

THOMAS OF SPALATO AND THE MONGOLS: A THIRTEENTH-CENTURY DALMATIAN VIEW OF MONGOL CUSTOMS*

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When Qadan, grandson of Genghis Khan, and his Mongol horsemen arrived before the walls of Spalato in the spring of 1242, the Adriatic Sea became the westernmost boundary of the Tartar Empire, stretching eastward across the vast Eurasian landmass to the shores of the Sea of Japan.¹ Thomas, archdeacon of Spalato (1200-1268), was a witness and principal reporter of that historic moment. Four chapters of his *Historia Pontificum Salonitanorum atque Spalatensium*² narrate the approach of the Mongols to Hungary, the conquest of the country, the flight of Béla IV to Dalmatia with the invading army in pursuit, the unexpected withdrawal of the Mongols, and the famine that followed their departure. This portion of Thomas's work ranks as a major western narrative of the Mongol invasion of Europe. The value of his narrative lies in the fact that the author was a contemporary of the events described and that his sources included his own eyewitness observation and reports made to him by informed refugees. Moreover, although he embraced a traditional mediaeval Christian historiographical outlook, his work is relatively free of the apocalyptic speculation found in other accounts of the Mongol invasion. His narrative is by no means a complete description of events in Hungary and Dalmatia during 1241-1242, but the information he provides can be shown, wherever corroboration exists, to be largely trustworthy.

Within the last decade or so, mediaeval scholars have devoted considerable attention to the re-examination of western sources on the Mongols. These

efforts have been directed toward the critical examination of the historiographical techniques of particular writers, the exploration of the historical reliability of surviving accounts, and the development of a tentative synthesis of the western European view of the Mongols. Perhaps the best known European chronicler of the invasion is Matthew Paris, the monk of St. Albans, whose *Chronica Majora* has been praised by modern critics for the author's readiness -- despite his geographical distance from the events described -- to include full texts of documents hitherto assumed to be verbatim transcripts of original sources.³ Without denying the general value of Matthew Paris's narrative, scholars recently studying his historiographical techniques have pointed out how, in shaping his narrative, the chronicler exercised a keen editorial eye for those issues closest to him, and in so doing permitted his biases to guide the organization of his material. It has also been shown that some, at least, of the primary documents are not in fact verbatim transcripts but have been edited and revised to suit the author's purpose, as in the case of the letter of Ivo of Narbonne to the archbishop of Bordeaux concerning an incursion into Austria.⁴

Another thirteenth-century author, and probably the single most influential source of western information about the Mongols in the Middle Ages, was Vincent of Beauvais, whose encyclopedic *Speculum Historiale* contains not only an historical account of the invasion of Europe but also a description of the Mongol Empire and its customs. Like Matthew Paris, Vincent of Beauvais in all likelihood never personally set eyes on a Mongol. His great gift lay in his mastery of the techniques of condensing and summarizing the works of other writers.⁵ The Mongol narrative in the *Speculum Historiale* is an intricate interweaving of excerpts from the *Historia Mongolorum* of the redoubtable John of Plano Carpini and from the *Historia Tartarorum* of Simon of Saint-Quentin. With the works of John and Simon we encounter detailed eyewitness narratives of great value. John, a Franciscan friar, had been dispatched by Pope Innocent IV as the first papal envoy to the Mongol court then at Karakorum. Upon his return to Europe in 1247, he gave a briefing on Mongol affairs to King Béla IV of Hungary, reported in detail on his mission to the pope at the Council of Lyons, and then wrote, in two redactions, a narrative of his journey. Friar John's ecclesiastical career culminated in his elevation to the Dalmatian archiepiscopal see of Antibari (1248-1252).⁶ Simon of Saint-Quentin, a Dominican friar, had been one of a party of five members of his order who carried out a papal mission to the Mongol general Baiju encamped on the Araxes river

in the Transcaucasus. Simon's account is also among those early first-hand narratives that not only relate details of a specific mission but also provide descriptions of Mongol customs and practices.⁷ Several other thirteenth-century works of similar character exist, notably the *Carmen Miserabile* of Roger of Torre Maggiore, the *Tartar Relations* of C. de Bridia, and the *Itinerarium* of William of Rubruck.⁸ The Mongol chapters of Thomas of Spalato, although possibly less well known, stand squarely in this company.

Western Europeans had a long and irregular history of encounters with peoples distinct from themselves. In the period from the ninth to the thirteenth century western Europe was challenged in different ways by Vikings, Magyars, Moslems, Byzantines, and Mongols among others. Relations with these foreign peoples were usually hostile and the western European attitude toward them was, not surprisingly, negative. Yet within this broadly negative spectrum of thought widely disparate views prevailed, ranging from the fearfully apocalyptic to the soberly clinical. This diversity of views, moreover, cannot be correlated neatly with social stratification -- popular mentality, clerical outlook, or aristocratic prejudice; rather, it eclectically overlaps such distinctions, and the task of synthesis is made all the more difficult. Historians have been at work for some time analyzing the western outlook toward Byzantium and the Islamic world.⁹ More recently, efforts have been made to describe and analyze the whole course of European-Mongol relations.¹⁰ But even the most successful of these studies, that by G.A. Bezzola, has been hindered by the scarcity of detailed modern historiographical criticism of the principal sources.¹¹ Consequently, we should regard these works as useful, but still tentative steps toward the formulation of a more definitive synthesis. The present essay is intended to contribute to this goal by providing an historiographical analysis of a major, but neglected, western source on the Mongols.

Thomas of Spalato was born in about the year 1200, but evidence of his place of birth and his parentage is lacking. Most authorities since the eighteenth century have assumed, from the manifestations of civic pride throughout the *Historia*, that the author was a native of Spalato (Split) and of patrician ancestry.¹² More certain is the fact that he was a student at the University of Bologna in 1222, when, according to his own report, he heard St. Francis of Assisi deliver a sermon on the theme of "Angels, Men, Demons." His training at Bologna prepared him for the profession of notary in the commune of Spalato and his career as canon of the cathedral chapter (first attested in a document of 14 April 1227).¹³ In 1230, in his thirtieth year,

Thomas was elected archdeacon of Spalato, a post he held until his death in 1268. During this period he played an active role not only in the affairs of the local church, but also in the public life of the city. On both public and private business, Thomas journeyed to the papal court then at Perugia (1234), to the commune of Ancona (1239), and twice to the royal court of Béla IV (1244/45 and 1261). Unquestionably, the high point of his career occurred in 1243, when the cathedral chapter of Spalato elected him to the archiepiscopal see. The election, which was nearly unanimous, took place during disturbed political conditions: Ban Matthew Ninoslav of Bosnia and the commune of Spalato were engaged together in a struggle for the domination of the central Dalmatian coast against Denés dg. Turje, ban of Slavonia, and the citizens of Traù (Trogir), who had the support of King Béla IV. The Spalatans were the losers in this contest, and the lay leaders of the city hoped to regain royal favor by elevating a Hungarian nobleman, Hugrinus dg. Csak, to the archiepiscopal office. Archdeacon Thomas was therefore coerced into withdrawing in favor of the royal candidate.¹⁴ It was a bitter loss to him.

The date of the composition of the *Historia* is not recorded, but on the basis of the internal organization of the narrative, it is likely that the work was begun between 1245 and 1251. In subsequent years, certain material referring to contemporary events was added from time to time. In organization the *Historia* conforms to the genre *gesta episcoporum*, serving to chronicle the deeds of the archbishops of ancient Salona and mediaeval Spalato. But the work is also a civic history, influenced by contemporary Italian models. The author had studied the *ars dictaminis* at Bologna at a time when Buoncompagno da Signa and his pupil Rolandino of Padua were applying rhetorical skills to the development of a new type of urban history which extolled the virtues of civic liberty.¹⁵ Even in the chapters devoted to the Mongols one cannot fail to observe Thomas's admiration for the Italian podestà Garganus de Arscindis as well as his urban patriotism, a salient feature of his historical outlook.

