

COUNT IVAN ANŽ FRANKOPAN, THE ROYAL STEWARD OF THE ESTATE IN SWEDEN 1426 - 1434

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Within the framework of medieval history of Europe and its own geostrategic location, Scandinavian royalties and nobility entertained contacts with central and western Europe. Less known however, is the relationship between Eric of Pomerania, the King of the three Scandinavian realms and the Croatian nobility of Frankopans. This paper attempts to provide the short description of the conditions in Croatia and Scandinavia at the beginning of XV century, the relationship between Eric of Pommerania and count Ivan Anž Frankopan, and the role of the Republic of Dubrovnik (Ragusa) during King Eric's travel on his way to the Holy Land 1424-5. Based on Dubrovnik, Budapest, Vatican, and Scandinavian sources, a special emphasis is being given to the events surrounding Ivan Anž Frankopan's visit to Sweden. In Venetian and Scandinavian sources, he is referred to under the name of Gian Franchi and Johan Franke. Due to this reason, historians have been unaware of the real identity of King Eric's steward of the estate (fief) Stegeborg in Sweden 1426-34, count Ivan Anž Frankopan.

Key words: Frankopan, Ivan Anž; the King Eric of Pommerania; Stegeborg; Kalmar Union

I.

The Kingdom of Croatia, Dalmatia and Slavonia has been in personal union with Kingdom of Hungary since 1102. Its main parts, Dalmatia and Croatia were governed by a viceroy (Ban), and Slavonia, as the third part, was governed by its own viceroy. In the beginning of the fifteenth century the Kingdom was the object of fight between King Ladislav of Naples and his rival Sigismund of Luxemburg. Aware that he would not be able to hold the Hungaro-Croatian throne, King Ladislav of Naples sold parts of Dalmatia he still possessed in 1409, i.e. towns of Zadar, Novigrad and Vrana, and the island of Pag to the Venetian Republic for 100,000 ducats. After Zadar, the islands of Rab and Cres, and the town of Nin also came under the rule of Venice which thus gained a substantial foothold in Dalmatia and kept it until its fall in 1797.

In response to the Venetian aspirations to expand their rule to other Dalmatian towns, the new Hungaro-Croatian King Sigismund (Rex Hungarie, Dalmacie, Croacie etc.) waged a new war against Venice (1411-13), however with no success, losing towns Skradin, Ostrovica and Šibenik. A five year truce was concluded in Trieste, according to which each side retained its conquests.

When the truce expired in 1418, another war started. Sigismund was defeated in Friuli and Dalmatia. After a long siege, Venice captured Trogir and Split, and the islands of Korčula, Brač and Hvar. The only parts of the Adriatic coast left to the Croatian Kingdom (i.e. Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia) were the Frankopan town of Senj (Segna) and the island of Krk (Veglia) in the north, and Omiš (Almissa) with Krajinna and Poljica in the south.¹

The most powerful noble family in Dalmatia and Croatia at the time were the Counts of Krk

¹ Šišić, F., Pregled povijesti hrvatskog naroda, Zagreb 1962, p. 221-222; Šunjić, M., Dalmacija u XV stoljeću, Sarajevo 1976, p. 40-66.

(*Segne, Veglie et Modrusse comites*) i.e. count Nikola IV, who became Ban (Viceroy) of Dalmatia and Croatia in 1426, and whose name Frankopan (*de Frangepanibus*) was officially accepted later. In the same year he loaned King Sigismund 28,000 ducats, obtaining almost all of Croatia as security. Next to the counts of Krk, the master of the largest estates was his friend, count Ivaniš Nelipčić, whose possessions included parts of Dalmatia around Split and its inland.²

The Dubrovnik Republic (*Reipublica Ragusina*) comprised in the first half of the fifteenth century the City and its environs, peninsula Pelješac, island Mljet, Konavle inland with the islet of Molunat. The Republic stretched from the Bay of Boka Kotorska to city of Neum. In terms of government, Dubrovnik was a patrician republic run by the Senate (*Consilium rogatorum*), with the Minor Council (*Consilium minus*) as the executive authority. The Mayor Council (*Consilium maius*) consisted of 203 patricians as members. The Republic was no military power, and it was therefore forced to pursue a very skilful and strictly neutral foreign policy in order to ensure its territorial integrity and freedom of trade. Being part of the Croato-Hungarian State, it paid tribute to King Sigismund. Ragusan ships plied active trade in all ports on the western coast of the Adriatic, as well as throughout the Mediterranean, in Portugal, England and Flanders. Dubrovnik was the strongest Croatian centre of business, and it was one of the most developed European states in terms of its national income and culture.³

II.

