qui illi favere nitebantur, occisi sunt Gelida namque corpora quorum, idem genitoris et sobolis, ob ignominiam primitus exigua navi ad macelli forum, deinde quodam sanctissimo viro Iohanne Gradonico nomine interpellante, ad sancti Yllari monasterium detulerunt Patrato vero hoc nequissimo scelere, in sancti Petri ecclesiam convenerunt, ibique communi voto quendam virum, Petrum videlicet Ursoylum cognomine, preclarum gene rositate et moribus in ducatus honorem sublimare decreverunt.” – Iohannis diaconi chronicon, p. 25–26.*

¹⁷ “*Erat siquidem sibi coniux, Felicia nomine et merito, unius nati tantu modo mater, qui patris equivocus nomine non dissimilis extitit opere.*” – Iohannis diaconi chronicon, p. 26.

¹⁸ NORWICH 2012. p. 45.

¹⁹ “*Eodem quoque tempore domnus Hwarinus venerabilis abbas sancti Michahelis monasterii, quod in Equitane partibus in loco qui vocatur Cussanus scitum manere decernitur, Romam ad apostolorum limina pro peravit. In redeundo quidem Dei fultus timore beatique Marci, Veneciam intravit, ibi que aliquantis diebus orationis studio et domni Petri ducis precibus constrictus commoratus est. Quem dum domnus dux digna veneratione coleret et sedulae divina colloquia simul agerent, expertus est abbas duce[m] prorsus terrena parvipendere habitamque dignitatem non ambitionis studio sed subditorum solatio obtinere; iniunxit tamen sibi dicens: ‘Si vis perfectus esse, relinque mundum huiusque dignitatis apicem, et in monasterio Deo servire festina.’ Cui dux:*

medieval source, namely the Chronicle of doge Andrea Dandolo (1343–1354), Peter I died within the walls of the monastery after 19 years of his departure from Venice.²⁰ However, in the light of the secondary literature the years around 987 can be considered more precisely.²¹ In 1731 the Roman Catholic Church canonized him,²² so according to the present situation the Hungarian king has saints in his ancestry from both maternal and paternal side.

Peter II, the son of Peter I took over the leadership in Venice in 991. He was 30 years old that time, if the chronicle of John deacon is right.²³ From this information Mór Wertner concluded that he was born around 961.²⁴ The reign and life of Peter II is not as scarce of sources as his father's. From the time of Otto III (983–1002) three diplomas are known, in which the emperor granted the establishment of commercial repositories along the banks of the rivers Piave and Sile and Otto III promised even tax exemption for Venice in the Holy Empire.²⁵ Peter II maintained good relations with Byzantium. In 997 when the Bulgarian tsar Samuel (997–1014) moved forward his army as far as the city of Zara (Zadar), Emperor Basil II (976–1025) turned to Venice and one year later he entrusted the doge to defend the Byzantine interests in Dalmatia. At this time Peter II received the illustrious titles *dux Dalmatianorum* and

'Egregie, inquit, pater et meae animae lucrator, suma aviditate tuis monitis obtemperare gestio. Sed aliquanti temporis spacium rogo, interim meam facultatem disponere queam. Postea vero in monasterio tuique regiminis vinculo summissus, Deo militare cupio.' His quidem determinatis, certam diem decreverunt, qua abbas Veneciam ad eundem suscipiendum reciperet. Tunc accepta licentia, ad suum monasterium repedavit. Antedictus vero dux ceptam patriae salutem sollerti studio procurare non desiit, licet aliquanti, quorum consilio, ut diximus, patriarcha imperatorem adiit, sue ditioni perversos repugnantes efficerentur, adeo ut suam vitam crudeli funere per dere molirentur. Tamen tante bonitatis et divinae virtutis gratia vigeat, ut quicquid ipsi de se clanculo iniqua machinatione determinarent, nemine indagante cognosceret, nullique resistenti aliquod nephas recompensare voluit, sed equo animo Dei timore omnia tollerando sustinebat. Inter hec statuta die prelibatus abbas ad Venetiam rever sus est, ea occasione quo Hierosolimam ire vellet. Quem Petrus dux libenter suscepit, et prima nocte diei Kalendarum Septembriarum ipse una cum Iohanne Gradonico nec non Iohanne Maureceni, suo videlicet genero, nesciente uxore et filio omnibusque fide libus, occulte de Venetia exierunt.' – Iohannis diaconi chronicon, p. 26.

²⁰ *"Interea supradictus Petrus dux, XVIII^o sui monachus anno, apud monesterium sancti Michaelis de Cusano, in confessione catholice fidei, die XI^o ianuarii feliciter ad celestem gloriam convolavit, cuius laudabilis vita, et obitus, ac miracola suis meritis demonstrata, ecciam' clarius et serius conprobantur per antiquatam legendam, que apud fratres dicti monesterii ad eorum exemplum continuo recensetur, et relationem multorum conprovincialium, et exterorum, qui devotionis causa visitare non desinunt sepulcrum, in quo eius venerabile corpus, digno honore, requiescit et colitur."* – Chronicon Venetum, p. 184.

²¹ DE BORDAS 1897. p. 234. According to de Bordas' work, Peter I was born in 928. See DE BORDAS 1897. p. 14.

²² Prior to the canonization, in 1027 Peter I was beatified. See DE BORDAS 1897. p. 283.

²³ *"Anno vero dominicae incarnationis noningentesimo nonagesimo primo Petrum, antedicti domni Petri Ursiuli ducis sobolem, trigesimo suae aetatis anno Veneticorum populi ad paternam dignitatem promoverunt."* – Iohannis diaconi chronicon, p. 29.

²⁴ WERTNER 1892. p. 76.

²⁵ Ottonis II. et III. diplomata. nr. 100, p. 511; nr. 165, p. 577; nr. 192, p. 600.

proconsul, which he used in his official title.²⁶ At the same time, the Holy Roman Emperor Henry II (1002–1024) has confirmed all privileges given by his predecessors to Peter and his son John in November 1002.²⁷

However, to uncover Peter's lineage, the most important source remains the widely quoted chronicle of John deacon, which is also considered to be the authentic on late 10th and 11th century Venetian history. According to the narration, the marriage of the doge and his wife Mary was quite fertile²⁸ as many children were born from it. Peter II died in 1009, his body was buried in the Church of San Zaccaria in Venice.

The oldest child from the marriage of Peter II and Mary is considered to be John (Giovanni), who appears in the aforementioned diploma of Henry II. It is known from John deacon's chronicle that from 1004 on his father shared with him the power over the city. However the charter of Henry refers to him as *Iohannis similiter ducis*, and since it was issued in 1002, the date in the narrative source may be wrong.²⁹ In this case John's date of birth is also based on miscalculation in the famous work of Mór Wertner, because the chronicle also tells that he was 18 years old when the joint rule of father and son began in Venice. So, it is more likely that John was born in 983 and not in 985 as some works claim. Probably he married Mary, the sister of Romanos *eparchos*, who later became Emperor Romanos III (1028–1034) in Byzantium. The uncertainties about the identity of Mary can be also traced back to John deacon's narrative source, since he considered her as an

²⁶ FINE 2000, p. 275.