Beyond his devotion to Spalato and his preference for an Italian-style republican government, the so-called *regimen latinorum*, Thomas's historical perspective was coloured by a sharply critical attitude toward Slavs, Hungarians, and Mongols. The Slavs he considers rustics, whose cultural backwardness and peculiar customs he freely condemned and ridiculed. Despite the presence of the Hungarians in Dalmatia since 1105, Thomas regards them as foreigners, whose interests and customs he distinguishes from those of the Dalmatians. To him, Hungary was *terra fecunda*, a rich land whose tranquil state and abundance of natural goods contributed to the languid and foppish self-indulgence of its

youth. On more than one occasion in describing the course of the Mongol invasions Thomas accuses Hungarian soldiers of cowardice. But he is also capable of making distinctions. He admires the candour and personal bravery of one of the Hungarian leaders, Archbishop Hugrinus of Kalocsa. He praises the piety of King Kálmán of Halicz while, at the same time, criticizing his ability as a man of public affairs. Toward King Béla IV Thomas is circumspect. The Hungarian monarch was, after all, the author's lord, still living during the writing of this chronicle. It was in his court that Thomas in vain had defended the ancient urban privileges of Spalato. Nevertheless, King Béla, whose political favor toward the rival town of Traù deeply troubled the archdeacon, is held accountable, albeit obliquely, for the slowness and ineptitude of his response to the first rumors of the Mongol advance. Thomas further blames him for the crowded conditions at the camp near Mohi, which contributed to the disastrous outcome of the battle. Thomas's severest criticism, however, is reserved for the Mongols. His language is unremittingly harsh. The Mongols were a plague, their instincts savage and merciless. As a people they lacked compassion and humanity. Despite this condemnation, Thomas was curious about the origins and customs of the Mongols and included such information in his *Historia*.

In evaluating the significance of an historical work it is important to establish its factual reliability, the nature of its sources, the degree to which it reflects individual or popularly held opinions, and its influence in shaping the outlook of succeeding generations. That Thomas's Mongol chapters, although incomplete, exhibit a high degree of factual accuracy will be shown later in this essay. Thomas himself provides the only clue to his sources when he states that his description of the character and appearance of the Mongols will be related "according to what I have been able to hear from more inquiring persons who have looked into the matter."¹⁶ The identity of these "inquiring persons" is nowhere disclosed. The implication is clear, however, that the information was transmitted orally. Thomas heard it, he did not read it. No textual borrowings from other works have been identified. There is no evidence to suggest that Thomas's account was shaped by those of Friar Julian, Roger of Torre Maggiore, or John of Plano Carpini.¹⁷ Thomas's sources, therefore, apart from his own observation, must have been the numerous refugees who streamed into Spalato in 1242. To this extent, the general attitude Thomas displays toward the Mongols must have been shared by his informants and contemporaries. From time to time, however, he separates himself from certain opinions, for example, those offered on the origin of the name "Tartar" and

the apocalyptic interpretation that the Mongols were the people prophesied to precede the coming of Antichrist. If Thomas's view of the Mongols can be said to be based on widely held, informed opinion of his day, the later influence of his work was more restricted and regional. Measured in terms of the mediaeval dissemination of the *Historia*, Thomas's influence was confined to regions along the Adriatic. Only four mediaeval manuscripts of the *Historia* are extant, and all appear to have a Dalmatian provenance.¹⁸ Thomas had two later Spalatan continuators, one of whom borrowed passages originally referring to the calamity of the Mongol invasion and applied them to the disaster of the Black Death!¹⁹ In the work usually known as the *Chronicon Venetum*, the fourteenth-century Venetian doge and historian Andrea Dandolo takes some of his information about Dalmatia from Thomas's *Historia*. In the entry for 1241 it is clear that Dandolo exploited several sources but employed Thomas's work for the information on the flight of Béla IV from Hungary with his treasure and his family, the Mongol pursuit of the king, and the presence of the king and his family in Dalmatia first at Klis and then in Traù.²⁰ Somewhat like Matthew Paris, therefore, Thomas of Spalato enjoyed a limited popularity within his own geographical region.

Thomas's Mongol narrative comprises chapters 36 to 39 of the *Historia*.²¹ The chapter titles, common to all the manuscripts, broadly suggest the author's negative outlook: *De Peste Tartarorum* ("The Tartar Plague"), *De Natura Tartarorum* ("The Character of the Tartars"), *De Fuga Hungarorum* ("The Flight of the Hungarians"), *De Sevitia Tartarorum* ("The Ferocity of the Tartars"). The chapters are arranged in a loose chronological order and vary in length. They treat the sequence of events in Hungary and Dalmatia from the first rumors of the approach of the Mongols late in the decade of the 1230's to the invaders' departure in the spring of 1242.²² Despite the breadth and general accuracy of the account, the description of Mongol exploits in Hungary is not complete. The Dalmatian archdeacon recorded events at a distance and was dependent upon uneven reports given by refugees. Thomas makes no mention, for example, of the reception of the Cumans into Hungary on the eve of the invasion, or of the difficulties that flowed from that migration; nor does he show an awareness of the simultaneous Mongol invasion of Poland and Moravia, nor of the great struggle for control of Nagyvárad in eastern Hungary. Although he refers to the Mongol occupation of Transylvania and to King Béla's flight to Austria, he provides no details. For these and other, lesser omissions we must supplement Thomas's account with those of western contemporaries geographically better situated to provide such information, such as the works of Roger of

Torre Maggiore, John of Plano Carpini, or C. de Bridia mentioned earlier. In addition, it is possible to corroborate some of the details that Thomas supplies on Mongol customs with similar observations found in Oriental sources: the Persian Juvaini's *History of the World-Conqueror*, Rashîd ad-Dîn's *World History* written in Arabic, and the Chinese *Yüan Shih*.²³

In chapters 36-39 there are twelve narrative segments specifically devoted to the Mongol invaders; the remainder of the material is concerned with the plight of the European defenders. For purposes of the present discussion these narrative segments have been identified by the letters "A" through "L" and the content of each is outlined in the appendix. Thomas begins with a brief sketch of Mongol history immediately prior to the invasion (A). The next segment is a short account of the entrance of the Mongols into Europe through the Carpathian passes (B). Thomas's description of the critically important Mongol victory of 11 April 1241, achieved on the banks of the River Sajó near Mohi (C), is very detailed and presents an opportunity for the author to display his considerable rhetorical gifts.

Once established in Hungary the Mongols, so our author reports, indulged in widespread, fearsome atrocities (D). In fact, the atrocities attributed to the invaders constitute a significant subtheme of the entire account. At seven different points in the narrative Thomas graphically describes such incidents. This is a feature to which we shall return. With the fall of the city of Pest (E) the conquest of eastern Hungary was complete. Both the Alföld -- the great Danubian plain -- and Transylvania were occupied by Mongol armies during the winter of 1241-1242 (F). At this point the chronological structure is interrupted by a lengthy and valuable chapter on Mongol origins and customs (G). In the next chapter the chronological narrative is resumed with the invasion of the Dunántúl, the rolling countryside of western Hungary. The winter of 1241-1242 had been brutally harsh, and the Mongols daringly rode their horses across the frozen Danube. Buda, Esztergom, and Székesfehérvár were besieged in turn (H). The helpless Hungarian King Béla IV fled before the Mongol advance, first to Austria and then to Croatia. Qadan, one of the Mongol commanders, was given the task of capturing him. Béla was apprised of this intention, however, and transferred his court from Zagreb to the Dalmatian coast as the Mongol army followed in pursuit (I). The king was received at Spalato, where he stayed only briefly, owing to a disagreement with the townsmen. Subsequently he moved to neighboring Traù and then to an adjacent island in the Dalmatian litoral. Meanwhile the Mongols perpetrated a savage massacre in Croatia.

Early in March 1242, the Mongols appeared before the walls of Spalato. They had ravaged the countryside, and the city was swollen with refugees (J). The nearby mountain fortress of Klis was besieged but not taken. Hearing that Béla was neither at Klis nor Spalato, but at Traù, Qadan shifted most of his forces northward along the coast facing that island town. The attack upon Traù was unsuccessful largely because of the natural defence provided by the mud flats along the channel separating Traù from the mainland (K). Thomas's final segment (L) relates the itinerary of the withdrawing Mongol armies through Upper Dalmatia, Serbia, and Bulgaria.

