

Doctoral Dissertation

**“Our Lord the King Looks for Money in Every Corner”  
Sigismund of Luxembourg’s Pledgings in Hungary**

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# “Our Lord the King Looks for Money in Every Corner”<sup>1</sup>

## Sigismund of Luxembourg’s Pledgings in Hungary

### Introduction

“...and wherever he can bring people together, he does it, so that he can extract some money.”<sup>1</sup> This is how a town notary of Sopron characterized Sigismund of Luxembourg in 1421. The notary’s account was probably not just a far-fetched and biased portrayal of his king, because Sigismund’s special way of approaching finances was observed by other contemporaries, too. Even his close companion Eberhard of Windecke — who wrote a chronicle about Sigismund and his time — noted down some stories that are in line with the opinion of the Sopron notary. Perhaps the most revealing among these is the one related to his king’s visit to England. According to the account, at the end of the visit, the English ruler, Henry V (1413-1422) gifted various jewels to Sigismund, which were pawned by Windecke himself shortly after the visit. The king of Hungary commissioned Windecke with this task, and Sigismund relinquished the jewels with ease, but he was much more reluctant to get them back, so he decided to redeem them only as a result of Windecke’s entreat.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the town notary’s account is remarkable not only for the information itself, but because it proves that the way Sigismund dealt with finances was not only known by the people around him, but it was a country-wide known open secret. Moreover, his reputation went beyond Hungary. In 1395, an envoy of Mantua reported to his lord that when Italian merchants arrived in Hungary, they were directed to the royal court, where they could arrange everything with their loans. However, when the time of repaying these loans arrived, their admittance to the

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<sup>1</sup> “... *unser herr der künig der suecht all winkchel umb gelt und wo er die leut aneinander bringen mag, das tut er, damit er gelt schaczet...*” Quoted from and translated by: Katalin Szende, “Between hatred and affection: Towns and Sigismund in Hungary and in the Empire,” in *Sigismund von Luxemburg. Ein Kaiser in Europa. Tagungsband des internationalen historischen und kunsthistorischen Kongresses in Luxemburg*, 8-10. Juni 2005, ed. Michel Pauly, Francois Reinert (Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2006), 205.

<sup>2</sup> Wilhelm Altmann, *Eberhard Windeckes Denkwürdigkeiten zur Geschichte des Zeitalters Kaiser Sigmunds* (Berlin: R. Gaertners Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1893), (pars 79, 80, 81), 80-82. On the background of the story see: Attila Bárány, “Zsigmond király és kísérete Németalföldön – németalföldiek Magyarországon” [King Sigismund and his entourage in the Low Countries – People of the Low Countries in Hungary ], in *Németalföld emlékei Magyarországon – magyar-holland kapcsolatok* [of the Low Countries in Hungary – Hungarian-Dutch relations], ed. Attila Bárány, et al. (*Loci Memoriae Hungaricae*, 5, Debrecen: Dupress, 2017), 33.



court was refused.<sup>3</sup> The contemporary Florentine tax registers, the *Catasto* confirms the envoy's report, since Sigismund is mostly described as a bad debtor here.<sup>4</sup> It did not matter whether he contracted the loans as the King of Hungary or the King of the Romans. For instance, in the Nuremberg municipal accounts a loan provided to the king was recorded as a gift because the town magistrate was not expecting repayment.<sup>5</sup>

Considering all these these examples mentioned above, it is not surprising that this image of the king has passed down to the posterity. Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, in his work entitled *De viris illustribus*, described Sigismund in the following way: "... he is insatiable and avaricious, ... he cannot keep any treasures, he is a wasting treasurer, he promises more than he could keep, he is volatile."<sup>6</sup> Although there is no proof that Piccolomini and Sigismund ever met, Piccolomini's information is not pure invention, as he collected it from people who knew the king personally, like his imperial chancellor Kaspar Schlick.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, there are also anecdotes preserved focusing on the issue of Sigismund and his finances. One of these is related to the construction of Beckov (Bolondóc) castle. The castle was the seat of residence of the Polish knight, Stibor of Stiboricz, Sigismund's close adherent. According to the anecdote, Stibor built the castle for his court jester to whom he promised to fulfill a wish, if he entertained Stibor's guests. When one of them asked the jester about what the king was doing at the moment, he replied, "It is clear that our lord is multiplying his debts." The answer pleased them all, and the jester asked his lord to build a castle for him.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "...cum hic nulla datur expeditio nisi certis a quibus rex mutuo petit et sunt italici mercatores, hii vero cum pecunias portant subito introducuntur ad regem et datur ipsis de verbis et sigillis celerima expeditio dum possit tantummodo tangere nummos. Cum venit postmodum terminus restituendi ipsis postea introitus et expeditio denegatur..." Lajos Thallóczy, "Mantovai követjárás Budán" [An envoy of Mantova in Buda], *Értekezések a Történeti Tudományok köréből* 20, no.4 (1905): 390.

<sup>4</sup> Krisztina Arany, *Florentine families in Hungary in the first half of the fifteenth century*. (PhD dissertation, Central European University, Budapest, 2014), 82–90.

<sup>5</sup> E. Miller, M. M. Postan, E. E. Rich, ed. *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe from the Decline of the Roman Empire*, Volume 3. *Economic Organisation and Policies in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 516.

<sup>6</sup> "...vasto animo, multivolus...nullius thesauri custos, prodigus dispensator; plura promisit quam servavit, finxit multa..." Quoted and translated to Hungarian by Enikő Csukovits. Enikő Csukovits, *Magyarországról és a magyarokról. Nyugat-Európa magyar-képe a középkorban*. [On Hungary and on the Hungarians. Western-Europe's image about Hungary and its people in the Middle Ages] (MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, Budapest, 2015), 157.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>8</sup> Daniela Dvořáková, *A lovag és királya: Stiborici Stibor és Luxemburgi Zsigmond: képek és történetek egy középkori magyar nemes életéből* [The knight and his king: Stibor of Stiboricz and Sigismund of Luxemburg: Moments and stories from the life of a medieval Hungarian nobleman] (Bratislava: Kalligram, 2009), 14-15.

Understandably, Sigismund's finances came to the attention of the modern Hungarian historiography relatively early. Already in 1916, Antal Áldásy stated that this was one of the most interesting aspects of Sigismund's internal policy.<sup>9</sup> Apparently, Áldásy was the only scholar of his generation so enthusiastic about this topic, for the ruling opinion of historiography accused Sigismund of irresponsible finance management and wastefulness.<sup>10</sup> The turning point was brought by the pioneering works of Emma Lederer and József Deér, published in the 1930s. Lederer was the one who drew attention to the significance of the pledgings of Sigismund, as she considered these as the cornerstone of the king's credit policy.<sup>11</sup> She was the first who attempted to collect as much data as she could about these transactions, but as she acknowledged, she could rely only on fragmentary information.<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, some of her observations are still valid and indispensable for studying the topic today. In her understanding, the pledgings were the king's tools in using the lords' financial resources for his own purposes. Also, she was the one who discovered that the year 1435 stands out in Sigismund's pledging practice for the high amount of money accumulated.<sup>13</sup> In 1936, four years after Lederer's book was published, József Deér's study about King Sigismund's defense policy was printed. In this, Deér complemented Lederer's database of pledges with new data, however, the works' main importance was not this, but the author's explanation for the high number of Sigismund's pledges.<sup>14</sup> Deér rejected the scholarship's earlier charges accusing Sigismund of lavishness and wastefulness by claiming that the sums of pledgings were used for the benefit of the country and were spent on military outlays.<sup>15</sup> This statement contributed substantially to the rehabilitation of Sigismund's image in Hungarian historiography. The topic however, was then neglected by scholarship for a long while, and only

<sup>9</sup> Antal Áldásy, "Zsigmond császár koronázása és a német zsidóság megadóztatása" [King Sigismund's coronation and the taxation of the Jews in the empire] *Értekezések a történeti tudományok köréből* 24, no.5 (1916): 301.

