



Grand Commandery "King Ferdinand I" of the Knights Templar of Romania

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Iancu Hunyadi The defender of Christianity Part 3

I. Iancu Huniady "The Athlete of Christ"

About the exceptional military capabilities of Hunyadi, an indirect metaphorical reference would be made by the great Hungarian historian Paul Lendvai in one of his works. She would say that until Iancu became commander of the Hungarian armies and later regent of the Hungarian Crowns, Hungarian soldiers were the last chickens in Europe. (Lendvai 2013, 87) Of course Lendvai does not want to say that the Hungarian army was weak until then, but that with the arrival of Iancu, its power will increase considerably.

Iancu's armed power was the result of measures he took by hiring professional soldiers (paid mercenaries), but he also managed to mobilize the local peasantry against the Turkish invaders. These two innovations contributed to his first successes against Ottoman troops marching on Transylvania in early 1440. Although he was defeated at the Battle of Varna in 1444 and the Second Battle of Kosovo in 1448, his "Long Campaign" success over the Balkan Mountains in 1443–444 and the defense of Belgrade in 1456 (against troops personally led by

the sultan) brought him a reputation as a great general and he was named Pope Pius II Athleta Christi.



Hunyadi was also an eminent statesman. During his time as voivode of Transylvania (1441-1456) he took an active part in the civil war between the partisans of Vladislas I and the minor Ladislaus V (two pretenders to the throne of Hungary in the early 1440s) in favor of the former. Became very popular among the lower nobility, the Hungarian Diet named him, in 1445, as one of the seven "captains of state" being responsible for the administration of state affairs until Ladislaus V (then unanimously accepted as king) will reach the age of majority. The next Diet went even further, electing nobilis romanus Huniade as sole regent with the title of Governor, (1446 - 1452). When he resigned this position in 1452, he was granted the first hereditary title in the Kingdom of Hungary, namely the Permanent Count of Bistrita. (Kubinyi 2008, 6-12) During this time he had become one of the richest landowners in the area and maintained his influence in the Hungarian Diet until his death.

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Grand Commander in the Near Past