Thomas's general view of the Mongol horsemen who rode out of the east is a composite of three perceptions, each of which will be examined in detail. On the literal, historical level of understanding, the Mongols were heartless enemies, ferocious opponents displaying unmatched military skills. To Thomas, the Mongols, or Tartars as he preferred to call them, were a "pestilential nation" (*gens pestifera Tartarorum*) whose unheard-of cruelty was "fattened solely on the blood of human victims." He conceives of the invaders as a monstrous, evil band of subhuman warriors. This attitude is brought out with great literary flourish whenever a military engagement is described and in the passages devoted to Mongol atrocities. After the battle of Mohi, for example, the Hungarian survivors attempted to flee but were trapped between the Mongol army and a great marsh, into which they were fatally driven by their pursuers. According to Thomas, once the exhausted Hungarians abandoned their weapons and possessions, the Mongols:

began to hurl spears from all directions, to slay with their swords, sparing no one but savagely massacring everyone. The dead fell to the right and to the left; like leaves in winter, the slain bodies of these miserable men were strewn along the whole route; blood poured forth like torrents of rain. The miserable country, stained by the blood of its sons, was dyed red throughout its length and breadth.²⁴

The Mongol triumph at Mohi was complete. After this victory, Thomas declares:

The whole land was filled with enemy troops, like locusts, who had no pity to spare the fallen, to show mercy to captives, or to pass over the exhausted: rather, like savage beasts, they thirsted only for human blood.²⁵

The archdeacon was repeatedly shocked by stories of the enemy's lack of compassion. This he finds to be a distinguishing, even a defining characteristic of the invaders. He enumerates seven incidents of Mongol atrocity. Before entering Hungary they had seized the Russian town of Suzdal by treachery and destroyed it; they captured Prince Yuri and put him to death "together with a great mass of his people." Following Mohi no captives were taken; the remnant of the Hungarian army, as we have seen, was either slaughtered or driven to a watery death in the marsh. In the spring of 1241, according to Thomas, large numbers of Hungarian men and women, old and young, from the towns and cities of eastern Hungary were put to death in a series of mass killings. The population of Pest, including those who sought sanctuary in the Dominican convent, were either slain or burned to death. During the winter, to instill fear in the Hungarians, the Mongols rode up and down the left bank of the Danube with the corpses of children impaled on lances, in Thomas's words, "like fish on a spear." He also reported mass killings of the most brutal sort in Croatia early in 1242 and again in Bulgaria a few months later (See Segments A 5, C 10, D 1-4, E 5-7, F 2, I 4, and L 5). The salient feature of each of those events was the pitilessness of the Mongols. After the beheading of the captives in Croatia, the Mongols permitted themselves a moment of rest and celebration. With a keen sense of irony, Thomas wrote:

The whole host of murderous people, taking their ease in camp camaraderie in the midst of those dead, began to dance and feast with great delight, and to shake with great mocking laughter, as though these fine men had performed some great deed.²⁶

To Thomas the Mongols were "wholly devoid of compassion and humanity." At another place he comments: "There was no respect for the feminine sex, no compassion for youth, no mercy for the aged. A single wicked people slaying everyone, they seemed to be not men, but devils."²⁷

The Mongols, however, were also skilled warriors whose abilities Thomas respected. He declares, "There are no people in the world that have such skill in warfare, that know so well how best in the struggle on the battlefield -- whether by strength or by cunning -- to fight and vanquish an enemy." He describes their armour as "made from layers of bull's hide, usually thick, impenetrable, and very secure." Other western writers, John of Plano Carpini for example, make similar observations.²⁸ Thomas describes the Mongols' helmets, swords, knives, and bows, and shows a particular interest in their arrows.

One suspects that his description is based upon personal examination:

Their arrows are four digits longer than ours, and arrowheads of iron, bone, and horn have been seen. The slit ends of their arrows have been so tightly wound that they rarely accept our bowstrings.²⁹

In passages describing military engagements Thomas frequently attributes a decisive role to the Mongol bowman and his arrows. The first approach to Pest was accompanied by "a hail of arrows." Several showers of arrows fell upon the defenders at Mohi, as well as upon the fleeing survivors of that battle. About the siege of Pest he writes, "The deadly arrows of the Tartars, unfailingly piercing, brought certain death. Indeed there was no breastplate, shield, or hauberk which was not penetrated by the blow delivered by the Tartar hand."³⁰ John of Plano Carpini also commented upon these arrows, three full quivers of which were carried by every Mongol horseman.³¹ Although modern historians have tended to focus attention upon long-range strategy and flexible battle-tactics based upon the Mongols' skill as horsemen, we ought not to lose sight of what Thomas regarded as a key to the Mongols' military advantage -- their skill as archers and the superiority of their arrows.³²

The second of Thomas's perceptions of the Mongols is that they are aliens, that is, a people from a distant quarter of the earth, who consorted with demons, lacked a recognized law, and indulged in unusual, even bizarre, customs. The Mongols, according to Thomas, "came from the lands of the orient." Their homeland was to be found "in that part of the world where the East is met by the North," and extended in the other direction to the borders of India. Very similar statements can be found in John of Plano Carpini and in the *Tartar Relation*.³³ Although Thomas consistently employs the name "Tartar" he knows that they called themselves Mongols (*mangoli*). He also shows an awareness of a distinction between "Tartar" and "Tatar," but makes no attempt to resolve the question of which name is to be preferred. The name "Tartar" is derived, he says, either from "a certain stream which flows past their territory," or "according to some 'Tatar' signifies the same as 'horde' (*multitudo*)."³⁴ Whether the first derivation is linked to the association of the Mongol homeland with Tartarus, a view found in Matthew Paris, is problematic. The second, about which Thomas is clearly uncertain, may echo the identification of "Tatar" with a particular tribe or group, or may be a folk etymology borrowed from a language other than Latin. In providing alternative derivations Thomas displays an almost scholarly caution. Of the physical appearance of the Mongols,

Thomas says, "they have short legs but enormous chests, their faces are broad, their skin white, with beardless cheeks, hooked noses, and narrow eyes set rather far apart."³⁵

Surprisingly, this archdeacon and cathedral canon exhibits little curiosity about Mongol religious practices. Perhaps his informants lacked detailed information. He knew, of course, they they were pagans (*gens pagana*), and at one point he states that the Mongol king trusted in the favor of devils, "with whom he was accustomed to consort." For Thomas, what was most significant about Mongol religion was that it was devoid of those sanctions applicable in the affairs of men which made international or diplomatic intercourse possible. He writes:

They conducted themselves in accordance with neither Christian, Hebrew, nor Saracen law; and for this reason no integrity is to be found among them, nor do they keep the good faith of sworn oaths. And contrary to the custom of all peoples, neither in war nor in peace do they send or receive an embassy.³⁶

The inner logic of this statement deserves closer scrutiny, for the view expressed here is an essential component of Thomas's perception of the Mongols as aliens. Adherence to Christian, Jewish, or Moslem beliefs presumably imposes upon a people certain basic norms of civilized behaviour. The absence of such beliefs leads to a collective lack of integrity. The sworn oath, so important to the orderly conduct of legal, commercial, and political business, was a characteristic common to the Peoples of the Book. Thus, the Mongols were a people apart; by definition a people of bad faith, who could not be trusted to keep their word nor to respect the immunity of diplomatic envoys.³⁷

The information in the *Historia* on Mongol political organization is rudimentary. Thomas tells the story of a Mongol king who fought three wars with neighbouring kings and in each instance emerged victorious:

When he [the Mongol king] had a war with a certain neighbouring king who had killed his [the Mongol king's] sister, who had been defiled, he descended upon him and killed him. He pursued the king's son who had fled to another king, and after a struggle, he warred against the son and against that king who had provided him with protective shelter in his kingdom. After he launched an armed attack on still a third kingdom, he engaged them in many battles and, emerging the

victor, returned home. Seeing that in all the wars such an agreeable fate favoured him, his heart began mightily to be puffed up and exalted with pride. Having decided that there should be no people or nation in the whole world capable of resisting his power, he resolved to win from all the nations the palm of glory.³⁸

Although Thomas does not say so directly, from a comparison of this passage with western sources such as John of Plano Carpini and C. de Bridia, and with oriental sources such as Juvaini and Rashîd ad-Dîn, it is clear that the king in question is Genghis Khan. The series of wars with neighbours and the decision to conquer the known world are familiar elements in the several biographies of Genghis Khan. Thomas gives the name of the Mongol king as *Cecarcanus*, a Latinized form of Khakan or Great Khan. This is thus a synecdochism, similar to the biblical use of "Pharaoh" as the name of the Egyptian king. But as the word "Genghis" means "Universal", or more accurately "Oceanic", and was a style adopted by Genghis Khan, Thomas's usage is unimpeachable.³⁹ Together with other western writers, Thomas is ignorant of the fact that Temujin was Genghis Khan's personal name. The use of a title as a personal name was not unique to Thomas and his western contemporaries; eastern chroniclers describing the Mongol invasion of Europe employ the same device with reference to a western leader. When describing the Mongol invasion of Hungary, Juvaini and Rashîd ad-Dîn apparently have no knowledge of the personal name of the Hungarian king Béla IV, but refer to him as the "Keler," and to his country as the land of the Keler. "Keler" is derived from the Hungarian word "Király" meaning "King."⁴⁰ Thus the two usages -- Thomas's reference to Temujin as "Khakan" and Juvaini's designation of Béla IV as "Keler" -- are mirror images of the same narrative device.