<sup>10</sup> In the synthesis of the Hungarian history edited by Sándor Szilágyi he is portrayed as a ruler who does not take ruling seriously, rather he spends his time having fun with his foreign courtiers. Sándor Szilágyi, ed., *A Magyar nemzet története* [The history of the Hungarian nation] (Budapest: Athenaeum 1895), vol. 3, 409. Also see: Gyula Rázsó, *A zsoldosság gazdasági és társadalmi előfeltételei és típusai Magyarországon a XIV-XV. században* [The economic and social preconditions and types of hiring mercenaries in Hungary in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries], *Hadtörténeti Közlemények* 63, no. 1 (1962): 166.

<sup>11</sup> Emma Lederer, *A középkori pénzüzetek története Magyarországon (1000-1458)* [The history of financial transactions in Hungary in the Middle Ages (1000-1458)] (Budapest: Kovács J., 1932), 183.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 183, 187-188.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 183. According to her calculations, this sum was 53.565 florins. As in Chapter 5 will be presented, this amount was even higher.

<sup>14</sup> József Deér, *Zsigmond király honvédelmi politikája* [King Sigismund's military defense policy], *Hadtörténeti Közlemények* 37 (1936): 193-198.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

in 1962 was the interest renewed, when Gyula Rázsó touched upon the topic in his study of mercenaries. Rázsó's standpoint was in line with Lederer's and Deér's; he perceived pledging as a way by which the king taxed the capital accumulated by the wealthy noblemen of the kingdom. His main contribution to the question lay in complementing the database of pledges with additional sources.<sup>16</sup>

Besides these historians, the issue of Sigismund's pledgings comes up here and there, usually in monographs about his reign or in some studies having him in the center of their attention. However, in these the topic comes up even in a less accentuated way, and mostly side issues are discussed, like the question of royal domains pledged under their value, or the issue when the ruler could get the real value of these.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, these works are still valuable, because they often approach the issue from another angle providing new interpretations and raising new questions, which help to give greater better insight on the whole topic. For example, János Bak considered the pledgings as a method of converting the domanical revenues of the estates into liquid incomes.<sup>18</sup> Or, another example, Pál Engel suggested that Sigismund instinctively knew what later became part of the fundamentals of economics, namely that royal finances work differently than household finances, and therefore the king could afford to spend more than he actually had.<sup>19</sup>

Among all the mentioned authors, Sigismund's pledgings were studied most thoroughly by Emma Lederer and József Deér, but on the one hand, their works were published more than eighty years ago, and on the other, even for them, the question of the pledgings was not at the center of

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<sup>16</sup> Rázsó, *A zsoldosság*, 166-169.

<sup>17</sup> Mályusz Elemér, *Kaiser Sigismund in Ungarn, 1387-1437* (Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó, 1990), 88-89. Dvořáková, *A lovag és király*, 398-399.

<sup>18</sup> János Bak, "Monarchie im Wellental: Materielle Grundlagen des ungarischen Königtums im fünfzehnten Jahrhundert" in *Das spätmittelalterliche Königtum im europäischen Vergleich, Vorträge und Forschungen, vol. 32*, ed. Reinhard Schneider (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag 1987), 356.

<sup>19</sup> Pál Engel, *A Magyar királyság jövedelmei Zsigmond korában* [The revenues of the Kingdom of Hungary during Sigismund's reign] in *Honor, vár, ispánság* [Honor, castle, ispanate], ed. Enikő Csukovics (Budapest: Osiris, 2003), 430. Pál Engel, "Die Einkünfte Kaiser Sigismunds in Ungarn" in *Sigismund von Luxemburg, Kaiser und König in Mitteleuropa 1387-1437*, ed. Josef Macek, Ernő Marosi and Ferdinand Seibt (Warendorf: Fahlbusch Verlag, 1994), 182. The topic was briefly discussed by a number of legal historians, though no special attention was dedicated to the royal pledgings. Péter Ágoston, *A zálogjog általános tanai* [The general rules of pledge right] (Nagyvárad: Politzer, 1906). Ferenc Eckhart, *Magyar alkotmány- és jogtörténet* [Hungarian constitutional and legal history] (Budapest: Osiris, 2000). The work was first published in 1946. Gábor Béli, *Magyar jogtörténet. A tradicionális jog* [Hungarian legal history. Customary law] (Budapest: Dialóg Campus, 1999). Not closely related to the topic, but the name of István Bariska could be mentioned too, as he wrote a book about the pledged western Hungary. Bariska, István. *A Szent Koronáért elzálogosított Nyugat-Magyarország, 1447-1647* [Western Hungary pledged for the Holy Crown, 1447-1647]. Szombathely: Vas Megyei Levéltár, 2007.

their investigation but remained only a marginal issue. Consequently, despite having pledgings identified as the cornerstone of Sigismund's credit policy many decades ago, several questions have still remained unanswered, and more importantly, an overall assessment is still lacking from Hungarian historiography. The present dissertation aims to fill this gap.

First of all, the work intends to provide a theoretical and legal background of the royal pledgings, since, in lack of a seminal work in this field, it is still not known what were the characteristics of these transactions and how they worked. One of the main questions for scholars touching upon the topic was the amount of money raised by Sigismund through the pledgings. In the historiography 500.000 florins comes up regularly as the amount gained through this fundraising method.<sup>20</sup> Due to the improved source accessibility conditions, a more complete database of pledges can be set up today than eighty years ago, which helps to provide a more accurate estimate of the value of fifty years of pledging. On the basis of this, it can also be determined in which periods Sigismund relied the most on this fundraising method. Besides assessing the amount of money raised through pledgings, the present work will also focus on the possible ways of its spending. So far, the defense of the kingdom has been identified by the historiography as the primary field on which these sums were spent. However, these statements were based on research conducted more than half a century ago, and since then, not only have many new sources been discovered, but also our understanding of Sigismund's reign has changed due to the numerous important studies published in the interim. That is why the validity of such statements will be judged in the present work, and it will be also explored on what other possible expenditures were the incomes of the pledging spent. Furthermore, the dissertation is also interested in the spatial distribution of the pledges, therefore, with the help of spatial analysis, it will explore in which geographical areas the pledges concentrated, where they were lacking, and how their spatial distribution changed over time.

Another of the commonplaces of the historiography related to the topic is that Sigismund never redeemed his pledges.<sup>21</sup> Such statements sound plausible, but are lacking detailed analysis. The present work aims to cover this issue, too. The king's business partners are another topic which will receive special attention in my dissertation. Here, the question to be addressed will be the

<sup>20</sup> Pál Engel, *The realm of St. Stephen. A history of medieval Hungary, 895–1526* (London; New York, 2001), 227.

<sup>21</sup> Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 33. Dvořáková, *A lovag és király*, 399.

extent of the pledge holders' network, their social status, the group of the most important pledgees. During his rule, Sigismund transformed the country's elite by removing members of the old establishment from their positions and filling up their ranks with his new favorites, many of them raised from the middling nobility.<sup>22</sup> What role the new elite could have in the royal transaction of pledge is another question that the dissertation seeks to answer. Furthermore, there are uncertainties not only regarding how the transactions of pledge worked, but often also concerning the objects of pledging themselves. Therefore, a typology of the pledges will be presented and their main characteristics will be presented accordingly. A further goal of the dissertation is to find the place of pledgings among Sigismund's extraordinary revenues and its relation to these. Finally, so far whenever someone has studied Sigismund's pledgings in Hungary it was never done in a larger, international comparative context. Therefore, it is not known whether Sigismund's Hungary was an isolated case, or whether monarchs exposed to similar financial challenges adopted similar solutions in neighboring countries. This is the issue that the first chapter of my work will explore.

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<sup>22</sup> Engel, *The Realm*, 213-214.

## Chapter 1. Pledging and Borrowing in Late Medieval Monarchies: an Overview

Loans secured by pledging of land was a fundraising method probably known in every late medieval country of Europe, but its significance for the royal court differed substantially in the northern and central regions from the western part of the continent. While in Northern and Central Europe it was a key component of the extraordinary revenues, in the West its importance was restricted, sometimes due to regulations, or simply because loans were secured by other means. The present chapter provides a brief overview of the history of royal (and imperial) pledging and to a less extent of borrowing in the period between 1300 and 1500 in these two large core areas, and explores the possible reasons behind the growing dependency of late medieval monarchs on credit.