The union of Scandinavian states was the result of the initiative of Margareth, Queen of Denmark and her skilful diplomatic efforts and negotiations with Norwegian and Swedish nobility; however, it could not pass without an armed intervention against King Albrecht of Mecklenburg, who did not enjoy the support of the Swedish nobles. One of the primary reasons underlying the creation of the union was of a foreign political nature: Queen Margareth was quite aware that Denmark on its own could not resolve the issue of Schleswig, which had long been part of Denmark and was now claimed by the Counts of Holstein. Dynastic ties favored such a union since Margareth was the daughter of of the Danish king Waldemar Atterdag, and her husband, the Norwegian king Haakon was of Swedish origin. Since their son died at an early age, and in order to secure succession, Margareth adopted the grandson of her sister Bugislawa of Pomerania, and gave him the popular Scandinavian name of Eric.

Thus, on 17 June 1397, the Union of Kalmar came into being (after the town of Kalmar in southern Sweden), and Eric was crowned as the first king of Denmark, Norway and Sweden. However, because of his youth, the official ruler continued to be his step-mother, who was given an unusual and - as far as Scandinavian history is concerned - unique title of “lady of our kingdoms, master and powerful guardian of our house”. She ruled until Eric’s coming of age in 1401, and practically until her death in 1412. Through negotiations and avoiding the issue of possession, Margareth succeeded in obtaining the recognition of Danish sovereignty over Schleswig by the Counts of Holstein.⁴

² Klaić, V., *Povjest Hrvata*, 2, Zagreb 1901, p. 113-114.

³ Stulli, B., *Povijest Dubrovačke Republike*, 1989, Dubrovnik - Zagreb, p. 50-60 etc.

⁴ Lauring, P., *A History of The Kingdom of Denmark*, Copenhagen 1969, p. 106-113.

King Eric of Pomerania faced a number of foreign and domestic policy problems caused by his imposition of customs levies on ships passing through the Sund between Denmark and Sweden, his conflict with the Hanseatic League, the appointment of Danish and German stewards in Sweden, and differences between feudal systems of Denmark and Sweden.⁵ After Margareth's death the Counts of Holstein again brought up the issue of Schleswig, and Eric was forced to seek the juridical support of his cousin, King Sigismund.⁶

Taking due account of the different area and geostrategic situation, the Counts of Holstein posed for the Danish king Eric a danger similar to that posed by the Venetian Republic for the Frankopans. The claims of the Venetian Republic in Dalmatia and northern Italy on the other side, also clashed with the interests of King Sigismund. His relations with the Frankopans ought to be regarded as a reflection of current economic interests and of the balance of power in that part of Europe in the first half of the fifteenth century.

III.

Ivan Anž VI Frankopan was the son of Nicola IV, the most powerful of the Counts of Krk and Viceroy of Croatia and Dalmatia from 1426 to 1432 (*Segne, Veglie et Modrusse comitem, Regni Dalmacie et Croacie Banus*). He was the eldest of nine brothers. His name Ivan is translated as Johannes (Latin), Hans (von Zenge, German) and Gian, Zuan or Zian (Italian). His second name Anž, is abbreviation of the latin name Angelus. In 1411, according to agreement between the parents, he became engaged to Katarina, daughter of Ivaniš Nelipčić, count of Cetina. He had adopted Ivan Anž more than a year before the engagement, because he had no male heir himself. During his war against Venetian Republic and en route to Friuli, King Sigismund issued a charter in Frankopan's town Brinje on 28 October 1412, whereby count Ivaniš Nelipčić was given licence to give his daughter Katarina, fiance of Ivan Anž, as dowry all the estates of his family.⁷ There are no records of Ivan's birth date, but in that year he and his younger brother Stjepan were mentioned as adult young men.⁸ Because of the Venetian claims on their lands, the Counts of Krk were forced not only to negotiate with Venice but also to establish ties with its rivals in Italy (such as Duke of Milan, Filippo Maria Visconti), nobles of German origin (Elisabeth, the cousin of Nikola IV, was married to Friedrich of Cilli, whose father Hermann was Ban of Slavonia), and with King Sigismund himself. There is no doubt that in addition to Croatian, Ivan Anž also spoke Latin, Italian (of Venetto-dialect) and German. He was probably educated in good manners, negotiation and the chivalric arts of the time. It may be concluded that he was brave - probably also of an adventurous spirit - and that count Nikola Frankopan trusted him as his oldest son and heir to the position of Ban of Dalmatia and Croatia.

⁵ Scott, D.F., *Sweden - the Nation's History*, South Illinois Univ. Press 1988, p. 106-113.

⁶ Olsen, A.R., *Herre i Norden*, Copenhagen 1995, p. 7-16.

⁷ Klaić 1901, p. 64.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

IV.