Whereas Thomas's brief biography of the Mongol king accords broadly with the details of the life of Genghis Khan, the impression that Genghis Khan was responsible for the invasion of Hungary is of course erroneous. Temujin died in 1227 and was succeeded by his son Ogedei (1229-1241). It was the latter who formulated the plan to invade eastern Europe, but of Ogedei Thomas knows nothing. The only Mongol leaders he knows by name are Batu and Qadan: Batu was the victor at Mohi; Qadan was King Béla's pursuer. Thomas refers to them as the elder and younger sons respectively of the Khakan. In fact, however, they were not siblings, but the grandsons of Genghis Khan by different fathers: Batu, the son of Jochi, and Qadan, the son of Ogedei.⁴¹ In referring to Qadan, Thomas consistently calls him *impius dux*, the "uncivilized commander." Of the

other Mongol military leaders engaged in the East European operation, Thomas says nothing.

The picture of the Mongols as foreigners is rounded out by a sequence of observations on their unusual customs. Like William of Rubruck later in the century, Thomas of Spalato was curious about the Mongol diet, which lacked bread and included clean and unclean meat and a beverage made of "curdled milk mixed with horse's blood." This unappetizing potion is probably to be understood as kumiz (*qumys*), fermented mare's milk, which other writers describe.⁴² The reference to horse's blood, while it might be a confusion on Thomas's part, may well be an allusion to some element of ritual horse sacrifice.⁴³ Thomas notes that the Mongol tents were made of felt or leather. The use of these materials was no doubt imposed by necessity. When given a choice, Mongol leaders seem to have been willing to give up the traditional yurt. Several years after the Mongol invasion of Hungary, John of Plano Carpini visited the court of Batu Khan on the banks of the Volga. There he saw Batu enthroned amidst great splendor and noted that he possessed "large and very beautiful tents of linen which used to belong to the King of Hungary."⁴⁴

Almost all western commentators took note of the horses used by the Mongols, and Thomas was no exception. He correctly observed that Mongol horses were different from those familiar to Europeans in that they were "small but strong" and capable of enduring hard work and even starvation: "They are satisfied with a little straw for fodder." The Mongol horses were docile animals that could march and fight in silence. Moreover, they were quick and could "race over rocks and crags without horseshoes as though they were wild goats."⁴⁵ The extraordinary stamina of these animals may have been reinforced by occasional interbreeding with the wild Przewalsky horse, whose capacity to survive in a harsh climate and unfavorable environment has been observed by modern zoologists.⁴⁶ When horses could not be used for transport over bodies of water, the Mongols devised coracles -- shallow wicker boats -- whose construction Thomas describes.⁴⁷

Thomas also tells of the unusual burial customs of the Mongols. The dead were to be interred in a "most secret place." "They bury him [the deceased] in the ground, levelling the grave and trampling the area with horses' hooves lest there should be any indication of a burial." We can compare this statement with a nearly contemporaneous account by the Persian historian Juzjani (d. 1260): "In the night-time the place [grave] is covered up, and horses are driven over it, in such a manner that not a trace of it remains"; and with an

eyewitness account by a Chinese envoy to Mongolia in about 1232, found in the *Hei-Ta Shih-luëh*: "The tombs . . . of (the Mongols) have no mound; they are trodden over by horses so as to appear as the even ground."⁴⁸ The accuracy of Thomas's description of Mongol customs is all the more remarkable when we recall that, unlike some thirteenth-century writers on the Mongols, he did not witness these practices, but, as he himself says, was dependent upon what he could hear "from more inquiring persons who have looked into the matter."

It is possible now for us to distill from Thomas's narrative the elements which made the Mongols a people apart: first, their distant geographical origins; second, their distinctive physical appearance; third, their lack of adherence to Christian, Hebrew, or Moslem law; and fourth, their strange customs, including dietary practices and burial rites.

The third perception which we encounter in the *Historia* is that of the Mongols as instruments of divine chastisement. Thomas of Spalato readily accepted the prevailing historiographical outlook of his day. God acted in the affairs of men, and the sinfulness of man could provoke divine wrath. It would be misleading, however, to suggest that such considerations were at the heart of Thomas's historical narrative. On the contrary, the hand of God is commonly found only in the background, at a distance. But the fury and devastation of the Mongol invasion brought the theme of divine punishment to the fore. Early in chapter 36 Thomas mentions a solar eclipse that occurred on Sunday, 6 October 1241, an event which occasioned great fear. He says nothing of its significance, nor was that necessary. His readers would readily have understood this natural phenomenon to be an evil portent.

After the conquest of the Alföld and Transylvania in 1241, an unnamed monk experienced a vision. Here is how Thomas relates this story, together with a somewhat equivocal conclusion:

A certain monk (*religiosus vir*) was sorely afflicted with deep grief because of the plight of the Christian people, wondering and fervently longing to know the reason why Almighty God had allowed the land of Hungary to be wasted by the sword of the pagans, since there the Catholic faith flourished and respect for the churches prevailed in the highest degree. At night he heard in a vision: "Do not marvel, brother, lest divine judgment should seem unjust to you, for although the supreme mercy of God had endured the many misdeeds of this people, nevertheless in no way could He tolerate the crime of

abominable wantonness on the part of three bishops." Of whom this was said, however, was not disclosed to me.⁴⁹

Thomas neither explicitly embraces nor repudiates the story. Modern efforts to uncover evidence for such episcopal "abominable wantonness" have also been unsuccessful.

Whereas the monk's vision is set in a regional context, explaining the devastation of Hungary as punishment for the sins of three Hungarian bishops, Thomas reports that in the lands of the Emperor Frederick II, the Mongol invasion was seen in apocalyptic terms. After consulting ancient writings, "especially the sayings of the martyr Methodius" (i.e., the sibyllic prophecies of Pseudo-Methodius), many thought the Mongols to be "the ones who were to precede the coming of Antichrist."⁵⁰ Thomas is careful not to endorse this explanation either. Nothing in his background or career predisposed him to accept millennial speculation. He seems satisfied to report that some people interpreted the Mongol invasion in such terms.

Thomas was more attracted to the appropriateness of Old Testament prophecy. Toward the end of his narration of the invasion he observes that after the Mongols withdrew, famine brought death to nearly as many people as did "the savagery of the Tartars," and that wolves came out of their dens to prey upon men. In words which seem to allude to the threefold destruction of Israel mentioned in Ezekiel 38:20-22, Thomas offers his own opinion: "Thus the whole kingdom of Hungary continued to be lashed for three years by the disasters spoken of old, namely, by the sword, by famine, and by wild beasts."⁵¹ The Dalmatian archdeacon, seemingly minimizing the effect of the Mongol invasion in his native region and placing the burden for divine retribution upon the Hungarians, concluded his Mongol narrative by saying: "And by divine judgment the Hungarians suffered inordinately the punishment of their sins." With this declaration we glimpse some of the central components of Thomas of Spalato's historiographical perspective, grounded in Old Testament prophecy, free from pseudo-Methodian speculation, and tinged with Dalmatian regional antipathy for the Hungarians.