To begin with the second issue, the root of the process of this growing dependency could be traced somewhere in the developments of the medieval military organization, where instead of continued reliance on military power of the nobility, hired mercenaries began to play a greater role in waging war. These professional soldiers had to be paid, fed, clad, and with the evolution of the military equipment, the armament became more expensive, consequently the mercenaries' wages too. Moreover, by building more elaborate and larger castles, it became more difficult to lay siege successfully on fortified places, while the duration of siege increased, which also led to further increase in the costs of war. Furthermore, the number of contingents deployed on the battlefield began to rise which together with the other changes meant that the war in the late Middle Ages became highly expensive. Lastly, ready cash had vital importance in waging war, since it would have been difficult to put in motion any army or to sustain military campaigns for longer period without liquid assets.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> David Stasavage, *States of Credit: Size, Power, and the Development of European Polities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 1-3, 8-10. E. Miller, M. M. Postan, E. E. Rich, ed. *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe from the Decline of the Roman Empire*, Volume 3. *Economic Organisation and Policies in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 432, 445. Edmund Boleslav Fryde, "The financial policies of the royal governments and popular resistance to them in France and England c. 1270-c. 1420" in *Studies in medieval trade and finance*. (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), I, 831. Ormrod, *The west European*, 125. Alan Ryder, "Cloth and Credit: Aragonese War Finance in the Mid-Fifteenth Century" *War and Society* Vol.2 Nr.1 (1984):1.

Not only military conflicts were costly enterprises but diplomacy and long-distance travel too. Regarding the first one, the success of concluding acts of alliances often depended on monarchs' ability of paying large subsidies, or conditions of peace were closely related to paying huge ransoms and indemnities. While concerning traveling, rulers taking part in long journeys, from time to time had to pawn even their own crown jewels to cover the unexpected costs of some of their travels,<sup>24</sup> other kings chose rather to limit the distance and the number of their travels, and tried to rule by means of correspondence and delegations.<sup>25</sup>

Taking into consideration all these, the contemporary stories about kings' deplorable financial conditions<sup>26</sup> or the old scholarship's accusations of crowned heads with money wasting and with irresponsibility in financial matters gains a different light. In fact, most of the medieval ruler's ordinary revenues were hardly enough for their everyday needs, and in case of extraordinary events, or if they wanted to increase "state activity", they had to seek alternative sources of income. Levying extraordinary tax was a viable option, but it required justification that should have been well grounded enough to persuade the estates to give their consent<sup>27</sup>, also its collection took much time, thus it could not be mobilized quickly in cases of emergency.<sup>28</sup> That is why occasional borrowing became a favored fundraising method among medieval rulers, but since they could not

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<sup>24</sup> These usually happened when kings took part in military excursions abroad. For example, at the beginning of the Hundred Years' War the English king, Edward III's (1327-1377) travel to the Low Countries in 1338 was almost exclusively financed by borrowings. During this journey, even the king's crown was shipped to Antwerp together with other royal and queenly jewels for pawning them. Edmund Boleslav Fryde, "Financial Resources of Edward III in the Netherlands, 1337-40" in *Studies in medieval trade and finance*. (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), VII 1152-1154. Edward III's case was not exceptional, for instance German rulers also had to pawn their crowns for time to time, like Charles IV (1346-1378), Rupert (1400-1410), Sigismund of Luxemburg (1411-1437) and others did. *The Cambridge Economic History* 3, 514, 515, 517.

<sup>25</sup> Eberhard Isenmann, "The Holy Roman Empire in the Middle Ages" in *The rise of the fiscal state in Europe, c. 1200-1815*, ed. Richard Bonney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 243-280. Ormrod, *The west European*, 127.

<sup>26</sup> Although, it goes beyond the proposed time frame, the famous story about Emperor Maximilian I needs to be mentioned here. He in 1518 had to turn to Jacob Fugger for money in two occasions because "His Majesty had nothing to eat". Maximilian's predecessor, Frederick III (1440-1493) had experienced a highly embarrassing situation, when in the Summer of 1473 while he was visiting the town he could not depart from the town till all his debts, towards the local craftsmen, were not cleared off. *The Cambridge Economic History* 3, 432, 518.

<sup>27</sup> This was the medieval principle called "*cessante causa, cessant effectus*" meaning that if the need for the extraordinary taxation was not valid anymore (like the war, for which it was collected, was over) then the collection of the tax should be abolished. John Bell Henneman, *Royal taxation in 14th century France: The development of war financing 1322-1356* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 24-25. Elizabeth A. R. Brown, "Taxation and Morality in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries: Conscience and Political Power and the Kings of France" *French Historical Studies* 8, No. 1 (1973): 5-6.

<sup>28</sup> Stasavage, *States of Credit*, 8-10. *The Cambridge Economic History* 3, 431-434. Isenmann, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 246. About taxations moral and philosophical implication according to medieval French authors, see: Brown, *Taxation and Morality*, 4-6, 9.

be enforced to honor their debts through judicial proceedings, creditors often required movable or immovable properties as a security of the payment.

## Western Europe

In the Western part of the continent, credits secured by pledging of royal domains chiefly to ecclesiastical lenders were probably the most common form of lending roughly until 1200, when this role was taken over by the lay creditors. Contrary to their ecclesiastical counterparts, these bankers and merchants preferred to receive such valuables as security which they could sell later. In case of foreign businessmen, they refused to accept land as a security of the money advanced, since they were not interested in settling down in the country and in holding domain abroad.<sup>29</sup>

In England from the fourteenth century onwards, the dominant policy concerning the treasury was that the alienated lands and rights had to be recovered to prevent the kingdom from financial crisis. Thus, not only the professional lenders' attitude of accepting land as security hindered to pledging of royal lands, but the financial policy of the crown as well. However, lay creditors were still given security, usually by granting them with the right of exporting wool free of duty, assigning custom duties, specific tax revenues or obligating the subsidies to them.<sup>30</sup>

In England, just as in France, a significant increase in royal borrowings was registered from the second half of the thirteenth century, and it was a commonplace that the late medieval English kings spent beyond their means.<sup>31</sup> Already from the reign of Edward I (1272-1307) the costs of warfare could be covered only through extraordinary revenues, among them foreign credit was favored. From almost seventy years from Edward's ascension to the throne Italian companies<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *The Cambridge Economic History* 3, 436-438.

<sup>30</sup> Fryde, *Loans to the English Crown*, IV. 207-208. Edmund Boleslav Fryde, "Italian Maritime Trade with Medieval England (c. 1270-c. 1530)" in *Studies in medieval trade and finance*. (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), XIV. 300-301. Ormrod, *England in the Middle Ages*, 34. G.L. Harriss, King, Parliament and Public Finance in Mediaeval England to 1369 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 87. Edwin S. Hunt, James M. Murray, *A History of Business in Medieval Europe, 1200-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 206.

<sup>31</sup> Ormrod, *The west European 127. The Cambridge Economic History* 3, 432.