Friedrich, the eldest son of Hermann, Count of Cilli and Viceroy of Slavonia, married Elizabeth, the daughter of Stjepan I Frankopan in 1405. Her uncle, Nikola IV Frankopan, was to pay 32,000 ducats as the dowry. As he was probably unable to produce such a sum, he pledged her and her husband Friedrich one-half of the island of Krk, and the Trsat, Bakar and Bribir, important cities north of Senj. Friedrich left Elisabeth in 1412 for his mistress Veronika Desinić, according to popular belief, reputed *belle* from Zagorje in northern part of Croatia. His father, together with Frankopans tried for eight years to reconcile them, but without success. Elisabeth and Friedrich met at last in 1422 in a castle at Krapina, but on the first night Elisabeth died a violent death, probably slain by Friedrich by knife.⁹

At that time, King Sigismund was engaged in a war against the Hussites, the Viceroy was not in Slavonia and as Friedrich's sister Barbara was the wife of King Sigismund, no one held Friedrich accountable for Elisabeth's death until 1424. Fearing revenge and a clash with other Croatian nobles, in June of the same year Friedrich fled on horseback to Buda in order to seek protection from his sister, Queen Barbara.¹⁰ It was precisely the conflict between Frankopans and Friedrich of Cilli over the murder of Elisabeth, that occasioned the meeting between King Erik of Pommerania and Ivan Anž Frankopan.

V.

The paths of the first King of Kalmar Union and Ivan Anž crossed in Sigismund's Buda (then Offen) in June, 1424. In that year, King Sigismund convened in Buda an assembly of European nobility to discuss, among other matters, the dispute between his cousin, King Erik and the Counts of Holstein over possession of Schleswig.¹¹ Eric's father-in-law was Henry IV of Britain, and his sister was married to the Duke of Bavaria; along with the fact that he ruled the largest state in Europe, these facts also contributed to his reputation. Therefore, having arrived in Buda in February, he joined Sigismund in order to discuss the agenda of the assembly.¹² King Erik was then about 42 and, according to the description of Aenes Sylvius Piccolomini, his tall figure, fair hair, athletic build and supple movements attracted general attention and particularly the glances of womenfolk.¹³

Ivan Anž Frankopan arrived in Buda at about same time, seeking satisfaction in a duel from Friedrich of Cilli for the murder of his cousin Elisabeth. Friedrich tried to avoid the duel and was hoping to take advantage of his kinship with King Sigismund. The king, on the other side, did not want to antagonize either the Frankopans or the Cillis, and did his best to avoid scandal and

⁹ Aschbach, J., *Geschichte Kaiser Sigmund's*, 3. teil, Hamburg 1841, p. 188-190.

¹⁰ Klaić, N., *Zadnji knezi Celjski v deželah Sv. krone*, Ljubljana-Celje 1991, p. 48-49.

¹¹ Erslev, K., *Erik af Pommern*, København 1901, p. 96-98.

¹² Olsen, R., *Herre i Norden*, København 1995, p. 7-16.

¹³ Dahlerup, T., *Danmarks Historie*, vol. 6, København 1989, p. 58-63, 69, 335.

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a compromise.¹⁴ So, he found an ideal mediator in the Scandinavian king. After king Erik received, on 28 June, the charter of King Sigismund which resolved the controversy over Schleswig with the Dukes of Holstein to his advantage (count Hermann of Cilli, Ban of Slavonia, played important role in this decision),¹⁵ he could only repay the favor and use his good services in order to talk young Ivan Anž out of confrontation with Friedrich of Cilli. His persuasiveness proved successful. It is certain that while talking to Ivan, King Erik became familiar with Ivan Anž's character, linguistic versatility and knowledge of circumstances in Dalmatia and Italy, and decided to take him along as an attendant and interpreter. It is worth to remember, that Ivan Anž's father, count Nikola, experienced the pilgrimage to the Holy Land some years before. According to historian Klaić, "king Erik may have already grown fond of the valiant young man at that time, as we find him at the Danish court eight years thereafter".¹⁶

VI.

In the Middle Ages the pilgrimage to the Holy Land was the highest goal of every Christian, particularly for the nobility and crowned heads. Ivan Anž's father, Count Nikola Frankopan, also visited Jerusalem in 1411.¹⁷ The pilgrimage, which was not without risk at the time, was often a sign of a ruler's gratitude for a particular success or gain. It was believed that Erik, after the favorable resolution of King Sigismund on Schleswig, decided to set off for the Holy Land. However, his visit to Venice en route to his destination (but not at his return!) shows that Erik, being indebted to King Sigismund, also had to carry out a political mission for the king.