²⁷ Heinrici II. et Arduini diplomata, nr. 24, p. 26–27.

²⁸ "Preterea Petrus dux omnibus suis liberis paternum munus impertiri voluit, ita ut testamentario iure quisque suas acciperet porciones. Nomina quorum ut rite recordor, exprimere libet. Illorum primus herile sortitus est nomen, qui forma et viribus bene respondebat satis natalibus. Secundus nominatur Ursus: iste sic officium gerens clericatus, quo haud immerito queat dici clericorum decus. Tercius est ordine Otho, predictus puerulus, patris qui constat dignitate equivocus. Quartus nominatur Vitalis: hic ingenii strenuitate ecclesiasticam adeptus est sortem. Quintus estat vocabulo Heinricus, species cuius puerilis ceu iubar micat solis. Quatuor quoque filiae eidem opimo manebat patri, quarum prima Hicelam nomine Stefano Sclavorum regis filio, de quo antea predixi, in coniugio honorifice sociavit; reliquas vero tres in monasterio Deo omnipotenti mancipavit. His itaque bene compositis, Mariae generosae suae uxoris thorum sequestratum habere deinceps decrevit, ea videlicet ratione, quo nullum divorcium foret in familiaritatis conversatione." – Iohannis diaconi chronicon, p. 37. There is also a hypothesis according which Mary was the niece of the former doge Pietro Candiano. However, this should be handled delicately as the author does not know all the children of the couple and calls the mother of the Hungarian King as Grimelda. Since there is no authentic source to prove that and the work mentions Prince Géza as Geizo – the same name variant that is used in Dandolo's chronicle – this kind of genealogy is questionable. Cf. STALEY 1910, p. 49–50, 53.

²⁹ "Anno quidem incarnationis Redemptoris nostri millesimo quarto, ducatus vero domni Petri Veneticorum ac Dalmaticorum ducis decimo, Iohannes, eiusdem ducis egregia proles, genitoris effectus est consors dignitate. Quem dum tercia etas octavo decimo anno ephebum foveret, nimirum paterno ingenio et probitate vigeabat; qui pii parentis adeo obtemperare studeat moribus, ut sub gemino regimine omnis patria uno maneret foedere." – Iohannis diaconi chronicon, p. 35. cf. Heinrici II. et Arduini diplomata, nr. 24, p. 26–27.

imperial niece³⁰ – and so did Wertner – but the recent historiography gives credit to John Skylitzes' work, which strengthens the relationship between Mary and Romanos.³¹ Szabolcs Vajay used this marriage as an argument to justify his hypothesis on the Byzantine matrimony of St. Emeric of Hungary. He presumed that the close ties between the Orseolos and the imperial family could help St. Stephen to choose an appropriate wife to his son.³² Wertner dated the marriage of John and Mary to 1004,³³ Vajay mentioned the year 989,³⁴ however, it is more likely that the wedding took place around 1005 or 1006.³⁵ John deacon's chronicle also tells that a boy named Basil was born from this union.³⁶ According to the sources the family had a sad end, since all of them died around 1007 in Venice due to an epidemic.³⁷

According to John deacon the second son of Peter II was Orso who was born around 988³⁸ and entered church career.³⁹ This information can be supplemented with the work of Andrea Dandolo, which states that he was consecrated to bishop of Torcello in 1008,⁴⁰ and ten years later he could occupy the patriarchal office in Grado.⁴¹ His former bishopric was given to

³⁰ *"Hoc quoque tempore Petrus famosus dux, sedula petitione a Vassylio et Constantino imperatoribus coactus, Iohannem ducem, suam dilectam prolem, ad regiam urbem causa coniugii delegavit. Quem imperatores dum benigne suscipere, cuiusdam nobilissimi patricii filiam Argiropoli nomine, imperiali editam stirpe, illi desponsare decreverunt. Et ut tantae femine, imperatorum videlicet neptis, copulationis dies acceleraret, prefatus dux una cum puella imperiali decreto in quadam capella convenire permitti sunt ibique ab eiusdem urbis pastore sacre benedictionis munus, ab imperatoribus aureas diademas suis capitibus, perceperunt."* – Iohannis diaconi chronicon, p. 36.

³¹ *"At that time the emperor gave the daughter of Argyros in lawful marriage to the Doge of Venice to conciliate the Venetians."* – John Skylitzes, p. 325.

³² VAJAY 1967. p. 91, note nr. 106. and p. 92.

³³ WERTNER 1892. p. 78.

³⁴ VAJAY 1967. p. 92.

³⁵ John Skylitzes. p. 325, note nr. 135.

³⁶ *"Domna vero Maria, Greca ductrix, non post plures dies puerum Constantinopolim genitum Venetiae protulit natum, quem Petrus eximius dux de sacro baptismatis lavacro suscipiens, Vassilium ob avunculi sui imperatoris nomen imposuit."* – Iohannis diaconi chronicon, p. 36.

³⁷ *"Eodem itaque tempore stella cometis, cuius indicium humanum semper pronunciat flagicium, in meridiano climate apparens, quam maxima per omnes Italiae seu Veneciae fines pestilentia subsequuta est. In qua utriusque sexus humanae conditionis nonnulli inopinata morte ceciderunt. Inter quos domna Maria, Greca ductrix, nec non Iohannes, egregius vir suus, sedecim dierum numero in sancti Zacharie monasterio pro dolor! uno clauduntur mausoleo."* – Iohannis diaconi chronicon, p. 36; Wertner placed the event on the year 1006, however the critical editions of John deacon's and Skylitzes' works mention the year 1007. WERTNER 1892. p. 78. Cf. John Skylitzes, p. 325, note nr. 135.

³⁸ [GULLINO 2013a](#). (online version, access: May 13, 2019)

³⁹ *"Secundus nominatur Ursus: iste sic officium gerens clericatus, quo haud immerito queat dici clericorum decus."* – Iohannis diaconi chronicon, p. 37.

⁴⁰ *"XVII^o ducis anno, Ursus eius filius, defuncto Valerio episcopo torcelano, laudante clero et populo, in eadem ecclesia subrogatus est. Hic, cum favore paterno, ecclesiam suam kathedralem, iam vetustate coruentem, cum episcopo renovare fecit; filia quoque ducis, Felicia nomine, sancti Iohannis evangeliste de Torcelo similiter abbatis ordinata est."* – Chronicon Venetum, p. 203.