<sup>32</sup> Italian merchants arrived in England in greater number after the third crusade, and they played an important role in covering Richard I's (1189-1199) expenses abroad, and even in putting up the money for the ransom when he was held captive by the Austrian duke. Nonetheless, only from Edward I's reign grew the Italians financiers' importance so much that they became almost indispensable for the crown. The Riccardis for example were Edward's chief bankers until their operation collapsed in the country in 1294. Martin Allen, "Italians in English mints and exchanges" in *Fourteenth Century England*, Vol. II., ed. Chris Given-Wilson (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002), 54.



kept lending money to the English treasury. Mobilizing these financial resources swiftly played a crucial role during the Hundred Years' War, too. Therefore, unsurprisingly, Edward III embarked on the French war with the financial backing of mainly the same foreign companies and merchants on which his predecessor relied as well. Among them were some of the greatest banking companies at the time, like the Peruzzi, Bardi, Riccardi, Frescobaldi.<sup>33</sup>

The regular loans provided Edward with steady supply of money and anticipating the crown's regular revenues offered him large financial mobility. However, frequent borrowing from professional lenders was a costly enterprise since these short loans were charged with heavy rates of interest. Kings often found it very difficult to repay these sums, like Edward III, who was on the verge of bankruptcy when he planned to invade France after the outbreak of the Hundred Year' War. The Bardi and the Peruzzi fell victims to this, the huge debt accumulated by the Plantagenet dynasty led to the collapse of these two companies at the first stage of the Hundred Years' War.<sup>34</sup>

The foreign sources of income having dried up, from the 1340s onwards the English ruler had to turn to his own wealthy subjects. Primarily barons, nobles and merchants were the ones who in the hope of commercial profit offered their financial assistance to the crown. Among them emerged William de la Pole, the only domestic creditor who offered to be a real alternative to the great Italian firms, as he was capable of lending so much money that it was close to the sums lent by them.<sup>35</sup> In the last phase of the late medieval period, the heavy reliance of the English crown on the regular loans eased, because the kings failed to pay their debts. This led to the deterioration

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<sup>33</sup> William Mark Ormrod, "England in the Middle Ages" in *The rise of the fiscal state in Europe, c. 1200-1815*, ed. Richard Bonney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 37. Fryde, *The financial policies*, I. 831. Ormrod, *The west European*, 127. Edmund Boleslav Fryde, "Loans to the English Crown, 1328-31" in *Studies in medieval trade and finance*. (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), IV. 198. Edmund Boleslav Fryde, "Financial Resources of Edward III in the Netherlands, 1337-40" in *Studies in medieval trade and finance*. (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), VII, 1146. Edmund Boleslav Fryde, "The English Farmers of the Customs, 1343-51" in *Studies in medieval trade and finance*. (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), X. 2. Edwin S. Hunt suggested that among medieval commercial and banking companies there were three superior to the others, which formed a category of their own that he calls "medieval super-companies." He argues that these big companies stood out from the rest because they successfully combined high provision of capital, with sophisticated organization, and superior resources. Among these three he enlists the Bardi and the Peruzzi companies, the third he includes here is the Acciaioli firm. Edwin S. Hunt, *The Medieval Super-Companies. A Study of the Peruzzi Company of Florence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 39-40.

<sup>34</sup> The collapse happened in the 1340s. Allen, *Italians in English mints*, 60. Ormrod, *England in the Middle Ages*, 36. Fryde, *Loans to the English Crown*, 211. Ormrod, *The west European*, 127. Fryde, *The financial policies*, I. 839.

<sup>35</sup> Ormrod, *England in the Middle Ages*, 36. Edmund Boleslav Fryde, "The Wool Accounts of William de la Pole" in *Studies in medieval trade and finance*. (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), IX. 3-4. Ormrod, *The west European*, 128. Edmund Boleslav Fryde, "The Last Trials of Sir William de la Pole" in *Studies in medieval trade and finance*. (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), XI. 17-18. Hunt, *A History of Business*, 102.

of the relations with the creditors, consequently the government was unable to develop an efficient system of borrowing, the rulers simply could not raise loans large enough to suffice their needs.<sup>36</sup>

Similarly to England, also in France ideas of the inalienability of royal domains obstructed the development of a system of royal pledging in the long term. This doctrine, predominant from the late thirteenth century on, was invoked even two centuries later occasionally, and was invested with legal power in 1318 by issuing of a royal decree. Among its various effects, the decree contributed to discourage the royal creditors to be interested in the royal pledges.<sup>37</sup> However, this did not mean that the treasury was not seeking lenders especially from the second part of the thirteenth century onwards when the administration while becoming more complex in the same time became more expensive, and in case of an ambitious foreign policy the treasury urgently needed to mobilize extraordinary resources.<sup>38</sup>

During the reign of King Philip IV (1285-1314) Italian companies, like the one run by the Florentine Franzesi brothers (Albizzo and Musciatto) took over the Templars' role as the main bankers of the crown, and lent money continuously to the king. It was a peculiarity of the history of the French public credit that chief creditors were exposed to high risk, since in no other European country they were plundered and ruined so often. This was especially true for the first part of the fourteenth century. Philip IV wanted to minimize the external influence on the royal finances, hence he treated foreign financiers with great distrust. After the Franzesi brothers' death the other Italian companies lost their influence on governmental activity, suffered persecutions and were accused with usurious practices. But Philip did not stop here, he expelled the Jews, arrested the Templars and confiscated their properties in 1307. The result of imprisoning and releasing merchants only in return of payment, led to the impoverishment of these people, and to discouraging them from further business with the French rulers.<sup>39</sup> That is why, at the outbreak of the Hundred Years' War the crown was lacking wealthy financiers who were willing to lend substantial sums. As a response to this, in the following decades the monarchy turned to its own subjects for credit, to the officials working in the administration, and to larger masses from whom

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<sup>36</sup> *The Cambridge Economic History* 3, 465-66, 469.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 438.

<sup>38</sup> John Bell Henneman, "France in the Middle Ages" in *The rise of the fiscal state in Europe, c. 1200-1815*, ed. Richard Bonney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 103- 105.

<sup>39</sup> They continued their activity in the country, but stopped doing business with the government. Hunt, *A History of Business*, 93.

funds were raised frequently in the form of forced loans. Intriguingly, for a brief period under the rule of Charles VII (1422-1461), the king even returned to the obsolete fundraising method of pledging royal domains, but soon after serious measures were taken to recover these possessions.<sup>40</sup>

After all, the long-term solution for the exposure of the crown to credit was found in the establishment of the regular taxation. A decisive stage of this process was the capture of King John II (1350-1364) by the English troops in 1356 in the battle of Poitiers. The ransom of the king required such extraordinary financial effort from the country that salaries of royal officials were put to hold, all traditional privileges and exemptions were suspended, and almost all revenue was used for this purpose. The period from 1356 till 1370 is regarded as the time of foundation of the regular taxation system, which was successfully kept also after the Hundred Year's War was over. Thanks to these financial measures, by the second part of the fifteenth century the country's treasury was well supplied with money and was functioning stable, consequently the practice of large scale borrowing was abandoned.<sup>41</sup>

In the late medieval Kingdom of Castile covering the costs of war and diplomacy often posed similar challenges to the kings as to other European monarchs. To ease the financial pressure, the crown turned to contracting short-term loans from time to time, and if the creditors demanded security, then specific sources of income, fees or lordships of certain settlements were used for such a purpose. Among the creditors of the treasury, the towns played a major role, like at the time of John II's reign (1406-1454), who in 1429 in numerous occasions turned to them for money. Besides the ordinary regalian rights of fiscal kind (salt revenues, royal fifth on war booty, revenues from the Jewish and Muslim community, etc.) the kings of Castile enjoyed a privileged position that not many contemporary rulers could enjoy. Namely, they could gain money from the clergy more easily, and on a regular basis, because Castile was a frontier state fighting with the Islam. An important change of the country's fiscal system was that the extraordinary tax of *alcabala* (tax on consumption and transactions) began to be collected regularly from 1342

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<sup>40</sup> *The Cambridge Economic History* 3, 477-480, 483, 487. Henneman, *France in the Middle Ages*, 105. Ormrod, *The west European*, 127.