The shortest route from Buda to the eastern coast of the Adriatic led across Croatia and the regions ruled by Counts of Frankopan, to their town and then important port of Senj.¹⁸ On the advice of Sigismund, Eric certainly took that route and took Ivan Anž along as an attendant. It may be assumed that Sigismund was keen to have Ivan Anž away from Friedrich of Cilli for a time, and that brought his influence to bear on Erik to take him along, not only as an attendant on his journey to the Holy Land, but also subsequently to Sweden.

The Dubrovnik Republic also played a part on that journey. Already on 19 March 1424 - during King Erik's stay in Krakow, i.e. before Sigismund's resolution on Schleswig - the Council of Dubrovnik received King Sigismund's letter informing about Erik's intention to visit the Holy Land and recommending the king to Council's attention.¹⁹ The Ragusans replied on 17 May and

¹⁴ Altmann, W., *Eberhardt Windeckes denkwürdigkeiten zur Geschichte des Zeitalters Kaiser Sigmunds*, Berlin 1893, p. 191-192.

¹⁵ Altmann, W., *Regesta Imperii XI*, vol I., Innsbruck 1896-97, n. 5804-05.

¹⁶ Klaić 1901, p. 106.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹⁸ Ibler, M., *Kong Erik af Pommerns rejse igennem Kroatien 1424-25*, *Historie 2*, Århus 2001, p.310-321.

¹⁹ Gelcich J., Thalloczy L., *Dipl. Rel. Ragusanae cum R. Hungariae*, Budapest 1887, p. 296-297.

informed Sigismund about the movements of hostile ships in the Mediterranean. The similar letter was sent also on 31 August.²⁰

On 31 July 1424, two envoys arrived to Venice from Senj, requesting that King Eric should be given free passage to Venice; they also requested a galley to be outfitted at the king's expense for the journey to the Holy Land, and finally, the loan of a sizable sum of 10,000 ducats. On the same day, the Venetian Senate granted the king's wishes and decided that he would be met at Senj by Francesco Minnio, *capitano delle Gallere di Quarnero*, accompanied by six envoys. It was also decided to place another galley at the disposal of the Count of Senj, who would escort the king to Venice. According to the records of the Venetian chronicler and historian Antonio Morosini, King Eric left in Senj 1000 horses and most of his escort.²¹ It is possible that during his stay at Senj, a member of king's escort took over the figurative pattern of the Croatian coat of arms as his noble family's heraldic device in Sweden.²² Accompanied by Count Nikola Frankopan, Viceroy of Croatia and Dalmatia (recorded by Morosini as *el Signor de Segna*) and some thirty noblemen and knights, King Erik experienced a solemn welcome in Venice on 24 August. He stayed at the Duke of Ferrara's Palace, today "Fondacci dei Turchi",²³ while Count Nikola stayed at the palace of Count Carlo Malatesta de Rimini.²⁴ Along with the ceremonial part of the visit, the king also held political talks with the Doge, showing that his visit to Venice was intended as mediation in the conflict between Venice and Sigismund. Venice was then allied with Duke Fillippo Maria Visconti of Milan. The alliance was meant to strengthen Venice's hand in the war against king Sigismund for the possession of Dalmatia and Friuli. The Scandinavian king tried to leave the impression of a neutral go-between, humbly offering his *bona officia*, but there is no doubt that he acted on instruction of his cousin Sigismund, to whom the alliance of Venice and Milan was certainly a thorn in the flesh. On 1 September, the Doge reported the substance of the talks to the Senate, which accepted Eric's offer with gratitude, albeit with the reservation that no decision was possible without the agreement of their ally, Visconti. Therefore, the Senate informed Duke Visconti of Eric's offer through the Venetian ambassador in Milan. Distrusting Eric's *bona officia*, Visconti declined the offer, as the Venetian ambassador reported to the Senate on 8 September. Having been appraised of Visconti's position, on 14 September the Senate instructed its ambassador to express the Venetian loyalty to the agreed alliance. During that time, King Eric was probably in Venice, which he presumably left only after hearing Visconti's response.²⁵

Although the description of King Eric's sojourn in Venice is rich and comprehensive, no word is mentioned about his interpreter, and among the names of Venetians involved in king's travel, the name of Gian or Zian Franchi is not mentioned.

²⁰ Gelcich J., Thalloczy L. 1887, p. 297-299.

²¹ Vangensten, L.C.O., "Erik af Pommern i Venedig 1424. Antonio Morosinis Krønike og Aktsykker fra Archivio di Stato ai Frari, Venedig", *Danske Magasin*, 6. rk. I, 1913, p. 72-88.

²² Ibler, M., *Hrvatski Glasnik - Kroatiska Riksförbundets medlemstidning* n.4, Sweden 1999, p. 16-17.

²³ Dahlerup 1989, p. 60.