⁴¹ *"Ursus patriarcha, nacione venetus, ex patre Petro Ursoyolo duce, sedit annis XVII, mense I[anuari]o, diebus XV. Hic, existens episcopus torcelanus, ex colaudacione cleri et populi, nunc*

his younger brother Vitale, the fourth son of Peter II. Doge Dandolo's chronicle also reports that following the internal conflicts in Venice, Orso and his other brother Otto – the father of King Peter of Hungary – sought refuge in Istria. Meanwhile Poppo, the patriarch of Aquileia attacked Grado to bring it under his jurisdiction.⁴² The intensification of the jurisdictional dispute between the two patriarchates were further strengthened by the contradictory decisions of Pope John XIX (1024–1032).⁴³ Finally, Otto found refuge in Constantinople. As Dandolo claims in 1031 the Venetians sent a delegation to the emperor to call back the exiled Otto, and during that time Orso took power in his brother's name in Venice, but as soon as he became aware of Otto's death he resigned and devoted his life to God.⁴⁴ The death of Orso can be dated around 1049.⁴⁵

King Peter's father was Otto, whom the abovementioned chronicle of John says that he was the third son of *Petrus dux*, namely doge Peter II.⁴⁶ The source also states that this was not his original name, since he was previously called Peter, but around 966, after his confirmation – on which Otto III took part as the young man's patron – to honour the emperor, Peter received the name Otto.⁴⁷ Wertner assumed that he was born around 991, but there is no accurate information to confirm this date, the famous Hungarian genealogist based his statement on the data that can be found in Andrea Dandolo's late, 14th-century chronicle. According to the latter chronicle King Peter's father wed Prince Géza's daughter in 1009 at the age of 18.⁴⁸ Dandolo also states

patriarcha factus est, Vitalia quoque, frater eius, vacantis ecclesie ordinatus episcopus. Hic, pro statu et iuribus ecclesie sue conservandis, instantissime laboravit. – Chronicon Venetum, p. 204.

⁴² *“Eodem anno, cum inter Venetos gravis orta discordia usque adheo perducta esset, ut dux, et frater eius patriarcha, relictis propriis sedibus, apud Ystriam exulare coacti forent, Popo patriarcha aquileiensis Gradum adiit, petens recepti adiuctorem fratris sui patriarche, et amici sui ducis, cui cum nollent acquiescere, per XVIII^o suorum sacramenta firmavit, quod ad salvam faciendam illis civitatem intraret; ubi, postquam intratum est, ecclesias et monasteria diruit, sanctimonialia violavit, thesauros abstulit, et civitatem, licet destitutam, munitam suis reliquit.”* – Chronicon Venetum, p. 205–206.

⁴³ [GULLINO 2013b](#). (online version, access: May 13, 2019)

⁴⁴ *“Ursus Ursiolo patriarcha ducatum tenuit anno Domini millesimo XXXI^o. Nam, ex absentia Octonis ducis, hunc presulem eius fratrem, virtute et generositate perspicuum, vices eius fungere laudant, et pro Octone Vitalem torcelanum episcopum cum pluribus Constantinopolim mitunt: Dominicus igitur Flabianico, cum ceteris qui exilii Octonis culpabiles fuerant, formidantes, abierunt. Hic urbem gradensem et ecclesias reparat, et monetam parvam sub eius nomine, ut vidimus, cudi fecit. Legati, Octone invento mortuo, redeunt, et casum indicant; tunc hic, qui vices eius tenebat, finito anno uno, mensibus duobus, relicta ducali sede, ad suam recitit ecclesiam; qui, licet dux non fuerit, attamen, quia iuste rexit, antiqui Veneti in chatalogo ducum illum posuerunt.”* – Chronicon Venetum, p. 207–208.

⁴⁵ [GULLINO 2013b](#). (online version, access: May 13, 2019)

⁴⁶ *“Tercius est ordine Otho, predictus puerulus, patris qui constat dignitate equivocus.”* – Iohannis diaconi chronicon, p. 37.

⁴⁷ *“Puero quidem Verona pervento officiose a rege susceptus est, quem chrismatis unctione propriis amplexibus coarctatum fecit munire, et amisso paterno nomine, Otto, id est suus aequivocus, nuncupatus est.”* – Iohannis diaconi chronicon, p. 30.

⁴⁸ *“Ocho Ursoyolo dux, defuncto patre preesse cepit anno Domini nostri Iesu Christi millesimo VIII. [...] Erat quippe dux annorum ferre XVIII-o, quo tempore filiam Geuce regis Ungarorum et sororem*

that this time he was elected to doge, shortly after his father's death.⁴⁹ Before the election, around 1008, he appeared as a co-ruler of the city since his brother Giovanni tragically passed away.⁵⁰ During his reign difficulties arose between Venice and the Croatian Kingdom, which was incited by Byzantium, since the emperor left a wider margin for Venetian activity in Dalmatia because he was preoccupied with the Bulgarian question. The Venetian interests conflicted with the Croatian jurisdictional claim on Dalmatia. The course of events went through a setback for Venice when Basil II and Krešimir III (1000–1030) reached an agreement, therefore the merchant city's rule lessened to the northern settlements of the region.⁵¹ During the abovementioned uprising in Venice around 1023 or 1024 doge Otto fled to Istria and later he found refuge in Constantinople. His place was taken over by Pietro Barbolano (1026–1032), however later he was also expelled.⁵² After this events Otto's older brother Orso temporarily was meant to lead the city, who sent Vitale – their younger brother – to Constantinople to call their exiled brother home, but Otto died during 1032.

The formerly mentioned Vitale, the fourth son of Peter II, was – as we discussed it before – awarded with the bishop's seat in Torcello after his brother Orso was appointed to patriarch of Grado, and later he took part in the mission to Constantinople to recall Otto to Venice. His other life events are unknown, although Wertner stated that he attended in a local synod in 1040, that was convened by Orso.⁵³

The destiny of the fifth son of Peter II and Mary also remains obscure. It is possible that the name Enrico (Henry) was given to him when the Emperor Henry II visited Verona and became the young Enrico's confirmation patron, similar to his older brother Otto.

From the sixth and probably youngest son of doge Peter II a diploma and Dandolo's chronicle upheld some information. The charter, which was issued in 1015, tells that his name was Domenico and was married to a certain Immilia, daughter of the count of Padova and Vicenza.⁵⁴ Their children Ugo,

Stephani successoris transduxit uxorem, mulierem utique generositate serenam, facie facundam, et honestate preclaram. – Chronicon Venetum. p. 203. The Italian historiography concluded to a somewhat different date: 993. Cf. [GULLINO 2013c](#). (online version, access: May 13, 2019)

⁴⁹ *"Otho Ursoyolo dux, defuncto patre, preesse cepit anno Domini nostri Iesu Christi millesimo XVIII.*" – Chronicon Venetum, p. 203.

⁵⁰ László Szegfű used different dates when he determined the political career of Otto. According to him Otto was appointed to co-ruler in 1006 and his election took place in 1008. See SZEGFŰ 1994. p. 544.

⁵¹ FINE 2000. p. 277–278.

⁵² *"Petrus Barbolano, sive Centranico, dux decernitur anno Domini millesimo XXVII. Hic, expulso pre[de]cessore, preficitur; quod, cum plurimis non placeret, scisma in populo crebo exoritur; et Popo aquilegiensis patriarcha, imperiali confissus auxilio, Venetorum confinia lacerabat. Imperator etiam, illius inductione, non solum Venetorum fedus aprobare renuit, sed ut sibi emulos illos persecutus est."* – Chronicon Venetum, p. 207.