<sup>41</sup> John Bell Henneman, *Royal taxation in fourteenth-century France. The captivity and ransom of John II, 1356-1370* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1976), 1-4, 112. Henneman, *France in the Middle Ages*, 112-113, 115-116, 118-120. Harry A. Miskimin, *Money and Power in Fifteenth-century France* (London: Yale University Press, 1984), 15.

onwards. This and other measures contributed to establishing a new fiscal system that brought a relative financial stability at the end of the Middle Ages.<sup>42</sup>

The Crown of Aragon was regarded as “a poor state in a rich country” by modern scholarship, and even if some historians refuse to consider the country rich, it is undoubted that the crown was in bad financial conditions in the late Middle Ages. Already James I the Conqueror (1213-1276) sought to complement the treasury’s ordinary revenues by relying on the financial expertise and the short-term loans of the Templars from his early years of reign. Besides the Templars, prelates and barons lent him money in change of future tax revenues. Coping with expenses of the war remained a constant problem for James I’s heirs, so much that by 1315 a great amount of the revenues of Aragon and Catalonia were mortgaged in advance for clearing off debts. Nevertheless, probably James I’s great-great grandson Peter IV (1336-1387), struggled most visibly with growing financial problems, when he engaged in an almost twenty years’ war with Peter of Castile (1350-1366). In one of the longest and the most expensive wars of the Spanish realms of the period, called the War of the Two Peters (1356-1375), Peter IV found himself in a difficult situation as he could hardly amass the necessary funds. Besides putting under pressure the military orders, churchmen, monasteries, Jewish and Muslim communities for their financial contribution to the treasury, Peter turned to his knights for emergency loans to raise cash quickly. But, as these sources proved to be inadequate because of the widening of the crisis in 1356-1357, the king began to pledge royal lands and continued this practice till the end of the conflict. In the same time large shares of the royal patrimony were alienated to finance the War of the Two Peters, later a revolt in Sardinia and lastly to reimburse bankers of Barcelona for the loans accumulated by the crown. With the growth of the economic importance of Catalonia, Barcelona’s financiers emerged as important creditors for the kings, who in return for the lent sums gave domains of the crown in pledge. Pledging remained a reliable tool for Peter IV in raising capital till the end of his reign; only a year before his death, he had to resort to this method again in order to secure the loans contracted from Catalan bankers.

Throughout the whole fourteenth century alienations of the royal domains remained a widespread practice till Martin I (1396-1410) started to take serious measures for recovering them,

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<sup>42</sup> Angus Mackay, *Money, prices and politics in fifteenth-century Castile* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1981), 12-15, 96. Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, “Castile in the Middle Ages” in *The rise of the fiscal state in Europe, c. 1200-1815*, ed. Richard Bonney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 178, 180-182, 193, 196.

nevertheless, due to the internal and external problems of the monarchy he could not achieve great success in it. A key development that provided the crown with a high level of capital which could meet extraordinary expenses, was the establishment of the long-term public debt, the so-called *censal* system. Similarly, to a modern government bond, the crown of Aragon offered shares in the government debt to the public. Thanks to this system, Aragon became one of the financially most advanced countries of its time, and not only was able to keep its integrity and to secure its hold over Sicily, but even to add the Kingdom of Naples to the Aragonese Crown. However, this sophisticated fiscal system was abandoned with the union with Castile in 1479, and the finance management used in Castile was implemented.<sup>43</sup>

## Central Europe and Scandinavia

As presented above, for various reasons pledging of lands had a somewhat limited impact on the finances of western monarchs. In contrast to this, in Scandinavia and Central Europe it had such an enormous importance that in modern historiography some authors perceived pledging as a system of dependency which could serve as an alternative for western-type feudalism. Others proposed a new way of periodization of medieval history, in which the period of feudalism is followed by the “era of pledging.”<sup>44</sup>

Just as in other parts of Europe, also in the Scandinavian countries rulers found it difficult to cope with the growing expenses of waging wars, as these increased especially because of hiring

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<sup>43</sup> Jeffrey Fynn-Paul, “Civic debt, civic taxes, and urban unrest: a Catalan key to interpreting the late fourteenth-century European crisis” in *Money, Markets and Trade in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. Douglas Biggs, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 124, 130-132. Donald J. Kagay, “War financing in the late-medieval crown of Aragon.” *Journal of Medieval Military History* 6 (2008): 121-122, 131. Jeffrey Fynn-Paul, “Military Entrepreneurs in the Crown of Aragon during the Castilian–Aragonese War, 1356–1375” in *War, Entrepreneurs, and the State in Europe and the Mediterranean, 1300–1800*, ed. Jeffrey Fynn-Paul, (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 35, 38, 57-58. Alan Forey, “The crown of Aragon” in *The New Cambridge Medieval History 6*, ed. Michael Jones, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 605-606. Jocelyn N. Hillgarth, “The royal accounts of the Crown of Aragon” in *Jews, Muslims and Christians In and Around the Crown of Aragon*, ed. Harvey J. Hames, (Brill: Leiden, 2004), 27-28, 31, 33.

<sup>44</sup> In the German literature, this is called as “Verpfändungszeitalter”. Hans-Georg Krause, “Pfandherrschaften als verfassungsgeschichtliches Problem” in *Der Staat* 9 (1970): 532. According to Eberhard Isenmann “feudalism was superseded by the practice of pledging.” Eberhard Isenmann, “The Holy Roman Empire in the Middle Ages” in *The rise of the fiscal state in Europe, c. 1200-1815*, ed. Richard Bonney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 254. Jacek Matuszewski, “Die Verpfändung der Krongüter und das Nutzungssystem der Herrschaftsgüter der Regierenden im Polen des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts” in *Polen und Österreich im 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Walter Leitsch, Stanislaw Trawkowski (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag), 58. Michael Ludwig, *Besteuerung und Verpfändung königlicher Städte im spätmittelalterlichen Polen* (Berlin:Duncker & Humblot, 1984), 100.

professional contingents more regularly. Levying new taxes seemed a plausible solution, but in fact it was difficult to push through against the will of the magnates, especially considering that in the Scandinavian lands taxation interfered with personal freedom, hence it was difficult to collect taxes on a regular basis. For this reason, from the thirteenth century onwards kings began to borrow heavily, but because the number of bankers and burghers with ready capital was limited, they had to turn to the nobility. In return for the lent sums, nobles usually received administrative units, called *len* (*län*) in pledge for a fixed period. This fundraising method became an important element of the royal finances so much that for example in Sweden, King Magnus IV (Eriksson) (1319-1364) financed his attempt to strengthen royal power by pledges. The extensive practice of pledging substantially weakened the country, since large shares of domains were alienated, and the military authority was fragmented by alienating castles together with the lands. Furthermore, foreign lords gained lands in the countries, like German princes in King Magnus IV's Sweden, which situation could easily have led to tensions. Pledging persisted to be a major source of extraordinary revenue for longer period; in the early sixteenth century Denmark it was still one of the primary ways of obtaining credit.<sup>45</sup>

In late medieval Poland, revenues originating from the royal domains were still a chief source of income, representing around one third of the royal revenues at the time of King Casimir III the Great's reign (1333-1370). Moreover, the royal demesne ensured to upkeep the basic functions of the kingdom and secured the continuous existence of the dynasty. However, this situation changed drastically with the ascension of Władysław II Jagiełło (1386-1434) to the throne, when the extensive royal lands left behind by Casimir III began to disintegrate primarily because of pledging. Władysław II being beholden to the nobility for offering the throne for him, and in need of extraordinary resources for fulfilling his political goals, found the answer in pledging for both problems. His death did not end the policy of large scale pledging, but this persisted till the early modern period.<sup>46</sup>

The reasons behind were manifold. There are historians, who claim that this phenomenon originates in the deed of privilege of King Louis of Anjou issued in 1374. The king, striving to

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<sup>45</sup> Bjørn Poulsen, "Kingdoms on the periphery of Europe: the case of medieval and early modern Scandinavia" in *Economic Systems and State Finance: The Origins of the Modern State in Europe*, ed. Richard Bonney (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 104-6, 112-114, 119.