²⁴ Vangensten 1913, p. 80.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

King Eric arrived to Dubrovnik on 16 September 1424, warmly welcomed by the authorities and citizens. During his meeting with the members of the Council, king Eric secretly declared that he, under any circumstances, has no intention to pass Venice on his return from the Holy Land. The Ragusans, in the letter of 20. September, informed King Sigismund of Eric's visit and asked him which other route to recommend when he returned to Dubrovnik.²⁶

There are no records of the king's stay in Jerusalem; on the way back he visited Rhodos, where he borrowed 2,000 ducats from the Knights Hospitaliers, which he later repaid, somewhat reluctantly, to their fellow brethren in Denmark.²⁷

King Eric arrived again at Dubrovnik on a Venetian ship on Christmas day 1424, escorted among others, by count Ivan Anž Frankopan and his younger brother Nikola. He resided at the Palace, and the authorities daily provided 60 perperi for his meals. He was permitted to import for himself a keg of Greek romagna wine.^{28 29} The Frankopans were offered accomodation in the mansion of Duke Sandalj³⁰ and the Council moved for a donation of 60 perperi in their favor³¹. The detailed records kept in The Dubrovnik Archives mention no interpreter named "Gian Franchi" in the king's escort. In Dubrovnik the king dismissed the Venetian galley on board of which he arrived. However, lacking funds to pay it, he asked the Ragusans to loan him 2000 ducats. On 26 December the loan was granted, obviously with a guarantee and certain provisions. In the receipt the king undertook to repay the loaned in Senj, if possible, or deliver it in Buda to the Ragusan ambassador who would escort him on his journey.³² The foregoing suggests that the Ragusans counted on King Eric to pass through Senj and borrow the money from Count Nikola Frankopan in order to be able to repay the Ragusan loan.

On the Ragusan galley, the king sailed to Omiš (Almissa) on 5 January 1425 in order to visit Count Ivaniš Nelipčić, Ivan Anž's father-in-law. From Omiš, he set off on horseback to Count Nikola Frankopan in Senj, from where he continued his return to Buda.^{33 34}

According to the Venetian Morosini, the king's galley from Senj arrived in Venice in January, but without the king. It carried the ship's commander, Giovanni Giustinian de St. Apostolo and the king's interpreter *messere Zian Franchi* and two envoys, who expressed King Eric's apologies and regrets at having to return to his kingdom for important reasons, and being therefore unable

²⁶ Gelcich, Thaloczy 1887, p. 300-301.

²⁷ Dahlerup 1989, p. 61.

²⁸ DAD (Dubrovnik State Archive), Acta cons. min. R. Rag. 1424, vol 3, f. 231v, 232v.

²⁹ Ibid., f. 233.

³⁰ Ibid., f. 183

³¹ Ibid., f. 232v.

³² DAD, Acta cons. maius R. Rag. 1424, vol. 3, 47v.

³³ Klai_, 1901, p. 106.

³⁴ DAD, Acta cons. min. R. Rag. 1424, vol. 3, 183v, 184.

to visit Venice.³⁵ The two envoys were obviously the two Ragusan diplomats - ambassadors Đuro Gučetić and Džore Palmotić.³⁶

It should be reminded, within the context of further considerations, that Venetian sources, which otherwise abound in details relating to the visit of Eric of Pommerania to Venice, do not mention the king's abovementioned interpreter, Zian or Gian Franchi (in Scandinavian sources Johan Franke), which means that he was not with King Eric when he arrived in Venice in August 1424, or when he left Venice in September of the same year. The records kept in The Dubrovnik Archives mention no word about the interpreter with such a name.

The person in question was obviously the oldest son of Count Nikola, Ivan Anž Frankopan, whom Eric had met in Buda in June 1424, and who joined the king on his way to the Holy Land, probably in Senj or Omiš, and whose name is recorded in the archives of Dubrovnik. According to historian Klaić, "we find him at the Danish court eight years thereafter".³⁷

According to the already cited Antonio Morosini, "subsequently, the (king's) interpreter, messere Zian Franchi, properly outfitted and on horseback, left Venice to visit the king in his country." Morosini added a malicious remark, which he would certainly have omitted had a distinguished citizen or a nobleman from the Republic of Venice been involved: "... looking forward to a reward, which will enable him to keep up his knightly status" (" *lo dito so turzimano miser zian franchi, de qua eser vestido horevel mente, e con cavay in lo so pixe andando per vixitarlo, sperando ave una provixion per mantegnir la so chavalaria orevel mente.*").³⁸

VII.

The reasons which led King Eric of Pomerania to employ foreign noblemen as bailiffs and stewards of his castles on his estates in Sweden are certainly interesting. He trusted them more than Swedish noblemen, and could expect loyalty and greater tax-collection efficiency from them, mostly of Danish and German origin. The appointment of "a simple interpreter and king's travel attendant" to the post of the bailiff of one of Sweden's major castles in the fifteenth century evoked amazement by some historians.³⁹ The same applies to the origin of Gian (Zian) Franchi,

³⁵ Vangensten, 1913, p. 83.