⁵³ WERTNER 1892. p. 79.

⁵⁴ *"Heinricus gratia Dei imperator augustus Deo propicio hic in Italia anno undecime imperii eius primo, octavo Kalendas februarias. Indictione terciadecima. Tibi Inmilda honesta filia mea et curaius Dominici filius quondam Petroni duci de finibus Veneciarum dilecta filia mea ego Inmilia*

Pietro, Felicia and Entesma are known from another diploma.⁵⁵ However, apart from the fact that Entesma was still alive in December 1061 and she was the wife of Domenico Rosso nothing else is known.⁵⁶ According to the chronicle of Andrea Dandolo Domenico seized the power over Venice for just one day after he discovered that his brother Otto died, then he fled to Ravenna where he passed away shortly afterwards.⁵⁷

From the marriage of Peter II and Mary, daughters were also born but the sources inform only briefly about them. Wertner counted with five sisters⁵⁸ but this number is more than what can be certified by the sources. John deacon mentions four daughters but the author specifies the name only in one case: Hicela. It is known that around 1000 she married to Stjepan, the son of Svestoslav (997–1000), king of Croatia. Due to the intensification of Croatian inner discordance Svetoslav turned to Venice, his former adversary, to strengthen his position.⁵⁹ He sent his son to the merchant city but apart this his life events are unknown to the researchers. There are theories that after the collapse of the Orseolo rule in Venice the couple sought refuge in St. Stephen's court, who donated some parts of Slavonia to them.⁶⁰ However, all this remains only hypothesis since it cannot be supported by sources. The main argument to back up this thesis was defined by the old Croatian historiography. According to this, Zvonimir (1075–1089/90) who was supposedly born from this marriage ruled afterwards in Slavonia. However, according to new research results Zvonimir exercised power over the Banate of Lika.⁶¹ In any case, Mór Wertner used this marriage as an argument to support his thesis on St. Emeric's alleged Croatian matrimony.⁶² This

erelita quondam Ugoni comitis et Ubertus comitis et Mainfridus filius quondam Ugo item comitis germanis filiis et mundoaldis meis qui professum sumus nos oranes qui supra mater et filii ex nacio meam lege vivere longobardorum ienitris et iermanis donatrix et donatrix stue propterea disi — quamprotrep dono a presenti die dilectionis stue et in tuo iure et potestatem per hanc cartulam donacionis propriethario nomine in te habendum confirmamus [...]” – CDP nr. 100, p. 134.

⁵⁵ *Chronicon Venetum*. p. 208, note nr. 1. Cf. CDP nr. 209, p. 237.

⁵⁶ *“In nomine domini Dei et salvatoris. nostri Jhesu Christi. Anno incarnationis eiusdem redemptoris millesimo sexagesimo primo, mense decembris indictione quartadecima Rivoalto. Magnus donacionis est titulus hubi casus largietatis nullus repperitur, sed ad firmamentum muneris sufficit animus largientis. Quapropter ego quedam Entesema filia Dominici Ursoyoli, uxor Dominici Roso, consentiente mihi eodem viro meo cum meis heredibus nullo penitus cogente aut suadente nec vira inferente, sed optima et spontanea mea bona voluntate et pro tuo condigno merito quod mihi factum habes [...]” – CDP nr. 184, p. 214.*

⁵⁷ *“Dominicus Ursiolo dux sedem invasit, anno Domini millesimo XXXII^o. Hic, de stirpe Octonis, modica parte populi consenciente, ducatum usurpat: ceteri, innatam libertatem et non tyrampnidem cupientes, in eum insurgunt; ille perorescens, dum prefuisset uno die, fugam arripiens Ravenam ivit, ubi denique moritur et sepelitur.” – Chronicon Venetum, p. 208.*

⁵⁸ WERTNER 1892. p. 77.

⁵⁹ FINE 2000. p. 276.

⁶⁰ FINE 2000. p. 278.

⁶¹ SZEBERÉNYI 2007. p. 296, note nr. 111.

⁶² WERTNER 1892. p. 61.

reasoning is quite similar to Szabolcs Vajay's thesis on Emeric's Byzantine marriage.⁶³

As it was mentioned, John deacon does not name any other daughters of Peter II, however in Dandolo's chronicle a certain Felicia appears as abbess of St. John Monastery in Torcello.⁶⁴ It is possible that Felicia could have been one of the three anonymous sisters who – according to John deacon – dedicated their lives to God,⁶⁵ so the five siblings in Wertner's work can no longer be held.

As it has been stated in light of the abovementioned sources King Peter's father was doge Otto Orseolo, who wed Prince Géza's daughter around 1009 as the chronicle of Andrea Dandolo states. There is much less information available of the king's mother than his paternal ancestry. There is no data on her exact birth date, but we can assume – since her wedding took place in 1009 – that she was younger than St. Stephen. Her name also remains in obscurity. Mór Wertner clarified that the names such as Gisella, Ilona and Mary – which can be found in the old Hungarian genealogical literature – cannot be her true names, since no sources are available to support any of them. Wertner also stated that she was born from Prince Géza's second Polish wife, Adelheid.⁶⁶ However, a recent research proved that Adelheid could not have been the wife of Géza, even her historical existence is questionable. Therefore, she must have been born from the Hungarian prince's only wife, Sarolt.⁶⁷ She could have been born around 991–992. The research has no knowledge on her life events following her marriage, but Wertner assumed that she has returned to Hungary after her husband's death.⁶⁸ In the chronicle of Albericus some information is upheld about her death, but this data cannot be taken seriously, since the Cistercian monk of Troisfontaines⁶⁹ regarded her son as the brother of the Hungarian Queen Gisella⁷⁰ and he thought that she died in 1010.⁷¹

From the marriage of Otto and Prince Géza's daughter not only the further Hungarian king was born as it can be proven by sources that King Peter's sister was the wife of Adalbert (1018–1055), the Margrave of Austria from

⁶³ VAJAY 1967. p. 89–91.

⁶⁴ "XVII^o ducis anno, Ursus eius filius, defuncto Valerio episcopo torcelano, laudante clero et populo, in eadem ecclesia subrogatus est. Hic, cum favore paterno, ecclesiam suam kathedralem, iam vetustate coruentem, cum episcopo renovare fecit; filia quoque ducis, Felicia nomine, sancti Iohannis evangeliste de Torcelo similiter abbatisa ordinata est." – Chronicon Venetum, p. 203.

⁶⁵ "Quatuor quoque filiae eidem opimo manebat patri, quarum prima Hicelam nomine Stefano Sclavorum regis filio, de quo antea predicti, in coniugio honorifice sociavit; reliquas vero tres in monasterio Deo omnipotenti mancipavit." – Iohannis diaconi chronicon, p. 37.

⁶⁶ WERTNER 1892. p. 88.

⁶⁷ KRISTÓ 2000. p. 7–9. Cf. GRZESIK 1995. p. 114–126.

⁶⁸ WERTNER 1892. p. 90.