The view of the Mongols found in Thomas of Spalato's *Historiā* combines the three perceptions of the invaders -- as heartless warriors, aliens, and instruments of divine chastisement -- into an interlocking narrative whole. This historiographical orientation is complemented by the reasonably high degree of factual accuracy noted above, and by a vigorous, carefully articu-

lated Latin prose style. These attributes distinguish Thomas's account as a fine example of thirteenth-century historical writing. Closer to the events which he describes than Matthew Paris, and possessing as keen an eye for detail as John of Plano Carpini, although without the latter's range of intimate personal observation, Thomas of Spalato is entitled to a more prominent place in the company of mediaeval narrators of Europe's encounter with the Mongols.

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NOTES

¹ The present essay is a revised version of a paper read at the Fourth International Colloquium on Mediaeval Civilization: "Travellers, Traders and Foreigners -- The Mediaeval View of the Outsider," Scarborough College, University of Toronto, January 21, 1981. The author wishes to thank the organizer of the conference, Professor Michael Gervers, for his kind invitation and generous hospitality.

² The standard edition of Thomas's *Historia* was published posthumously by F. Rački, *Monumenta Spectantia Historiam Slavorum Meridionalium*, 26 (Zagreb 1894). Although defective as a variorum edition, lacking a textual introduction and without a full collation of one of the four extant manuscripts, the Rački edition is to be preferred to the earlier editions which were based upon only a single, late manuscript. All references in this paper are to the Rački edition (hereinafter cited as Thomas, *Historia*). The *editio princeps*, prepared from a sixteenth-century transcription of one of the late manuscripts (Vat. Lat. Nr. 7019), was published by J. Lucius (I. Lučić) in his *De Regno Dalmatiae et Croatiae Libri Sex* (Amsterdam 1666). This version with only minor revisions was reprinted by J.G. Schwandtner, *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum, Dalmaticarum, Croaticarum et Slavonicarum III* (Vienna 1748). The extracts from the *Historia* published by D. Farlati in volume V of *Illyricum Sacrum* (Venice 1772), and in the *Acta Sanctorum* (April 11: *De SS Martyribus Dalmatis*, vol. 11, 1866; and August 4: *St. Raynerius*, vol. 35, 1867) both derive from Lucius' edition.

L. von Heinemann edited the extract, which contains the four chapters on the Mongols, published in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores* 29 (Hanover 1892). Von Heinemann, however, based his edition on the Vatican manuscript which he erroneously believed to be the *codex unicus*, and for that reason his edition has been superseded by that of Rački. Translations of Thomas's work have been published in Italian, Hungarian, and Serbo-Croatian. A fragmentary translation of some of the early chapters was published by A. Barbiani and G. Cadorin, *Tommaso arcidiacono della chiesa di Spalato: Notizie di Salona, antica città della Dalmazia* (Venice 1843). A translation of the entire work was first undertaken by the Italian scholar P. Fontana whose text appeared serially in *Archivio storico per la Dalmazia* (Rome 1939-1940). K. Szabó published a Hungarian translation of the chapters concerning the Mongols in the nineteenth century: "Tamás spalatói esperest 'Historia Salonitana' -- jaból a tatárjárás története (37-40 fejezet)," in *Magyarország történetének forrásai*, I, 2 (Pest 1861) 57-84. The only Serbo-Croatian translation was published by V. Rismondo, *Toma Archidakon: Kronika* (Split 1960); reprinted with a facsimile of the Split codex by the Čakavski Sabor (Split 1977). The present writer has been at work on the preparation of an English translation of the complete chronicle, and a German translation of the chapters on the Mongols, scheduled to appear in the series *Ungarns Geschichtsschreiber: Vol. III: Der Mongolensturm*, ed. H. Göckenjan.

³ Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H.R. Luard, 7 vols., Rolls Series (London 1872-1883) IV. The only English translation is by J.A. Giles, *Matthew Paris' English History*, 3 vols. (London 1852-1854). See the admiring comments of J.J. Saunders, "Matthew Paris and the Mongols," *Essays in Mediaeval History Presented to Bertie Wilkinson*, ed. T.A. Sandquist and M.R. Powicke (Toronto 1969) 116-32, esp. 116 n. 1 for references to the earlier critical literature.

⁴ K. Schnith, *England in einer sich wandelnden Welt (1189-1259). Studien zu Roger Wendover und Matthäus Paris* (Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters, Bd. 7, Stuttgart 1974) esp. 137-67. On the trustworthiness and historiographical intent of the letters in the *Chronica Majora* see K. Rudolf, "Die Tartaren 1241/1242. Nachrichten und Wiedergabe: Korrespondenz und Historiographie," *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 19 (1977) 79-107; and H.-E. Hilpert, *Kaiser- und Papstbriefe in den Chronica Majora des Matthäus Paris* (Veröffentlichungen des deutschen historischen Instituts London, Bd. 9, Stuttgart 1981), 153-73.

⁵ Unfortunately no modern edition of the *Speculum Historiale* exists.

The most readily accessible edition is that found in *Speculum Quadruplex sive Speculum Maius*, 4 vols. (Douai 1624, repr. Graz 1965) IV. For studies of Vincent of Beauvais and the Mongols see G.G. Guzman, "The Encyclopedist Vincent of Beauvais and his Mongol Extracts from John of Plano Carpini and Simon of Saint-Quentin," *Speculum* 49 (1974) 287-307; and A.D. von den Brincken, "Die Mongolen im Weltbild der Lateiner um die Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des 'Speculum Historiale' des Vincenz von Beauvais OP," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 57 (1975) 117-40.

⁶ The critical edition of John of Plano Carpini's *Historia Mongolorum* is that of A. van den Wyngaert, *Sinica Franciscana I* (Quaracchi-Firenze 1929) 3-130. For an English translation see C. Dawson, ed., *The Mongol Mission* (London 1955) pp. 3-72. See also D. Sinor, "John of Plano Carpini's Return from the Mongols. New Light from a Luxembourg Manuscript," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1957) 193-206; and idem, "Mongol and Turkic Words in the Latin Versions of John of Plano Carpini's Journey to the Mongols (1245-1247)" in Louis Ligeti, ed., *Mongolian Studies* (Budapest 1970) pp. 537-51. Both articles have been reprinted in D. Sinor, *Inner Asia and its Contacts with Medieval Europe* (London 1977).

⁷ The critical text of Simon of Saint-Quentin has been established by J. Richard in *Histoire des Tartares* (Documents relatifs à l'histoire des croisades 8, Paris 1965). See also J. Richard, "The Mongols and the Franks," *Journal of Asian History* 3 (1969) 45-57, reprinted in J. Richard, *Orient et occident au moyen âge: contacts et relations (XII^e - XV^e siècles)* (London 1976); and G.G. Guzman, "Simon of Saint-Quentin and the Dominican Mission to the Mongol Baiju: A Reappraisal," *Speculum* 46 (1971) 232-49.

⁸ See *Carmen Miserabile super Destructione Regni Hungariae per Tartaros*, ed., L. Juhász, in I Szentpétery, ed., *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum*, 2 vols. (Budapest 1937-1938) II, 543-88; a German translation by H. Göckenjan in *Ungarns Geschichtsschreiber*, III: *Der Mongolensturm* is forthcoming. C. de Bridia, *Historia Tartarorum*, ed. A. Önnorfors (Berlin 1967); an English translation in R.A. Skelton, T.E. Marston, and G.D. Painter, *The Vinland Map and the Tartar Relation* (New Haven 1965) 54-101. William of Rubruck, *Itinerarium*, ed. A. van den Wyngaert, *Sinica Franciscana I*, 147-332; an English translation in Dawson, *op. cit.* (at n. 6) 87-220.

⁹ For the western view of the Byzantines see F. Haenssler, *Byzanz und Byzantiner. Ihr Bild im Spiegel der Überlieferung der germanischen Reiche im frühen Mittelalter* (Bern 1960); M.G. Arbagi, "Byzantium in Latin Eyes: 800-1204"

(Ph.D. Diss. Rutgers 1969); B. Ebels-Hoving, *Byzantium in Westerse Ogen, 1096-1204* (Assen 1971), with English summary, 272-85; and M. Rentschler, "Greichische Kultur und Byzanz im Urteil westlicher Autoren des 10. Jahrhunderts," *Saeculum* 29 (1978) 324-55. For a somewhat different approach see D.J. Geanakopolos, *Interaction of the 'Sibling' Byzantine and Western Cultures in the Middle Ages and the Italian Renaissance (330-1600)* (New Haven 1976) esp. 55-94, 95-117. Western attitudes toward the Moslems have been examined by N. Daniel, *Islam and the West. The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh 1966), and R.W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge 1962).