³⁶ Gelcich, Thalloczy, 1887, p. 307-308; DAD, Acta cons. rog. R. Rag. 3, f. 234v.

³⁷ Klaić, 1901, p. 106.

³⁸ Vangensten, 1913, p. 83.

³⁹ Lundberg, G., *Stegeborg under middeltiden, Norrköping* 1978, pp. 79-83.

in Scandinavian historiography known as Johanes Franke.

All Swedish historical works and treatises⁴⁰ relating to the identity of “Gian Franchi” rely on information from Morosini, and the sources based on the records of Venetian seamen who, having suffered a shipwreck in 1432, stayed at the Swedish castle of Stegeborg *en route* from Lofoten to their homeland. Their report was published in Venice by Giovanni Batista Ramusio between 1553-59, and again by Bullo in 1881.⁴¹ The latest translation appeared in Norway in 1991.⁴²

A comparative analysis of the abovementioned sources with the sources known to Croatian historiography points to the conclusion that Gian Franchi (Johan Franke) and Ivan Anž Frankopan are one and the same person.

Having delivered, together with the Ragusan envoys, the message to the Venetian Senate to the effect that King Eric could not visit Venice for reasons of state, Ivan Anž Frankopan left, “properly outfitted and on horseback”, some time in late January or early February, for the country of King Eric, the first king of the Union of Kalmar. It is not known how and when he arrived in Scandinavia. The Swedish State Archives contain copies of two documents of 1426 mentioning the presence of Johan Franke, Steward of the estate (fief) and castle of Stegeborg. One of the documents is cited by the distinguished Swedish historian Styffe⁴³, who claims that Johan Franke had certified the dowry given by Bengt Konigsmarck to Mrs. Ingrid Karlsdottir Gedda on 30 May 1426. Bengt Konigsmarck was the Steward of the royal castle of Kalmar, and Ingrid Karlsdottir the daughter of a high royal dignitary. Further investigations in the Archives disclosed another copy of a document on a similar subject, in which Johan Franke, together with parson Haakon, certified a deed of donation whereby a certain Ragvald Puke donated to his wife some land at Ullalva; the deed is dated 29 May 1426, i.e. one day before the first document⁴⁴.

Along with Kalmar, among the other important Swedish castles were Stegeborg and Köpingshus. Trusting Johan Franke (Ivan Frankopan), King Eric first appointed him Steward (hövitsman, fogdare) of the castle of Köpingshus, and then of the castle of Stegeborg, with the respective estates.⁴⁵ Stegeborg was a well-fortified castle next to the narrowest part of the bay of Slätbakken on the eastern Swedish coast, and it guarded the approach to Söderköping and to the

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⁴⁰ Ridderstad, A., *Lexicon over Östergötland*, 2, Nörköping 1877, p.209,210; Hildebrand, A., *Sveriges middeltid*, 1, Stockholm 1878, p. 631; Styffe, C.G., *Skandinavien under Unionstiden*, Stockholm 1911, p. 263.

⁴¹ Bullo, C., *Il Viaggio di M. Pietro Querini e le Relazioni Della Repubblica Veneta Colla Svezia*, Venezia 1881.

⁴² Wold H.A., *I Paradisets første krets*, Oslo 1991, p. 123-177.

⁴³ Styffe 1911, p. 263.

⁴⁴ Riksarkivet Stockholm, Exhib.Joh.Westhio 1683, Biogr.K, 20; Kyle,Hans fol. 38r.

⁴⁵ Hadorphio, J., *Stillestandsbriefvet af 21.aug. 1439. Bih. till Rimkrönikor*, 139, Stockholm 1674; Hildebrand, A., *Sveriges middeltid*, vol.1, Stockholm 1878, p.631; Fritz, B., *Översikt över Västmanlands forvaltning/Östergötlands forvaltning. Ståkeborgs, Ringstadaholms, Rönös o. Hovs fogderier; Hus, land och län* 2, (1973) ed. 1992, p. 44, 89.

interior. It was first mentioned in 1310, although its foundations are of an older date. The Danish queen Margaret used to visit the castle, as did relatively often, also King Eric. Until 1427 it was managed by the Swedish noble Magnus Drake, and thereafter by Ivan Anž Frankopan, known in Swedish sources under the name Johan Franke and under the Italianized version of his name, Gian Franchi.