⁶⁹ On the Hungarians in Albericus' chronicle see CSÁKÓ 2012. p. 515–526.

⁷⁰ "Unde rex iste Petrus, de quo hic agitur, frater dicitur fuisse illius regine Gisle, de qua superius diximus." – Albrici monachi Triumfontium Chronicon, p. 786.

⁷¹ "[...] Gisla regina, ut dicunt, multas malitias in terra illa fecit et ad extremum post mortem sancti regis meritis exigentibus interfecta fuit." – Albrici monachi Triumfontium Chronicon, p. 779.

the House Babenberg. The works of Hermannus Contractus⁷² and Bishop Otto of Freising⁷³ can be cited here as they both preserved the information that King Peter sought refuge at his brother-in-law when he was expelled from Hungary. Wertner pointed out properly that her name could not have been Adelheid, what the so-called Aloldus tradition had upheld,⁷⁴ since there are multiple authentic diplomas in which she is mentioned as Froiza, Frowila.⁷⁵ György Pray, the 18th century Jesuit historian attempted to interpret the meaning of the name, believing that Fronwe means 'a woman, mistress' but his reasoning is weakened by the fact that he considered the above mentioned Adelheid as the sister of King Peter, therefore he assumed that the name is of German origin.⁷⁶ Her exact birthdate is unknown, but it is certain that in 1041 when King Peter fled to Adalbert, she was already married, i.e. she was at least 15–16 years old. As *post quem* date her parents' wedding comes in question, but – because of the lack of information on the matter in the sources – it is impossible to narrow down the dating of the event. Mór Wertner suggested that Adalbert was married twice, therefore Frowila can be only regarded as the second wife of the margrave.⁷⁷ This theory was also accepted by Szabolcs Vajay⁷⁸ and certain German works are suggesting the same statement, although there is no consensus in the research about the identity of Adalbert's first wife.⁷⁹ Furthermore, Wertner stated that the two sons of Adalbert, namely Liutpold and Ernest were certainly born from the margrave's first marriage. This theory is widely spread in the German secondary literature as well. It is true that Liutpold – who appears in the Annals of the monastery of Niederaltaich⁸⁰ in the year 1042 – could not be Frowila's son for chronological reasons. However,

⁷² "*Ipsa anno Ungarii perfidi Ovonem quendam regem sibi constituentes, Petrum regem suum occidere moliantur. Qui vix fuga lapsus, primo ad marchionem nostrum Adalbertum, sororis suae maritum, profugus venit, indeque ad regem Heinricum veniens, pedibusque eius provolutus, veniam et gratiam imploravit et impetravit.*" – Herimannus Augiensis Chronicon, p. 123.

⁷³ "*Ungaros quoque variis ac diversis praeliis premens, Petrum regem eorum ab Ovone regno fraudolenter pulsum intercessione Alberti marchionis, cuius levir erat, exulem suscepit, ac cum exercitu Pannonias ingressus, congressu habito, cum paucis incredibilem multitudinem Ungarorum fudit, Petrumque regno restituit.*" – Otto Frisingensis episcopus Chronica, lib. 6, c. 32, p. 298.

⁷⁴ WERTNER 1892. p. 91.

⁷⁵ The above mentioned name variants can be found in the charters of Emperor Henry III. issued in 21 April in 1048. and 12 November in 1051. The diploma of Henry IV from 1058 also mentions the wife of Adalbert. See Heinrici III. diplomata. nr. 215, p. 287–288, resp. nr. 278, p. 379, and Heinrici IV. diplomata. nr. 40, p. 49–50.

⁷⁶ PRAY 1801. p. 25–26, especially p. 26. note 'a'. For similar reasons it is a common practice to name her as Dominica in certain genealogical tables. Cf. LECHNER 1992. p. 327, note nr. 95.

⁷⁷ WERTNER 1892. p. 91–92.

⁷⁸ VAJAY 1967. p. 97.

⁷⁹ According to Karl Lechner Gismold, the sister of Bishop Meinwerk of Paderborn could be the first wife of Adalbert and she was also the mother of his children. See LECHNER 1992. p. 79.

⁸⁰ "*Qui dum ex praecepto regis eadem die et simili fraude septentrionalem Danubii terram deberet vastare, quia similiter imparatos offendit, magnam quidem captivitatem congressit, sed eam Dei gratia citissime remisit. Aderat ibi tum marchio Adalbertus et Liupoldus, filius eius, cum parvissima manu militum et servitorum, quippe nec triginta habentes scutatorum.*" – Annales Altahenses maiores, p. 30.

Wertner is mistaken about the claim that the same chronological arguments exclude Frowila's mothership in case of the margrave's younger son, Ernest. It complicates the problem even further, as the exact birthdate of Ernest is unknown, but probably the years between 1025–1028 can be considered plausible.⁸¹ According to this approach – considering that Frowila was born in 1010 – she could have been 17–18 years old when Ernest was born, which is far from preposterous as Wertner claimed. However, as we have no data on Frowila's date of birth, one can get a different result as did Szabolcs Vajay who opted for the year 1015 as the birthdate of the princess.⁸²

Because of the scarcity of data in the sources, it cannot be excluded – based on chronological considerations – that Ernest could have been the cousin of King Peter, but we have no evidence on this matter.⁸³ There is also no knowledge of Frowila's other children and her further destiny, but her day of death was recorded in the necrology of the monastery of Melk: respectively 17th of February.⁸⁴ Unfortunately, the year is missing from the source, however the chronicle of Vitus Arnspeckius states that a certain Adelheid, the wife of Margrave Adelbert has died in 1071. This could be an error in the text, so the chronicle may have referred to Frowila's death.⁸⁵

One short note must be taken about the alleged other sister, namely Balda. She was mentioned first by Joseph Justus Scaliger who wrote a genealogical treatise of his own family which has several editions. Wertner used the edition from 1627, while Vajay used the one from 1614 published in Leiden. There is, however, an older version from 1594 which also states that a certain Balda was the sister of King Peter of Hungary. According to Scaliger she was married and had several children.⁸⁶ This work was written more than 500 years after the supposed birth of King Peter's sister and it is the only evidence of Balda's historical existence, so it certainly cannot be classified as authentic. In 1892 Mór Wertner stated the following on Scaliger's work: "*this man, who otherwise deserves recognition, was to glorify his family and for this reason he made up a dubious lineage from emperors, kings and other ruling princes.*"⁸⁷ This critical statement is still valid today, however, not every researcher has accepted it: Szabolcs Vajay who was known for his thorough preparedness and his wide knowledge of sources, for some reason presented Balda on the

⁸¹ SCHEIBELREITER 2000. p. 2177.

⁸² VAJAY 1967. p. 97.

⁸³ Wertner assumed that Emperor Henry IV donated estates to Frowila because her stepson Ernest did not properly taken care of her. However, this is merely an assumption, so this does not prove anything on the matter. See WERTNER 1892. p. 96–97. For the imperial donation see LECHNER 1992. p. 84–85; Karl Lechner's genealogical table indicates that Ernest's mother was Adalbert's first wife, but in the text of his work he refers to the mother of Ernest as Frowila. See LECHNER 1992. p. 83 and p. 479 (genealogical table).