<sup>46</sup> Matuszewski, *Die Verpfändung der Krongüter*, 47, 50, 57-58. Ludwig, *Besteuerung und Verpfändung*, 131-132.

obtain the support of the nobility for securing his daughter's claim to the Polish throne, issued the document by which the Polish nobility was exempted from paying direct taxes. By this action the Polish crown was deprived from a considerable source of income and even from the possibility of appealing to its subjects' financial contribution in cases of emergency.<sup>47</sup> Besides this, the revenues of domains were insufficient throughout the discussed period for covering the costs of the defense of the country, upkeep of the army, the administration and the judicial system. Some extra funds were needed for the Jagiellonians' foreign political ambitions, like obtaining the Czech or the Hungarian throne. Additionally, from the fifteenth century onwards mercenaries began to be hired in larger numbers, especially in the thirteen years' war (1454-1466) fought with the Teutonic Order. Finally, besides financial considerations pledging was important for recruiting and binding adherents to the ruling dynasty.<sup>48</sup>

A few examples can illustrate precisely how large the scale of pledging of royal domains was in late medieval Poland. From 800 charters and letters preserved from the reign of Władysław III (1434-1444) around 480 (60%) were related to transactions of pledging. In Great Poland, the grants of land's role as the traditional method of rewarding services began to be taken over by pledging. In Little Poland Władysław II pledged so many domains that his successors could hardly find such which were still not in the hands of creditors. Mass pledging even affected the royal towns too, of course, its scale differed from one region to the other. Sandomierz Voivodeship was among the regions most affected, where out of the 20 existing towns 15 were pledged during the rule of Władysław II and III. The situation was even worse in the Lublin land where all the 7 towns of the region were given in pledge. Only a few towns could avoid successfully to become subject of pledge. These were the mining towns important for the royal treasury (Wieliczka, Olkusz, Bochnia), Krakow, the capital of the country, and other centers of certain provinces. That is why, it is not surprising that from the preserved archival material, historians managed to collect data about 610 transactions of pledge concluded between 1447-1492 and 287 for 1492-1501. Furthermore, they proposed that in the years between 1385 and 1504 from the existing 2.300 royal settlements around 1.400 were involved in pledging.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Matuszewski, *Die Verpfändung der Krongüter*, 49.

<sup>48</sup> Anna Filipczak-Kocur, "Poland-Lithuania before partition" in *The rise of the fiscal state in Europe, c. 1200-1815*, ed. Richard Bonney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 443-444. Ludwig, *Besteuerung und Verpfändung*, 99-100, 103-104, 119-120.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 102, 105-106, 128-131. Matuszewski, *Die Verpfändung der Krongüter*, 48.

If we can believe to Jan Dlugosz' account, then voices were raised quite early opposing the royal pledging policy. According to him, Pope Martin V drew Władysław II's attention to preserving the integrity of the royal demesne. His successor, Władysław III was also criticized for his extensive pledging practice, not by the pope, but by the nobility. They did not stop at this point, but launched an initiative that demanded from the ruler that centers of provinces and burgraviates (*Burghauptmannschaft*) should have not been pledged. Also during this period, in 1440 it was prohibited for the first time pledging of certain lands significant for the treasury.<sup>50</sup> It was by no coincidence, that concrete measures aiming to stop the drastic shrinking of the crown lands were taken during Władysław III's time, because exactly during this period, the treasury's resources became so limited that it was almost impossible to recover the pledged lands. After his death, there was a plan to redeem the pledged domains by collecting the necessary sum through levying extraordinary tax, but the outbreak of the thirteen years' war impeded it.<sup>51</sup>

A firm stance was taken in favor of restoring royal finances by regulating the pledging of the crown's domains at the Sejm of 1504. Here a legislation was adopted which prescribed that royal estates could be pledged only in case of emergency, and only with the consent of the Sejm. Also, it hindered the pledging for the second time of such lands which were recovered for the royal treasury, by stating that this was possible only in case the transaction was in concordance with the interest of the *Res Publica*. Despite that the decree was passed during the rule of Alexander I Jagiellon (1501-1506), when he died in 1506 he left behind an almost empty treasury and large shares of royal lands in pledge both in Poland and Lithuania.<sup>52</sup>

In the Holy Roman Empire kings and emperors were struggling with running their governments, paying the wages of the ambassadors, and protecting their settlements from the enemies. It was similarly difficult for them to cover the expenses of war, increased by the developments in the field of military engineering (war-wagons, new-fangled cannon, etc.) and also by the changed nature of war. This, especially in case of the Hussite wars meant, that the traditional summer military campaigns were not enough to secure the military dominance of an area but permanent military presence was required, which of course was financially highly cumbersome.

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<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, 50-53. Ludwig, *Besteuerung und Verpfändung*, 109, 113-114.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 131. Ludwig, *Besteuerung und Verpfändung*, 50-51.

<sup>52</sup> Filipczak-Kocur, *Poland-Lithuania before partition*, 450. Ludwig, *Besteuerung und Verpfändung*, 121. Matuszewski, *Die Verpfändung der Krongüter*, 49.



Moreover, due to the rulers' severe liquidity problems, they were almost constantly on the verge of insolvency. It is very much telling, that during the reign of Sigismund of Luxembourg (1411-1437), the royal and imperial yearly revenues were many times lower than some of the princes' of the realm, not to mention the revenues of the main European monarchies.<sup>53</sup>

Furthermore, in contrast to the cities' sophisticated finance management, the empire's was obsolete, no financial experts were hired in larger numbers, there were no general registers of the *bona imperii*, and it was lacking good credit facilities. One of the primary reasons for the rulers' deplorable financial condition was that the imperial domains were gradually dismembered by pledging them away, creating fiefs, and due to the usurpations during the Great Interregnum (1254-1273). That is why dynastic lands of the monarchs came to the front to ease the financial pressure and began to bear with more importance than the imperial possessions.<sup>54</sup> Nonetheless, sometimes even these additional funds proved to be inadequate, consequently the rulers had no choice but to maximize their incomes, and seek for alternative sources of revenue.

From 1251 onwards pledging the possessions of the empire was one of the chief ways of raising extraordinary funds, so much that it was a regular feature of every German ruler from then on.<sup>55</sup> The origins of imperial pledges go back to the end of the twelfth century, the very first such transactions being concluded by Frederick of Barbarossa. From the double-reign (1198-1208) of Philipp, Duke of Swabia, and Otto IV onwards they started to play a greater role in the imperial finances, but it was not until the rule of Conrad IV (1237-1254) and his military expedition to Italy

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<sup>53</sup> Steven Rowan, "Imperial Taxes and German Politics in the Fifteenth Century: An Outline." *Central European History* 13, 3 (1980): 205. Isenmann, *The Holy Roman Empire, 252-255, 260-261*. Eberhard Isenmann, "Reichsfinanzen und Reichssteuern im 15. Jahrhundert." *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 7 (1980): 11. Sigismund once claimed that he only controlled the imperial cities and all the rest of the empire were in the hand of the princes. He also stated in 1412, that he could not collect more income than 13.000 gulden a year. Indeed, he had limited resources at his disposal, though, he was probably exaggerating with this statement. *The Cambridge Economic History* 3, 507, 515-516. Isenmann, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 260. Stefan Weiss challenged this picture of the impoverished Holy Roman kings and emperors through the example of Emperor Charles IV, whom he considered the wealthiest ruler North of the Alps. Weiss argued, that the Bohemian silver resources were chiefly behind Charles IV's wealth, leasing the mine of Kuttenberg yielded him around 91.000 florins yearly. Stefan Weiss, "Karl IV. und das Geld - Einige Beobachtungen" in *Rom 1312: Die Kaiserkrönung Heinrichs VII. und die Folgen. Die Luxemburger als Herrscherdynastie von gesamteuropäischer Bedeutung*, ed. Sabine Pentz, Peter Thorau (Cologne: Böhlau, 2016), 207-211.

<sup>54</sup> A good example of this is represented Charles IV's attitude towards the imperial lands. For him the hereditary possessions were more important, he was interested not only to keep their integrity but even sought to expand them. Like with the acquisition of the Margraviate of Brandenburg. Regarding the domains of the empire he was not this caring as his countless pledges demonstrates. *The Cambridge Economic History* 3, 514. Isenmann, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 261.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 245-247, 252-253, 257. *The Cambridge Economic History* 3, 510.