In July 1432, the Venetian Pietro Querini stayed at Stegeborg with the remaining members of his crew, survivors of a shipwreck. On its journey from Crete to the Netherlands, their ship foundered off the Portuguese coast. Their boats were carried by the wind and the Gulf Stream until the surviving seamen - including one from Šibenik and Zadar on Dalmatian coast - finally landed on the Lofoten, crossed Norway and Sweden on foot, before they could board a ship and sail for Venice⁴⁶. The record describes Ivan Anž Frankopan (in this case, under the name Zuan or Gian Franco) as an outstandingly hospitable and kind “distinguished nobleman and esteemed baron in the service of King Eric”. He escorted them personally, continues the record, with a hundred horsemen to the boundary of the estate, and from there to the port of Lödöse they were escorted by his son Mapheo (Matheo?). It should be noted that the descriptions of the Querini and of his crew differ somewhat, and that there are possibly some errors of transcription in the Norwegian translation⁴⁷. Indicatively, the record of Venetian seamen does not mention with a single word the exact origin of their benefactor, with whom they were able to converse in their own language after six months of tribulation and journeying through Scandinavia, and whom they supposed to be their countryman. Indeed, one would expect a mention of that point if a nobleman of Italian, and particularly Venetian, origin had been involved.

However, the real identity of King Eric’s Steward of Stegeborg has been revealed by the written record, originating far away from Scandinavia. Few weeks before Venetian seamen’s arrival to Stegeborg, died Ivan Anž’s father, Count Nikola Frankopan, *Ban* (viceroys) of Croatia and Dalmatia. Written by an unknown priest that very day, in a breviary from the island of Krk, the Frankopans’ “parent” region, it was noted that the *Ban*’s son Anž, was in the service of the Danish king at that time, the summer of 1432:

“The good and noble Ban Nikola died on the twenty-sixth day of the month of June 1432. And his son Anž was by the king of Denmark ...”

The note, written in Glagolitic script and in Croatian language, describes also that at the same time, Stjepan, Ivan Anž’s younger brother, was by king Sigismund and that Bosnia has been invaded by Turks⁴⁸.

⁴⁶ Bullo 1881, p. 14; Wold 1991, p. 123 - 177.

⁴⁷ Brandt R.J.: Helge A. Wold, I Paradisets første krets. Om drømmen om ære og rikdom etc.; Historisk Tidsskrift, vol.3, Oslo 1992, p. 330-333.

⁴⁸ Breviario Illirico 5; Fond. Borgiani Illirici, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana; Šurmin Đ., Hrvatski spomenici I, Monumenta historico-juridica Slavorum meridionalium 6, Zagreb, 1888, p. 131-132.

VIII.

Scandinavian sources call Ivan Anž Frankopan as Franchi or Franke, which corresponds to the belief that he was of Italian (Venetian) origin.

In fact, that was an abbreviated Italian or German version of the name Frankopan, which was not yet known in Venetian Republic. Croatian sources first mention the name Frankopan in relation to Nikola Frankopan, Ivan Anž's father, in 1426, the very year in which Ivan Anž left for Sweden⁴⁹. Four years later, the same name (de Frangepanibus) was confirmed to Nikola by Pope Martin V in Rome during a personal audience. However, King Sigismund's court mainly ignored the Ban's new name, referring instead to the Segne, Veglie et Modrusse comites. Sigismund recognized the title to the name given after the Roman Frangepani, and the Pope's approval, only in 1434, i.e., after Nikola's death, to his first and third-born sons, Ivan Anž and Stjepan⁵⁰.

There is another and important reason why the identity of Ivan Anž Frankopan, during his journey to the Holy Land in the capacity of King Eric's attendant, was not known, or was not supposed to be known, even to the Venetian Republic. The information that the son of the powerful "*el Signor de Segna*" (as Count Nikola Frankopan is called in Venetian archives) was present on the ship sailing in the Mediterranean en route to the Holy Land would have been very valuable to the enemy ships and pirates in these waters⁵¹, because such a person could bring them a substantial amount of ducats in ransom; this would have jeopardized also the safety of King Eric⁵², who traveled incognito⁵³, disguised as the ship's scribe, for the same reason. For Ivan Anž, an additional reason for caution and discretion was the risk which he could expect, on his way to northern Europe, while crossing the estates of the Counts of Cilli.

Last but not least, it should be mentioned that Croatian historian Klaić does not exclude the possibility that Frankopans descend from the ancient family Franko of the island of Krk⁵⁴.

IX.

In Sweden, discontent with King Eric grew in the early fourteen-thirties and as of 1430 his visits to that country became less frequent. In Dalarna, the northwestern part of Sweden, the nobleman Engelbrekt Engelbrektson started an insurgency which soon spread to other parts of the country. The uprising against Eric of Pommerania reached its climax in 1434, when it was also joined by the high nobility (Bo Stensson Natt och Dag, Karl Knutsson Bonde and others) dissatisfied with

⁴⁹ Klaić 1901, p. 113-114.