⁸⁴ "XIII. kal. [Martij] [Frouza marchionissa ob.]" – Necrologium Mellicense, p. 552.

⁸⁵ VAJAY 1967. p. 97. note nr. 128. Cf. KÁDÁR 2012. p. 69.

⁸⁶ "Trellius Emeri filius ex Balda Petri Hungariae regis sorore nati sunt: Trebellij filius Casimirus ez Zolomeri Falmatae regis, Wilelmue Grossus abuus meus ex Elizabetha imperatoris Ludouici filia." – SCALIGER 1597. p. 26.

⁸⁷ WERTNER 1892. p. 98. (Translated by B.P.)

genealogical table of the Orseolos.⁸⁸ Historical criticism, however, does not support Vajay's claim and therefore modern historiography should erase her among the relatives of King Peter and treat her as a fictional person.

As conclusion on Peter's lineage it can be surely said that he had illustrious ancestors, dukes and bishops were among them, and he was also related to Venetian, Hungarian, Croatian, Austrian and Byzantine noble families.

Unfortunately, Peter's year of birth cannot be defined without any doubt. Wertner believed that the king was born in 1011 and so did Vajay.⁸⁹ The Hungarian historiography generally accepted this date based on the information on Danadolo's chronicle, which states that their parents were married in 1009. Gyula Kristó assumed that Peter was born around 1010–1011 and his sister around 1015, these statements were based on the research of Szabolcs Vajay.⁹⁰ However, there is no data in sources that strengthens the hypothesis that Peter was older than Frowila. If the king's sister was really the mother of Margrave Ernest, then perhaps she could be considered as the elder child of their parents. According to László Szegefű, in 1023 during the uprising against their father Otto in Venice, they both sought refuge in St. Stephen's court, therefore they were brought up in Hungary.⁹¹ As Kristó pointed out, in this case a question remains unanswered: why did not the family follow Otto to Constantinople? Perhaps the young age of the children, Hungary's geographical proximity or the close relatives in St. Stephen's court could hold the answer. Since there is no information in the sources on this matter the question remains truly unacknowledged. It is well known, however, that after the tragic death of King Stephen's son, Prince Emeric, the Hungarian ruler appointed Peter as his successor. This can be further strengthened by the fact that he was also made chief commander of the royal troops.⁹² The Annals of the monastery of Niederaltaich tells that he was adopted by St. Stephen, and the king demanded from him that Queen Gisella should be taken care properly without violation of her rights.⁹³

⁸⁸ VAJAY 1967. p. 97, especially note nr. 129.

⁸⁹ WERTNER 1892. p. 81. Cf. VAJAY 1967. (genealogical table).

⁹⁰ KRISTÓ–MAKK 2000. p. 58.

⁹¹ SZEGFŰ 1995. p. 544.

⁹² *"Tandem per misericordiam dei dignus centuplicate retributionis bravio, tactus febre, cum sibi transit[um] imminere non ambigeret, accersitis episcopis et primis palatii de Christi nomine gloriantibus, primum cum eis tractavit de substituendo pro se rege, Petro videlicet sororis sue filio, quem in Venetia genitum ad se vocatum iam dudum exercitui suo prefecerat ducem [...]."* – *Legenda Sancti Stephani regis*, c. 16, p. 392. Cf. GYÖRFFY 1958. p. 574.

⁹³ *"Hoc anno Petrus rex Ungrorum regno est privatus, coniurantibus adversum se suis primatibus. Unde hoc ortum sit, audiat qui velit. Stephanus bonae memoriae rex, avunculus ipsius, cum filius eius patre superstite esset mortuus, quoniam alium non habuit filium, hunc fecit adoptivum ipsumque regni heredem locavit; filium fratris sui digniorem in regno, quia hoc non consensit, cecavit et parvulos eiusdem exilio relegavit. Hic igitur ipso vivente in regno solidatus iuravit, ut praeceperat avunculus, se dominam suam reginam semper honoraturum nec quicquam eorum, quae rex dederat ei, ablaturum, si post mortem ipsius vitam illi donaret Dominus. Quod ut firmiter fieret, addidit iuramento se contra omnes, qui eam vellent calumniare, pro posse et nosse semet subsidio fore, et in eadem verba omnes iuraverunt, qui principes regionis fuerunt. Stephano demum vita decedente et Petro eius gratia in regno succedente, fides ipsius patuit, quae prius quasi*

One of the most problematic chapter in the genealogical literature of the Árpád-era is about the determination of King Peter's marriage. In his study on Prince Géza's family Szabolcs Vajay basically referred to Wertner's work and pointed out that a certain Tuta, who was the descendant of the Formbach-Neuburg counts, married to Peter. This genealogical problem is not a novelty in Hungarian historiography. Wertner was dealing with this issue based on the works of Dániel Cornides, published in the last third of the 18th century. Wertner concluded that Tuta cannot be inserted into the genealogy of the Orseolos, therefore she could not be the wife of the king.⁹⁴ The theory is mainly based of two distinct sources which are far from authentic. The first one is the 16th century work of Angelus Rumpler,⁹⁵ the former abbot of Formbach about the history of the monastery. The source tells the following story: "*Himeltrudis itaquae filia Regis Hungariae, quoniam esset caeca, ad Capellam Gloriosae Virginis Maria (de qua jam pridem scripsimus) peregrinationem suscepit.*" According to this narrative Himeltrudis, the alleged daughter of the Hungarian king regained her vision – since she was blind – near to a spring and therefore she founded the monastery of Formbach with her sister Tuta.⁹⁶ This miraculous healing is obviously an indispensable part of such legends, which also serves as an explanation for Formbach's name, as the German word *Bach* can be translated as stream, brook. It is unknown which sources could Rumpler rely on, but the history of the monastery shows a great deal of resemblance of the narrative used during the Middle Ages and early modern times and were intended to present the primeval and grand historical past of families, settlements and religious institutions.⁹⁷ The other source which was also quoted by Mór Wertner is the late medieval work titled *Anonymi monachi Bavari compilatio chronologica*, that follows the events until 1388. The source states that in the year of 1109 Count Eckbert was buried in the monastery founded by Himeltrudis, Queen of Hungary.⁹⁸ These are the only works that can confirm that Himeltrudis and her sister Tuta were related to the Orseolos. However, caution is advised because these sources arose late and are contradictory about the nature of the relationship between Himeltrudis and the Hungarian kings. Rumpler considers her as the daughter of the king, the anonymous compiler refers her as Queen of Hungary. Szabolcs Vajay tried to dissolve the contradictory information and came up with a new theory based

bona latuit. Nam unius anni tempore tractavit eam honorifice, quo peracto spatio destituit illam omni bono. Primum quidem praedia, quae a marito vivente susceperat, et pecuniam, quam seorsum habuerat, ipse vi abstulit, eamque iurare compulit, ut de residuo nihil daret cuiquam praeter suam licentiam. In quadam etiam urbe eam locavit talique custodiae mancipavit, ut nec ipsi potestas esset usquam progrediendi nec cuiquam advenientium eam conveniendi. Cum hoc toto triennio passa fuisset, et ipse nihil de iniuria minuisset, ipsa principes regni convocavit et facti sibi iuramenti eos commonuit." – Annales Altahenses maiores, p. 24.