(1252-1253) — primarily financed by pledges — that pledging began on a massive scale. After his death, during the interregnum this practice continued, and significantly contributed to Rudolf of Habsburg's (1273-1291) ascension to power.<sup>56</sup> However, the peak was reached in the fourteenth century, during the reigns of Louis IV (1314-1347) and Charles IV (1346-1378), when out of the circa 1100 transactions of pledge were concluded in the interval of time 1200 and 1500,<sup>57</sup> 725 (65% of the whole figure) was agreed during their reign. Concerning the fifteenth century, “only” 130 were contracted, representing 12% of the 1100 pledgings.<sup>58</sup> The busiest periods, when much of the contracts had been agreed, were the elections of the King of the Romans and the times of internal disturbances with two candidates to the throne. Such times were the first years of rule of Charles IV, when he, during his fight with Louis IV was in great need to recruit followers and to gather resources, therefore only in three years' time he had 45 new pledgings nearing 1.000.000 gulden in value.<sup>59</sup>

The imperial election created a chain of indebtedness, where the indebted electors hoped to clear off some of their debts by the pledges that the candidates to the throne had promised them in exchange for their support. The indebtedness of the German princes and electors sometimes could reach similar heights to that of the monarchs'.<sup>60</sup> The Wittelsbach dynasty having the bulk of their domains pledged in the Margraviate of Brandenburg, and trying to overcome some serious financial problems, had no choice but to sell the territory. Ecclesiastical electors were no different from the secular. For example, in the Archbishopric of Cologne all district governorship and

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<sup>56</sup> Rudolf's military campaign against Ottokar II of Bohemia (1253-1278) in 1276 was financed by loans and by pledging away many Austrian revenues. *Ibid.*, 508-511.

<sup>57</sup> Götz Landwehr summed up the value of the 1100 pledges and his calculation resulted in altogether 7.740.00 gulden or pound heller (Pfund Heller). Götz Landwehr, “Die rechtshistorische Einordnung der Reichspfandschaften” in *Der deutsche Territorialstaat im 14. Jahrhundert* Vol.1, ed. Hans Patze (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke-Verlag, 1970), 99.

<sup>58</sup> The number of 1100 pledgings does not contain such transactions when a pledge was transferred to a third party, or when the initial sum was increased. Landwehr, *Die rechtshistorische*, 97-98. Isenmann, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 254. Isenmann, *Reichsfinanzen*, 11-12.

<sup>59</sup> Krause, *Pfandherrschaften*, 392, 401. *The Cambridge Economic History* 3, 507.

<sup>60</sup> Not only the rulers and electors of the realm, but other German princess were often heavily indebted. They usually relied on the financial support of the local nobility, to whom for the money provided they put in pledge entire territories, advocacies (Vogtei), district governorships, towns, castles, mints and so on. Just to mention a few examples, in the duchy of Austria, the ducal debt became unmanageable after the fourteenth century. In the County of Tyrol where the non-royal branch of the Habsburg dynasty was ruling, most the dynasty's possessions were in pledge at the second part of the fifteenth century. In the Landgraviate of Hesse, the landgraves managed to contract around 600 pledgings during the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. In the Prince-Bishopric of Würzburg most of the episcopal towns and castles had been given in pledge by 1450. *The Cambridge Economic History* 3, 520-521. Hillay Zmora, *State and Nobility in Early Modern Germany: The Knightly Feud in Franconia, 1440–1567* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 44-45.

jurisdictional rights pertaining under the authority of the archbishop were in pledge by 1463.<sup>61</sup> At the basis of the archbishops' indebtedness often stood the sum they owed to the papacy for their promotion to this high ecclesiastical office (*pallium*).<sup>62</sup> On the other edge, the candidates to the throne strove to secure the electors' vote with bribes, by promising them imperial domains in pledges. These promises, from time to time were included even in the contracts concluded between the electors and the king-elect (*Wahlkapitulation*).<sup>63</sup>

As a result of the intensive pledging practice of the German rulers, by 1440 there was not much left to pledge. Another upheaval of imperial pledgings contributed to this during the reign of Sigismund of Luxembourg, although this was smaller in its magnitude, mainly because Sigismund had less resources at his disposal. He pledged primarily offices, taxes and revenues, but no imperial free cities (*Reichsstädte*), which were one of the chief elements of the imperial pledges, much desired by creditors due to their financial potential.<sup>64</sup> Already his father, Charles IV pressured by the urban opposition had to promise not to pledge the imperial cities. Later this opposition had amplified, and the idea of reforming the imperial finances by redeeming the pledges emerged in the fifteenth century. Nonetheless, because many of the pledged imperial estates were in the hands of the princes of the empire, it would have been difficult to recover these possessions. That is why it was by no surprise, that German rulers from the beginning of the sixteenth century on had to insert among their coronation promises, one that assured the electors that they can keep the imperial pledges unconditionally.<sup>65</sup> Thus, pledging continued to be an important tool for the

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<sup>61</sup> *The Cambridge Economic History* 3, 521. Zmora, *State and Nobility*, 45.

<sup>62</sup> Popes could be so unwavering regarding the payment for the pallium, that sometimes they even excommunicated archbishops. For instance, Konrad von Hochstaden (1238-1261), and Frederick III of Saarwerden (1370-1414), Archbishops of Cologne had this fate. *The Cambridge Economic History* 3, 521-523.

<sup>63</sup> Some random examples: John the Blind promised together with many other towns, the town of Dortmund in pledge to the Archbishop of Cologne in case if he supports' John's son, Charles' candidacy. Charles followed his father's steps when before his death, he offered substantial subsidy again to the Archbishop of the same town in order to secure his contribution in Charles's son Wenzels' successful election. Götz Landwehr, *Die Verpfändung der deutschen Reichsstädte im Mittelalter* (Köln: Böhlau, 1967), 156-157. *The Cambridge Economic History* 3, 524. It created a contradictory situation, that often the pretenders promised exactly the opposite, to stop pledging away the *bona imperii* in case they are enthroned. Landwehr, *Die Verpfändung*, 156. Likewise, it was a delicate situation, when such prince was elected king of the Romans, who held many imperial possessions in pledge. King Rupert came up with a clever solution, after his coronation he transferred the domains he held in pledge to his son, but increased substantially the value of the pledgings. *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>64</sup> Rowan, *Imperial Taxes*, 205. Isenmann, *Reichsfinanzen*, 13-14. Landwehr, *Die rechtshistorische*, 107. Landwehr, *Die Verpfändung*, 34. Krause, *Pfandherrschaften*, 516. Isenmann, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 255.

<sup>65</sup> This promise taken in the name of Emperor Ferdinand III was included even the peace treaty of Westphalia in 1637. Landwehr, *Die rechtshistorische*, 103. Isenmann, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 265. Landwehr, *Die Verpfändung*, 372. *The Cambridge Economic History* 3, 514.

empire, especially for its territorial politics even at the end of the seventeenth century. One of the last such transactions was concluded in the first part of the nineteenth century, the town of Wismar being pledged to the Grand-Duchy of Mecklenburg- Schwerin.<sup>66</sup>

Although in the case of Bohemia there are no such detailed numeric analyses available, it is highly probable that the pledging of royal estates was as much important for the royal treasury as it was in the Holy Roman Empire and in Poland. Charles I (1346-1378) (later Emperor Charles IV 1355-1378) gives an illustrative account of the situation in his autobiography. He writes that in 1333, when he returned from France to Bohemia to take over the country's governance, there were no royal castles under the king's authority where he could accommodate himself because all these castles were in pledge with all of their royal rights.<sup>67</sup> It is very tempting to think that Charles IV exaggerated the gravity of the situation, but the fact is that his father's, John the Blind's reign in Bohemia (1310-1346) was indeed catastrophic for the network of royal castles, because almost all castles were given in pledge during his time.<sup>68</sup> King John managed to rise to power in Bohemia under complicated circumstances. First of all, he became king young, at the age of fourteen, secondly, he did not speak the language of his new country, he married to a proud wife considering herself as the representative of the native dynasty contrary to her husband, and finally John faced the opposition of the powerful nobility from the early years of his reign. No wonder, that King John — considered as a “foreign king” by the locals — never felt at home in Bohemia and after a while he conceded the administration of the country to the nobility and began to pursue a life of travelling.<sup>69</sup> As a consequence of the nobility's takeover of the administration, they enjoyed the royal pledging policy the most since usually they were the pledge holders. Another cause of the numerous royal pledgings in Bohemia was John the Blind's serious financial troubles. The unpopular king was often accused by the contemporary Bohemians that he just visited the land to

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<sup>66</sup> The town was pledged in 1803, and was recovered in 1903 by the pledge holder renouncing its claim on the settlement. Landwehr, *Die rechtshistorische*, 97.