¹⁰ For reliable, factual surveys describing the historical course of European-Mongol contacts see D. Sinor, "Les relations entre les Mongols et l'Europe jusqu'à la mort d'Arghoun et de Béla IV," *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale* 3 (1956) 39-61; and idem, "The Mongols and Western Europe," in K.M. Setton, ed., *A History of the Crusades III* (Madison, Wisc. 1975) 513-44. Both have been reprinted in Sinor, *Inner Asia and its Contacts with Mediaeval Europe* (London 1977). The point of departure for modern interpretive studies of the European perception of the Mongols is the work of I. Pálffy, *A tatárok es a XIII. századi europa* (Hefte des Collegium Hungaricum in Wien II, Budapest 1928) with a bibliography of the earlier literature, 61-67, and German summary, 69-72. More recent studies are C.W. Connell, "Western Views of the Tartars, 1240-1340," (Ph.D. Diss. Rutgers 1969); idem, "Western Views of the Origin of the 'Tartars': an Example of the Influence of Myth in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 3 (1973) 115-37; H. Euler, "Die Begegnung Europas mit den Mongolen im spiegel abendländischer Reiseberichte," *Saeculum* 23 (1972) 47-58; G.A. Bezzola, *Die Mongolen in abendländischer Sicht (1220-1270)* (Bern 1974); and von den Brincken, "Die Mongolen im Weltbild der Lateiner," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* (1975). More popular general works based largely on secondary materials are J.J. Saunders, *A History of the Mongol Conquests* (London 1971), and J. Chambers, *The Devil's Horsemen: The Mongol Invasion of Europe* (New York 1979). A modern cultural history of the Mongols and their neighbours, with useful bibliography, is L. Kwanten, *Imperial Nomads, A History of Central Asia, 500-1500* (Philadelphia 1979).

¹¹ Bezzola, *op. cit.* (at n. 10), was unable to make use of recent historiographical studies which have appeared since 1971 and has a tendency to take his sources at face value; see Rudolf, *art. cit.* (at n. 4) 92n. Bezzola and Connell (*op. cit.* [at n. 10]) do make use of Thomas of Spalato's *Historia*;

Bezzola does so with insight. But neither writer seems aware of the existence of Rački's critical edition, and their bibliographies lack even a single study devoted specifically to Thomas and his work.

¹² The basic studies devoted to Thomas and his work are I. Kršnjavi, *Zur Historia Salonitana des Thomas Archidiaconus van Spalato* (Zagreb 1900); C. Šegvić, *Tommaso Archidiacono di Spalato: il suo tempo e la sua opera* (Spalato 1914); A. Selem, *Tommaso arcidiacono e la storia medioevale di Spalato* (Zara 1933). For a discussion of Thomas's career and the city in which he lived see G. Novak, *Povijest Splita*, 3 vols. (Split 1957-1965; 2nd ed., 4 vols., Split 1978) I, 100-30. The question of the relationship of Thomas's *Historia* to another mediaeval text known as the *Historia Salonitana Maior* has been hotly disputed by N. Klaić and S. Gunjača; see N. Klaić, *Historia Salonitana Maior* (Academie Serbe des sciences et des artes, Monographies, T. 399, cl. sci. soc. no 55, Belgrade 1967); and a series of studies published in S. Gunjača, *Ispravci i dopune starijoj hrvatskoj historiji*, 2 vols. (Zagreb 1973). Although this debate has a bearing on the question of Thomas's sources and historical methodology, it applies only to the earlier portion of his narrative before 1200, and thus has no direct relationship to the historiography of the Mongol material.

¹³ T. Smičiklas, *Codex Diplomaticus Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Salvoniae*, III (Zagreb 1905) 265, no. 239.

¹⁴ Thomas, *Historia*, 187-200.

¹⁵ Selem, *op. cit.* (at n. 12) 22 f. On the political implications of this new civic history see Q. Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge 1978) I, 28-35.

¹⁶ Thomas, *Historia*, 168.

¹⁷ Bezzola, *op. cit.* (at n. 10) 103 f., has speculated on a possible relationship between Thomas of Spalato and the account of the journeys in search of *Magna Hungaria* of the Dominican friar Julian but offers no argumentation; cf. H. Dörrie, "Drei Texte zur Geschichte der Ungarn und Mongolen: Die Missionsreisen des fr. Julianus O.P. ins Uralgebiet (1234/35) und nach Russland (1237) und der Bericht des Erzbischofs Peter über die Tartaren," *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* 1, phil.-hist. Kl. Nr. 6 (1956), 125-202. Both Bezzola, *ibid.* 91, and Connell, *op. cit.* (at n. 10) 102, presume Roger to have been a source of information for Thomas, but offer no evidence to support their view. A comparison of the scope, contents, tone, and text of Thomas's *Historia* and Roger's *Carmen Miserabile* strongly

suggests the contrary. Although John of Plano Carpini ended his career as archbishop of Antibari, and at points both he and Thomas are in agreement on aspects of Mongol customs, we have no evidence to suggest that the Dalmatian archdeacon and archbishop ever had occasion to meet.

¹⁸ The oldest manuscript, written in beneventan minuscule, is housed in the archive of the Cathedral Chapter of Split (MS Nr. 623), see D. Diana, N. Gogola, S. Matijević, *Riznica splitske katedrale* (Split 1972) 152 f. Perhaps the most handsome of the manuscripts is the illuminated codex in the National Széchényi Library in Budapest (Cod. Lat. Nr. 440), see E. Bartoniek, *Codices Manuscripti Latini*, I (Budapest 1940) 395-97. The manuscript that scholars have known longest is the late paper codex in the Vatican Library (MS Vat. Lat. Nr. 7019). The fourth, and latest, mediaeval manuscript is also a paper codex written in two distinct fifteenth-century hands and housed in the library of the University of Zagreb (MS Nr. R3311). The scribe of the second portion of the Zagreb MS appears to have had associations with the abbey of St. Chrisogonus at Zara, and this may provide a clue to its provenance.

¹⁹ The first continuator was the Spalatan nobleman Michas Madius de Barbazanis in the fourteenth century who composed the *Historia de Gestis Romanorum Imperatorum et Summorum Pontificum*, ed. Schwandtner, *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum*, III 636-53. Somewhat later in the same century A. Cutheis wrote the *Summa Historiarum . . . de Gestis Civium Spalatinorum*, ed. Schwandtner, III 654-61, describing the effects of the plague and the rise of the Turkish threat to the Balkans.

²⁰ Both H. Simonsfeld, *Andreas Dandolo und seine Geschichtswerke* (Munich 1876) 128, and H. Marczali, *Ungarns Geschichtsquellen im Zeitalter der Arpaden* (Berlin 1882) 116-18, commented upon Dandolo's indebtedness to Thomas's *Historia*. The Venetian's account of the Mongol invasion is relatively brief, and the modern editor of the text has carefully noted the passage which relies upon Thomas: Andrea Dandolo, *Chronica per Extensum Descripta aa. 46-1280 d. C.*, ed. E. Pastorello, in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* (Racolta degli storici italiani . . . ordinata da L.A. Muratori, nuova edizione, edd. G. Carducci, V. Fiorini, P. Fedele) XII pt. 1 (Bologna 1942-1958) 299.

²¹ Thomas, *Historia*, 132-78.