⁹⁴ WERTNER 1892. p. 586–589.

⁹⁵ SCHMID 1889. p. 671–672.

⁹⁶ Angeli Rumpleri Historiae, I, pars III, lib. 1, col. 425.

⁹⁷ With many examples see ALTHOFF 2003. p. 28–51.

⁹⁸ Anonymi monachi Bavari compilatio, p. 332.

on historiographical observations. He believed that Himeltrudis and Tuta were sisters as well as the founders of the monasteries of Formbach and Suben, but they had no connections to Hungary because both were descendants of the counts of Neuburg and burgraves of Regensburg. Himeltrude however had two daughters as well, who were named Himeltrudis and Tuta. This complicated genealogy was further elaborated by Vajay since he identified the latter Tuta as Judith – he believed that Tuta is a name variant of Judith – whose name was recorded as *Iudita regina* in the necrology of Regensburg.⁹⁹ Whatever may be the truth about the lineage of these two ladies – whether they were descending from the counts of Formbach, Neuburg or burgraves of Regensburg – only these two suspicious and contractionary sources are available to prove their kinship with the Hungarian kings. It is not difficult to admit that the sources cannot stand the fundamental tests of source criticism, therefore neither Himeltrudis nor Tuta should be considered as the wife of King Peter or any other Hungarian king.

Despite all this it is known that Peter was married since the statement can be proven by authentic information. The chronicle of Hermannus Contractus, written around the time of events tells that during 1046 Peter's wife was alive when her husband was captured and blinded.¹⁰⁰ Unfortunately her name and identity cannot be determined since the source upheld no data on the matter.

At this point it is also usual to cite the work of Cosmas of Prague. His chronicle mentions that Prince Břetislav's widow, Judith was married to King Peter. According to Cosmas the union was initiated by the elderly lady because she could not find any other way to humiliate his son, Spytihněv II (1055–1061), who had expelled her from Prague.¹⁰¹ This chapter of Cosmas' chronicle prompted all the researchers who handled with the genealogy of the Hungarian kings to make a statement. From György Pray to Mór Wertner a significant part of historians rejected this marriage and most recently Liza Wolverton, the English translator of the chronicle, pointed out that Cosmas could have misinterpreted his sources.¹⁰² In contrast Szabolcs Vajay and Gyula Kristó did not rule out the possibility and have accepted Cosmas' information as authentic.¹⁰³ However, this latter case discredits all the data that was upheld in the 14th century chronicle composition on Peter's death.

⁹⁹ VAJAY 1967. p. 96–98.

¹⁰⁰ "*Subsecuto autumnno Ungarii, pristinae perfidiae suae memores, Andream quendam regem sibi statuunt, Petrum regem, multis advenarum, qui pro eo pugnaverant, occisis, variis cum coniuge sua iniuriis affectum, postremo oculis privant, et in quendam locum cum eadem coniuge sua alendum deputant; multis etiam per idem tempus peregrinis inibi expoliatis, exulatis atque necatis.*" – Herimannus Augiensis Chronicon, p. 126.

¹⁰¹ "*Anno dominice incarnationis MLVIII. IV. non. Augusti Iuditha a coniunx Bracizlai, ductrix Boemorum, obiit, quam quia filius suus Zpitigneu eiecerat de regno suo, cum non posset aliter ulcisci iniuriam suam in filio, ad contumeliam eius et omnium Boemorum nupserat Petro regi Ungarorum.*" – Cosmae Pragensis Chronica, lib. 2, c. 17, p. 108.

¹⁰² The Chronicle of the Czechs, p. 135, note nr. 121.

¹⁰³ VAJAY 1967. p. 93–95. and 95, note nr. 115; KRISTÓ–MAKK 2000. p. 65.

The source namely tells that the king passed away shortly after his blinding,¹⁰⁴ therefore he could not take Judith as wife. It is also worth to mention that Judith could enter a new marriage after the death of her first husband, Prince Břetislav (1035–1055) in 1055. This issue is often dealt in the secondary literature and in many cases the authors are not taking side but offering both solutions.¹⁰⁵ Thus, it seems that the death of King Peter depends on our choice, whether we accept Cosmas' report on this union or not. However, it is worth to note that in the chronicle of the deacon of Prague the matrimony is dated to 1058. In the same year another important engagement took place in Hungary, between King Salomon and Judith, daughter of Emperor Henry III (1039–1056). The date and the fact that both princesses were called Judith is quite suspicious. Therefore, it seems that Mór Wertner was right: Judith of Schweinfurt cannot be considered as wife of King Peter, probably Cosmas, who wrote his chronicle 50 years after the events, may have mixed up his sources.

There is no information about Peter's children and there is also a consensus on this in the historiography. In his widely quoted work Wertner cleared with logical reasoning that all the people who were referred as Peter's children in the early historiography cannot be identified as descendants of the king.¹⁰⁶

This study briefly had mentioned the problems concerning Peter's death. It is worth to refer to the fact that the last events of the king's life were upheld only by the Hungarian chronicle composition. According to the narrative, King Peter tried to escape the country as soon as he got word of the arrival of Prince Andrew and Levente. He wanted to leave the Kingdom and flee to his brother-in-law, the Margrave of Austria, but the gates of the country were blocked by those who rebelled against him. Finally, the envoy of Andrew arrived at the king and initiated negotiations on Peter's future position and tried to lure him back. All this, however, proved to be a ruse for the envoy sought to capture the king. Peter occupied a manor-house, where he fought fiercely but after all his men were dead, he was finally taken captive. He was blinded and dragged to Székesfehérvár where he passed away due to his severe injuries.¹⁰⁷ Herimannus also confirms that the king was deprived from his sight and was hauled. The source however does not know the exact place where the king and his family was detained.¹⁰⁸ There is no

¹⁰⁴ *"Petrus autem prenoscens hoc collegit se in quandam curiam et per triduum viriliter dimicando semetipsum defendebat. Tandem milites eius omnes a sagittariis sunt interempti, ipse vero vivus captus est et obcecatus Albamque ductus pre nimio dolore vitam in brevi finivit. Sepultusque est Quinqueecclesiis."* – *Chronici Hungarici compositio saeculi XIV*, c. 85, p. 343.

¹⁰⁵ KRISTO–MAKK 2000. p. 64–65; SZEGFU 1995. p. 544.

¹⁰⁶ WERTNER 1892. p. 98–102.

¹⁰⁷ *Chronici Hungarici compositio saeculi XIV*, c. 85, p. 343.