⁵⁰ Klaić, V., *Krčki knezovi Frankapani*, Zagreb 1901, p. 221.

⁵¹ Gelcich, Thalloczy 1887, p. 297-299.

⁵² Mollerup 1882, p. 30-31.

⁵³ Dahlerup 1989, p. 61.

⁵⁴ Klaić, *Krčki knezovi Frankapani*, 1901, introduction.

foreign stewards in royal castles⁵⁵. The Swedish people called foreigners from the southern parts of Europe (Walloons, Italians, etc.) Waale; thus, in the well-known fifteenth-century Swedish chronicle on Engelbrekt Engelbrektson the master of the castle of Stegeborg was called Johan Waale⁵⁶. Having captured the castles of Borganäs and Västerås, in the summer of 1434, Engelbrekt laid siege to the fort of Köpingshus. Unable to defend the fort, Frankopan withdrew to Stegeborg. Two months later he also surrendered that castle⁵⁷, which he held since 1427⁵⁸. Considering the situation, it was understandable for Ivan Anž to decide to leave Sweden and return home. It is not known when and how he returned back to Croatia, and whether he kept coming back to Sweden. According to a document in the Swedish State Archives, he (under the name of Johan Franke) mortgaged an estate to the monastery at Vadstena in 1435 for 233 east Gothic pfennig; this would suggest that he needed money, perhaps to repay a debt or return to Croatia. Of particular interest is the fact that he - or someone else on his behalf - later paid off the mortgage, and that his son Matts Franke (in Croatian language Matija) sold it in 1437 to Karl Knutsson Bonde⁵⁹, commander of Engelbrekt's army and subsequently regent of Sweden. In Croatia and Dalmatia, after the death of Ban (viceroy) Nikola Frankopan, King Sigismund, in his capacity of sovereign, designated Nikola's sons as heirs in that part of the Kingdom. Stjepan II was Nikola's third-born son, but King Sigismund mentioned him first (in spite Ivan Anž was the eldest). It was partly because Ivan Anž was absent from Croatia, and partly because his younger brother Stjepan was at that time continuously in the king's retinue in Italian and German lands. He also confirmed the title of Ban to the brothers, and Stjepan and Ivan consequently signed themselves as *Regni Dalmatiae et Croatiae Banus*⁶⁰. Ivan Anž's father-in-law died in May 1434, and Ivan inherited, through his wife Katarina, cities Klis, Omiš and other estates. Having concluded peace with Venetian Republic, Sigismund was no longer politically and economically interested in Frankopans. In spite of the charter by which he had renounced, in 1412, his claim to the estate of Ivan Anž's father-in-law, he requested from Ivan Anž to relinquish the inherited estates. At the same time, Ulrich, son of Friedrich of Cilli, also claimed the unpaid dowry, i.e., the estates pledged by Frankopans to his father, Ivan Anž's opponent in Buda in 1424. Ivan Anž refused to bow to the king's request and to relinquish the estates, upon which he was proclaimed a rebel and divested of the title of Ban (viceroy) in January 1436. The king ordered the Ban of Slavonia to subdue Ivan Anž by force of arms. His military campaign against Ivan Anž in the summer of the same year was not particularly successful. However, Ivan Anž died on 20. November, of unknown cause, probably at his castle of Klis⁶¹.

⁵⁵ Scott 1988, p. 87-97.

⁵⁶ S. B. Jansson, ed. *Engelbrektrönikan*, Stockholm 1994, p. 54, 55, 68.

⁵⁷ Ibidem

⁵⁸ Hadorphio 1674; Ridderstad 1877; Hildebrand 1878; Styffe 1911; Lundberg 1978.

⁵⁹ Riksarkivet Stockholm: Brockman, Hadorph; 1435, C4 fol. 8 v 0301; 1437, C 4 fol. 9 o301.

⁶⁰ Klaić, *Krčki knezovi Frankapani, 1901*, p. 221.

⁶¹ Pal, R., *Publicationes Museorum Vesprimiensis* 1986, 18, 357.

Pal, R., *A Frangepan család cimervaltzatai a XIV-XVI: században*. *Publicationes Museorum Comitatus Vesprimiensis* 1986, 18, 357; Engel P., Lövei P., Varga Livia, *Grabplatten von Ungarischen magnaten aus dem zeitalter der Anjou-könige und Sigismunds von Luxemburg*. *Acta Historie Artium Acad.Scient. Hungaricae*, Budapest, 1984, tom.XXX, fasc.1-2.

His acquaintance from Buda, King Eric of Pommerania, visited Stegeborg for the last time three years later⁶², and after signing *stilleståndsfordrag*⁶³ on 21 August 1439, definitively left Sweden.

⁶² Lundberg 1978.

⁶³ Hadorphio 1674.