²² The fundamental modern study of the Mongol invasion of Europe remains G. Strakosch-Grassmann, *Der Einfall der Mongolen in Mitteleuropa in den Jahren 1241 und 1242* (Innsbruck 1893). The only detailed scholarly account of the Mongol presence in Croatia, also containing editions of relevant Latin texts,

is I. Kukuljević-Sakcinski, *Borba Hrvatah s Mongoli i Tartari* (Zagreb 1863). The more recent work of A. Tresić Pavčić, *Izgon Mongola iz Hrvatske prigodom sedamstote godišnjice, 1242-1942* (Zagreb 1942), is a more popular treatment intended to commemorate the seven-hundredth anniversary of the invasion of Croatia. The unusual thesis advanced by E. Lederer, "L'invasion des Tartares en Hongrie et les relations internationales de l'époque," *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 2 (1953) 1-45 (Russian text with French summary, 44 f.), stating that the principal causes of the invasion were feudal anarchy prevailing in Hungary and the weakness of Europe brought on by the struggle between the Empire and the papacy, has won little scholarly support.

²³ See Juvaini, *History of the World-Conqueror*, 2 vols. trans. J.A. Boyle (Manchester 1958); Rashīd ad-Dīn, *Successors of Genghis Khan*, trans. J.A. Boyle (New York, 1971); and the extract from the *Yüan Shih* in E. Bretschneider, *Medieval Researchers from Eastern Asiatic Sources*, 2 vols. (London 1888) 330-32.

²⁴ Thomas, *Historia*, 163.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 164.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 174.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 165.

²⁸ Dawson, *op. cit.* (at n. 6) 33 f.

²⁹ Thomas, *Historia*, 170.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 166.

³¹ Dawson, *op. cit.* (at n. 6) 34 f.

³² To the Armenians, and especially to Grigor of Akner, the Mongols' skill at archery was their distinguishing feature, a characteristic which may have been imputed to all central Asian nomads; see Grigor of Akanc', *A History of the Nation of the Archers (the Mongols)*, ed. and trans. R.P. Blake and R.N. Frye (Cambridge, Mass. 1954) 116 n. For the correct name of this chronicler see *ibid.*, corrigenda, 177.

³³ Dawson *op. cit.* (at n. 6) 5, and Skelton, et al., *op. cit.* (at n. 8) 54-56.

³⁴ Thomas, *Historia*, 169: "Est enim regio illorum in ea parte orbis sita, ubi oriens coniungitur aquiloni, gentesque ille secundum proprietatem lingue sue mangoli appellantur . . . Hoc autem nomen, tartari, non nomen est gentis proprium, sed a quadam aqua, que illorum preterfluit regionem, sic appellati sunt, vel secundum quosdam tatar idem sonat quod multitudo." Although Rački corrected the text here, the Split and Budapest Mss have the

reading "mangoli." The Split, Budapest and Vatican Mss preserve the distinction between "Tartari" and "Tatar" found in this passage, but Rački's emendation has obscured this difference. The Split and Budapest Mss use "Tatar" irregularly as a variant of "Tartar" as, for example, in the chapter headings of the Split codex: "De Natura Tatarorum" and "De Sevitia Tatororum" (*sic*). Friar Julian, C. de Bridia, and John of Plano Carpini, like Thomas, derive "Tartar" from the name of a stream which is called "Tatar." None of these writers embraced the fabulous derivation from "Tartarus" found in Matthew Paris. It is, therefore, tendentious to assert that wherever in western sources one encounters the term "Tartar" it must have been preferred because of the popularity of Matthew Paris' understanding of it; cf. Connell, *art. cit.* (at n. 10) 117-19. Another derivation of the name "Tatar" is offered by Grigor of Acanc' who wrote that they are "called Tat'ar, which means sharp and swift" (*op. cit.* [at n. 32] 19). Although modern historians persist in their efforts to define the original meaning of "Tatar", first applied to a particular central Asian tribe later incorporated into the Mongol confederacy, and seek to link it with the Chinese term "ta-ta" (see Saunders, "Matthew Paris and the Mongols," 124 n.; and Bezzola, *op. cit.* [at n. 10] 43 n.), knowledgeable linguists since Pelliot have rejected this etymology and have concluded that the meaning of "Tatar" is unknown; see F.W. Cleaves, "The Mongolian Names and Terms in the *History of the Nation of the Archers*," in Grigor of Akanc', *op. cit.* (at n. 32) 160; and Sinor, "Mongol and Turkic Words . . ." (at n. 6) 547.

³⁵ Thomas, *Historia* 170. Thomas appears to be the first western chronicler to provide this sort of description of the Mongols' physical appearance, see Bezzola, *op. cit.* (at n. 10) 92.

³⁶ Thomas, *Historia*, 169 f. Thomas here appreciates the common cultural traditions of Christians, Jews, and Moslems, and recognizes the separate character of Mongol shamanism. Of course, the Mongols did possess a code of law, the *yasag* or *yasa* of which Thomas is ignorant, see R. Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes, A History of Central Asia*, trans. N. Walford (New Brunswick, N.J. 1970) 221. The thirteenth-century Chinese account found in the *Hei-Ta Shih-luēh* (Changsha 1937) 6, specifically contradicts Thomas's assertion about the Mongols' observance of oaths: ". . . by custom they are candid and honest and they never deviate from their word. According to their law, a liar must die and so no one dares commit fraud." I am indebted to Professor Wayne Schleppe of the Department of East Asian Studies of the University of Toronto for this reference.

³⁷ Bezzola, *op. cit.* (at n. 10) 99, has argued that since the messages given by the Khan were always in the form of ultimata, Thomas is technically correct in stating that the Mongols do not exchange embassies. This may well have been the experience of King Béla IV down to 1241-1242. From 1245 onward, however, such exchanges did occur; see I. de Rachewiltz, *Papal Envoys to the Great Khans* (London 1971). Since the policy changed between 1245-1247, this passage points to an early date for Thomas's composition of these chapters, sometime before circa 1247.

³⁸ Thomas, *Historia*, 169. Bezzola, *op. cit.* (at n. 10) 46, has suggested that the defiling and killing of the Mongol king's sister corresponds with a story about the sister of "Gurgutam" found in Friar Julian's narrative. The story in the *Historia* is probably a conflation of several tales. If, however, we concentrate on the general context wherein the abduction and defiling of the woman leads to the first great war of the Mongol king with his neighbours, it is more likely that Thomas's story refers to the abduction of Genghis Khan's wife Börte-Fujin, who was carried off by the Merkits. This abduction precipitated a Mongol attack upon the Merkits which brought about not only Börte's recovery, but launched Genghis Khan's military career. See *Die Geheime Geschichte der Mongolen*, trans. E. Haenisch (2nd ed., Leipzig 1948) 22 f. After Börte's return from among the Merkits she gave birth to Genghis Khan's eldest son Jochi, about whom there was a question of paternity, hence perhaps the reference to the defiling of the lady. As Batu Khan was Jochi's son, such stories could well have been circulating among the Mongol invaders and been picked up by the Hungarian captives.

³⁹ For the meaning of "Genghis" ("Jenghiz," "Chinggis") see Grousset, *op. cit.* (at n. 36) 202, 216, 581 n.; and Kwanten, *op. cit.* (at n. 10) 112. For the Mongol version of the elevation of Genghis Khan in 1206, see *Die Geheime Geschichte* (at n. 38) 91 and note on p. 159.

⁴⁰ Juvaini, *op. cit.* (at n. 23) I, 270 f.; Rashîd ad-Dîn, *op. cit.* (at n. 23) 56 f.

⁴¹ Rashîd ad-Dîn, *op. cit.* (at n. 23) 107 f. (Batu), and 27 f., 249 (Qadan).

⁴² Thomas, *Historia*, 170. The most extensive treatment of the making of *qumys* is found in William of Rubruck, ed. Dawson, *op. cit.* (at n. 6) 98 f. Bezzola, *op. cit.* (at n. 10) 93 believes the reference in Thomas to be the earliest found in any western source.

⁴³ Ritualistic horse sacrifice was common among the Eurasian nomads in-

cluding the early Magyars, see J. Deér, *Heidnisches und Christliches in der altungarischen Monarchie* (2nd ed., Darmstadt 1969) 62. See also J.A. Boyle, "A Form of Horse Sacrifice Amongst the 13th- and 14th-Century Mongols," *Central Asiatic Journal* 10 (1965) 145-50.

⁴⁴ Dawson *op. cit.* (at n. 6) 57. Felt making has, nevertheless, remained an essential feature of Eurasian culture, see Michael and Veronika Gervers, "Felt-making Craftsmen of the Anatolian and Iranian Plateaux," *Textile Museum Journal* 4 (1974) 15-29.