¹⁰⁸ *"Subsecuto autumnno Ungarii, pristinae perfidiae suae memores, Andream quendam regem sibi statuunt, Petrum regem, multis advenarum, qui pro eo pugnaverant, occisis, variis cum coniuge sua iniuriis affectum, postremo oculis privant, et in quendam locum cum eadem coniuge sua alendum deputant; multis etiam per idem tempus peregrinis inibi exspoliatis, exulatis atque necatis."* – Herimannus Augiensis *Chronicon*, p. 126.

contradiction between the sources, they complement each other. Herimannus states that the king was fleeing with his wife, they were obviously accompanied by armed escort who defended the royal family during the struggles at Zámoly. To understand the weight of the punishment that Peter had to suffer it is worth to recall some information from the Hungarian chronicle composition regarding Prince Vazul's blinding. As it is known Vazul was blinded because St. Stephen nominated Peter as his successor. Later, in 1046 the same sanction was implied to Peter. This can be interpreted as revenge committed by Andrew's men who might have been formerly served Vazul and when Andrew arrived in Hungary, they sided with him. Peter was made incapable of rule with the same method as Vazul and with the crowning of Andrew (1046–1060) the continuity of the Árpád-dynasty was restored. All of this turns the balance in point of credibility towards the 14th century chronicle composition against Cosmas' information which was described above. According to Hungarian chronicle he was buried in the Church St. Peter in Pécs, that was consecrated during his reign.¹⁰⁹

Summary

It is quite difficult to draw the authentic portrait and genealogy of King Peter since the historiography condemns him all around and in many cases denies his virtues as well. Today Peter's ancestry has been properly clarified and it turned out that the genealogy that can be found in the Hungarian chronicle composition is none other than a fiction, but it also clears that the anonymous compiler had some knowledge on the lineage of Peter and Queen Gisella which he had combined together. The source considered Peter's rule hateful and Gisella was incorporated to Peter's genealogy that St. Stephen could be freed from the odium of Peter's nomination to the throne. All the later kings of Hungary descended from Vazul, but they regarded their source of royal power from the first king of the country and all of them considered him as their ancestor. Therefore, the chronicle described Peter's accession to the throne as the result of Gisella's manipulation.¹¹⁰ Peter was not the scion of the Burgundian royal dynasty – as the chronicle states – but the venetian Orseolo family. His father Otto, exercised power alongside his father over the merchant city as co-ruler. Soon he became doge and reigned alone after his father passed away. King Peter's uncles fulfilled important and high-ranking church offices, namely the bishop of Torcello and the patriarch of Grado. Through his other uncles he also maintained familial relations with the ruling dynasties in Venice's proximity.

¹⁰⁹ KOSZTA 2012, p. 65–67. Cf. KADAR 2012, p. 69.

¹¹⁰ “*At regina Keysla cum Buda satellite scelerum, Petrum Alamanum vel potius Venetum, fratrem regine, regem preficere statuerunt, hoc intendentes, ut regina Keysla motus sue voluntatis pro libitu suo posset complere et regnum Hungarie amissa libertate Teutonicis subderetur et regina Keysia motus sue voluntatis in regno sine impedimento posset explere.*” – *Chronici Hungarici compositio saeculi XIV*, c. 70, p. 322–323.

With no information in the sources we cannot determine his date of birth precisely as it is the case with his sister Frowila. However, their parents' marriage in 1009 let us assume that they were born sometime between 1010 and 1015. According to a generally accepted view Peter may have been older but we cannot exclude that Frowila could have been born first. Peter and his family were forced to leave Venice when an uprising swept away the rule of Otto around 1023, perhaps they found refuge in Grado at their uncle's place, but for some unclear reasons they did not follow Otto in his exile in Constantinople. Peter was raised in St Stephen's court, most likely with his mother as his later fate would suggest. The life of Peter changed a lot when St. Emeric died. He was adopted and nominated as successor by the Hungarian king. He also had to swear an oath that he would not deprive Queen Gisella of her rights and wealth.

According to the chronicle's widely quoted phrase after his coronation "*he cast aside all goodness of royal serenity and raged with Teutonic fury, despising the nobles of Hungary and devoured with insatiable heart casting his proud eyes together with the Germans, who roared like wild beasts, and the Italians who chattered and twittered like swallows, the wealth of the land.*"¹¹¹ This portrait of Peter painted by the anonymous compiler is however too dark. Gyula Kristó pointed out that the reason behind this could be that Peter "*did not seek to cooperate with nobles of the many-faced court of St. Stephen, so they easily branded him as the corruptor of Hungary.*"¹¹² Hungarian historiography has made it clear by now that Peter continued St. Stephen's work: he issued laws,¹¹³ and the foundation of the bishopric of Vác and the collegiate church of Óbuda.¹¹⁴ Peter's real figure was not only distorted by the Hungarian but the foreign sources as well, the Annals of the monastery Niederaltaich called him wicked and evil-spirited.¹¹⁵

At this point it is worth to mention Peter's oath which was upheld by the above-mentioned Annals. József Gerics proposed that the nobles turned against Peter because he violated the oath and deprived Queen Gisella all her rights. In this case, the reason behind the election of Samuel Aba as king and the end Peter's first reign can be explained with oath-breaking.¹¹⁶ The events after Aba's coronation further cracked Peter's reputation as he turned to the emperor to restore his rule. Peter managed to regain his throne in Hungary with the help of Henry III but this time he denied the heritage of St. Stephen: he became vassal of the emperor.¹¹⁷ His second reign was swept away by

¹¹¹ *Chronica de gestis Hungarorum*, c. 71, p. 132–133.

¹¹² KRISTÓ – MAKK 2000. p. 61. (Translated by B.P.)

¹¹³ JÁNOSI 1996. p. 119.

¹¹⁴ KOSZTA 2001. p. 363–375.

¹¹⁵ "*Set cum sepius esset amonitus, mala mens et malus animus in pertinacia perduravit finetenus.*" – *Annales Altahenses maiores*, p. 25.

¹¹⁶ GERICS 1982. p. 187–199, 299–313; GERICS 1995. p. 93–94.

¹¹⁷ "Sequenti vero anno reversus est cesar in Hungariam, cui Petrus rex in ipsa sancta sollempnitate regnum Hungarie eum de aurata lancea tradidit coram Hungaris simul et

pagan uprising and the return of Andrew and Levente, princes of the Árpád-dynasty. He died in 1046 due to severe injuries as it has been clarified above. His body was buried in Pécs.

It is certain that Peter got married as well as his sister Frowila. The latter became the wife of Margrave Adalbert of Babenberg. The identity of Peter's wife however remains obscure despite all attempts to uncover her name and lineage.

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FRA	<i>Fontes Rerum Austriacarum. Scriptores</i> . I–XIV. Wien. 1855–2003.
MGH DD	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Diplomata</i> . Hannoverae, 1872–
MGH SRG	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi</i> . Hannover, 1871–
MGH SRG NS	<i>Monamenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum Nova Series</i> . Berolini, 1922–
MGH SS	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores in folio</i> . Hannover, 1826–
SRH	<i>Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum</i> . I–II. Ed. SZENTÉPTEY, Emericus. Budapest. 1999.

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Table I: Peter Orseolo's Genealogy