⁴⁵ Thomas, *Historia*, 170 f.

⁴⁶ According to D. Sinor, the horse was to the armies of Inner Asia what cannon was to the armies of Renaissance Europe; "Horse and Pasture in Inner Asian History," *Oriens Extremis* 19 (1972) 171-84, reprinted in Sinor, *Inner Asia and its Contacts with Medieval Europe* (London 1977). On the Przevalsky horse see S. Bökönyi, *The Przevalsky Horse* (London 1974), esp. 54-57, 85-87.

⁴⁷ See D. Sinor, "On Water Transport in Central Eurasia," *Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher* 33 (1961) 158-59, reprinted in Sinor, *Inner Asia and its Contacts with Medieval Europe* (London 1977).

⁴⁸ Cited by Boyle, *art. cit.* (at n. 43) 145 f.

⁴⁹ Thomas, *Historia*, 168.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 171. For the "Sermon" of pseudo-Methodius see E. Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen* (Halle 1898) 59-96. Whether Thomas knew this text directly or was acquainted with the pseudo-Methodian prophecies through an intermediary, possibly the *Historia Scholastica* of Petrus Comestor, a standard school text of the period, is impossible to determine. It is worth observing that Thomas attributes such speculation neither to Dalmatians nor Hungarians, but to those around the Emperor Frederick II. There is no doubt, however, that such myths about Gog and Magog preceding Antichrist were widely known; Sackur asserts (*op. cit.* 58) that manuscripts of pseudo-Methodius were "legion." These speculations were bound up also with the mediaeval tales of Alexander the Great; see A.R. Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge, Mass. 1932) 44-51. The dissemination of such tales, therefore, makes it certain that a knowledge of pseudo-Methodian prophecy was reasonably widespread; see N. Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (New York 1961) 18. For the connection between these prophecies and the Mongols, see Connell, *op. cit.* (at n. 10).

⁵¹ Thomas, *Historia*, 178.

APPENDIX

Narrative Segments

dealing with the Mongols in Thomas of Spalato's *Historia*

- A. Sketch of Mongol history (ch. 36)
1. Mongols (Tartars) came from "the lands in the orient."
 2. Mongols attacked the "Ruthenians" (Kievan Russians) who repulsed them.
 3. After this Mongols turned northward "for twenty years and more."
 4. Meanwhile the Mongolian army had been increased by additions of subject peoples, especially Cumans.
 5. Mongols attacked and destroyed Suzdal, and killed its ruler, Prince Yuri II [1238].
 6. After this the Mongols set out for Hungary.
- B. Mongol entry into Hungary (ch. 36)
1. The invasion commenced around Easter (31 March) 1241.
 2. Mongol axemen destroyed Hungarian barricades in the Carpathian passes.
 3. At first the Mongols spared the peasants in the lands which they invaded.
 4. The leaders of the invasion were "two brothers" -- Batu and Qadan.
 5. An advance party attacked King Béla IV at Pest, discharging "a hail of arrows," but withdrew after encountering resistance.
- C. Battle of Mohi [11 April 1241] (ch. 36)
1. King Béla in pursuit of retreating army made camp on the banks of the Sajó near Mohi while the Mongolian army was partly concealed by woods.
 2. Batu ascended a nearby hill.
 3. Batu made a speech to his men.
 4. The Mongolian army made an unsuccessful night attack on bridge over the Sajó.
 5. Using siege engines at dawn, Mongols took control of the bridge.
 6. Mongols surrounded the Hungarian camp.
 7. Valiant defense efforts of three Hungarian leaders failed.
 8. Hungarian camp was overwhelmed.
 9. Mongols opened ranks to permit Hungarians to flee.
 10. Fleeing army hemmed in by Mongols who massacred stragglers.
 11. Remnant of fleeing army perished in a marsh.
- D. Mongol atrocities in the cities and towns (ch. 36)
1. Women, children, and the aged stripped naked and pierced by spears.
 2. Mongol women killed beautiful captive women, disfigured and enslaved others.
 3. Mongol children beat captive children to death for sport.
 4. Convents of religious were invaded, occupants decapitated, holy objects profaned.

E. Capture of Pest [1241] (ch. 36)

1. The "swift Tartars" arrived at Pest before most defenses of the city could be completed.
2. Mongols reconnoitred the town.
3. Pest was encircled and besieged. Mongolian bowmen and their "deadly arrows" proved decisive.
4. After two or three days resistance was abandoned.
5. Upon entering Pest the Mongols massacred the defenseless population.
6. Mongols withdrew from the town, setting it ablaze.
7. The Dominican convent at Pest, crowded with refugees, was burned by the Mongols.

F. Mongol occupation of the Alföld and Transylvania (ch. 36)

1. Piles of dead bodies on the left bank of the Danube.
2. Corpses of children pierced by lances were paraded by Mongols along river bank.
3. Captured booty: horses and other animals, treasure, slaves.

G. Mongol origins and customs (ch. 37)

1. Mongol homeland is "where the east is met by the north."
2. In their own language they are called Mongols (*mangoli*). The name "Tartar" is derived from a certain stream, or signifies a horde or mass of people (*multitudo*).
3. "Their king's name is Khakan" (*Cecarcanus*, i.e., Great Khan).
4. Brief sketch of the life of Khakan (Genghis Khan?) who "decided that there should be no people or nation in the whole world capable of resisting his power."
5. Mongols are unsurpassed in military skill.
6. Living under neither Christian, Hebrew nor Saracen law the Mongols lack integrity and do not keep sworn oaths.
7. Mongols do not send or receive embassies.
8. Their armour and weapons.
9. Their battle standard (the *tug*).
10. Characteristics of Mongolian horses.
11. Food and eating habits.
12. Burial practices.
13. Method of crossing streams
14. Use of felt and leather tents.
15. Mongols believed by some to be the people prophesied to precede the coming of Antichrist (i.e. Gog and Magog; cf. Ezek. 38.2-39:6, Rev. 20.8, and pseudo-Methodius).

H. Invasion of the Dunántúl [1242] (ch. 38).

1. Mongols crossed frozen Danube to burn Buda (*Budalia*).
2. Esztergom (*Gran*, *Strigonium*) pillaged and burned but citadel escaped.
3. Székesfehérvár threatened, but saved by strong garrison and swampy terrain.

I. Pursuit of King Bela (ch. 39).

1. Qadan advanced into Slavonia and Croatia pursuing King Béla.
2. Populace fled to mountains and woods, thus only small-scale killings of Slavs ensued.
3. As Béla found safety on the Dalmatian coast, the Mongols made camp on the banks of the Srebrenica in the Lika district.
4. Savage massacre of the captives led out of Hungary.

J. Mongols at Spalato [March, 1242] (ch. 39)

1. First appearance of Mongols mistaken for Croatians.
2. Spalatan countryside ravaged. Refugees stream into the city.
3. Mongol advance guard approached walls of the city for possible reconnaissance.
4. Main army under Qadan arrived.
5. Fortress of Klis besieged. Rugged terrain and spirited resistance impeded Mongolian attackers. When the Mongols learned that Béla was not in Klis, the siege was lifted.
6. Mongols divided their forces: some advanced on Traù, others turned toward Spalato.

K. Attack upon Traù (ch. 39)

1. Qadan established his camp on the mainland opposite Traù. Béla boarded ship to survey Mongolian army.
2. With the Mongolian army disposed around the shore Qadan vainly attempted to cross the channel separating Traù from mainland. Mud flats impeded attackers.
3. Mongol messenger addressed populace of Traù "in the Slavonic language."
4. Failing to take the city or cause a rift among the defenders, the Mongols withdrew.
5. Five or six times the coastal towns were subjected to raids.

L. Mongol withdrawal [April, 1242] (ch. 39)

1. Qadan led his forces through Bosnia and Raška to Upper Dalmatia.
2. Bypassing Ragusa, Mongols set fire to Cattaro (Kotor).
3. Southern coastal towns of Suagio (Svač) and Drivasto (Drivast) depopulated.
4. Passing inland through Serbia Qadan rejoined the forces of Batu in Bulgaria.
5. Brutal massacre of captives -- "Hungarians, Slavs, and other peoples" -- in Bulgaria.