<sup>67</sup> In the end, he had to settle in houses of the burghers just as any ordinary townsman: *Quod regnum invenimus ita desolatum, quod nec unum castrum invenimus liberum quod non esset obligatum cum omnibus bonis regalibus, ita quod non habebamus ubi manere, nisi in domibus civi tatum sicut alter civis*. Balázs Nagy, Frank Schaer, ed., *Autobiography of Emperor Charles IV and his Legend of St. Wenceslas* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 68.

<sup>68</sup>Jörg K. Hoensch, *Geschichte Böhmens. Von der slavischen Landnahme bis zur Gegenwart* (München: C.H.Beck, 1992), 123. Hugh LeCaine Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown* (Stanford: Hoover Press, 2013), 28-29.

<sup>69</sup> Tomas Durdík, “System der königlichen Burgen in Böhmen” *Château Gaillard. Etudes de castellologie medievale* 17 (1996): 74.

collect the taxes which he later spent on his military business, or to improve his dynastic lands of Luxembourg. Moreover, he was criticized for spending too much on his display, or for dissipating the lands of the Bohemian crown.<sup>70</sup> These stories should have contained some truth, since John the Blind left such a troubled financial heritage to his son and heir, Charles IV that he had to borrow money even for his father's funeral.<sup>71</sup> Burdensome financial inheritance awaited Charles IV in Bohemia after his return from France, but he managed to cope with it successfully throughout the years. One of the cornerstones of Charles' Bohemian policy regarding the crown lands was the recovery of the royal castles pledged by his father. He did not only try to recover more and more castles but consciously strove to redeem them from the entire Bohemian territory and to restore the wide stretching network of royal castles. It is important to highlight that Charles pursued a totally opposite domanical policy in Bohemia than in the Holy Roman Empire. While in the latter, he distinguished himself by pledging of the *Reischgüte* on an enormous scale, in Bohemia, visibly his dynastical interests were in forefront, therefore he intended to preserve the royal domains and even to expand it. In his legal code called *Maiestas Carolina*, he stood up for keeping the integrity of the crown lands, by prohibiting the pledging of the royal castles and towns, and by making the selling of them dependent of certain conditions. All of Charles IV efforts were in vain, because due to the nobility's firm resistance he had to revoke the legal code.<sup>72</sup>

The era of large-scale pledging returned to Bohemia with the reign of one of Charles' sons, Sigismund. For him pledging bore such high significance for his rule that today historians cannot provide an accurate assessment of his rule without elaborating on it. Pledging of various royal possessions was a well-known practice of raising extraordinary funds in Bohemia, still Sigismund managed to bring novelty by beginning to put in pledge the church estates.<sup>73</sup> In the pre-Hussite Bohemia, the church had been one of the greatest landowners of the country, owning around one-third of the available domains. The Hussite revolution had defining consequences for the church possessions since the various church institutions lost around 90% of their domains. During the Hussite wars both sides tried to seize the lands of the church. The Hussites based their claims on

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<sup>70</sup> Zdeněk Žalud, "Financiers to the Blind King: Funding the Court of John the Blind (1310–1346)" in *Money and Finance in Central Europe during the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Roman Zaoral (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 60-64.

<sup>71</sup> Hoensch, *Geschichte Böhmens*, 123

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. Durdík, *System der königlichen Burgen*, 74-75. Weiss, *Karl IV. und das Geld*, 215.

<sup>73</sup> Stanislav Bárta, *Zástavní listiny Zikmunda Lucemburského na církevní statky (1420-1437)* [Sigismund of Luxemburg's pledgings of the church estates] (Brno: Filozofická fakulta Masarykova univerzita, 2016), 139-142.

the revolutionary situation, on the current position of power, and on the four articles of Prague, in which the seizure of church properties was prescribed. On the Catholic side, Sigismund was seizing the estate primarily by pledging them away. His actions were not motivated primarily by theological ideas, but by practical needs. Generally, there were two great waves of mass pledging of church possessions, between the years 1420-1422 and the other between 1436-1437. In the first period — in which sometimes he could conclude as much as 19 contracts of pledge a day — the pledgings served for securing the Bohemian throne for him, for covering the military expenses and for hiring mercenaries against the Hussites. Behind the pledgings of the second period was Sigismund's intention to revise the earlier pledgings of church estates, which intention probably triggered heavy opposition among the pledge holders. Therefore, to maintain the status quo, Sigismund began to issue another series of pledge charters, by which he not only appeased his adherents, but was also able to secure the loyalty of his former enemies.<sup>74</sup>

The death of King Sigismund was not followed by an extensive recovery of royal domains as it happened during the reign of Charles IV, in fact Sigismund's successors were not able to redeem the royal possessions, but they also kept pledging further the church estates. Moreover, with the long reign of Władysław II (1471- 1516) the pledges of royal castles in Bohemia gained a new impetus.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Jaroslav Čechura, “Die Säkularisation der kirchlichen Güter im hussitischen Böhmen und Sigismund von Luxemburg” in *Sigismund von Luxemburg, Kaiser und König in Mitteleuropa 1387-1437. Beiträge zur Herrschaft Kaiser Sigismunds und der europäischen Geschichte um 1400*, ed. Josef Macek, Ernő Marosi, Ferdinand Seibt (Warendorf: Fahlbusch Verlag, 1994), 121-124, 128-129. Stanislav Bárta, “The Financial Dimension of the Pledge Policy of King Sigismund of Luxembourg in Bohemia (1419–1437)” in *Money and Finance in Central Europe during the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Roman Zaoral (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 76-80, 82.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* Durdík, *System der königlichen Burgen*, 76.

## Chapter 2. The Price of Ascending to the Throne

*Sigismund of Luxembourg's Fight for the Throne of Hungary and Northwestern Hungary in Pledge\**

Pledging was fundamental for Sigismund from the very beginning, well before he would have become king of Hungary since without its help he could hardly achieve this. One of the key moments of his ascension to throne of Hungary was the Moravian margraves' military intervention in Hungary in 1385. Thanks to it, Sigismund became ruler of the country, but in return he had to cede the territory between the Váh and Danube rivers. That was a symbolical moment, one which marked the onset of many similar transactions for the young ruler. This chapter deals with this decisive event of Sigismund's rise to power, and more precisely, with the way the territory came under foreign rule, how it was administered by the margraves during this period, and how Sigismund recovered it.

### Preceding events

Charles IV's son had to take a long and difficult journey until he managed to be crowned as king of Hungary and Croatia, and until he could get rid of the obligations that he had taken upon himself meanwhile. According to his father's plan, he was not chosen for the Hungarian throne, but with the change of the political climate and due to an unexpected turn of events, in the end there was a real opportunity for Sigismund to become the ruler of Hungary.

According to the initial plans of the emperor, Sigismund would have married the daughter of Frederick V, Burgrave of Nuremberg, but establishing familial ties with the Angevin dynasty turned out to be more important because of the Polish-Hungarian personal union; with this marriage the Luxembourgs could gain not only the throne of Hungary but that of Poland as well. In 1372, King Louis I made a promise that he would give one of his daughters to Sigismund in marriage. Three years later a matrimonial contract was concluded for the marriage of Mary and Sigismund. At this time, the Polish inheritance was assigned to them, but because King Louis' older daughter, Catherine – who would have inherited the Hungarian throne through being the fiancée of the French prince Louis Valois – died, they would have ruled over Hungary, too. In addition, his father bought the margraviate of Brandenburg for him, which elevated its title holder to prince-elect of the Holy-Roman Empire This bright future for the young Luxembourg seemed

to be unreachable when King Louis died and Sigismund's ascension to the thrones became uncertain. Louis obliged the Polish magnates to take a solemn oath to support Sigismund's claim, but after his death they demanded that Sigismund set up his residence in Poland if he wanted to be crowned. Moreover, some of the nobility openly refused to recognize Sigismund as their ruler and wanted Prince Ziemowit IV of Mazovia instead, despite Sigismund's military efforts to achieve his general acceptance. Furthermore, because his marriage to Mary was regularly postponed by Queen Elisabeth and the barons on her side, it seemed that his Hungarian coronation would never materialize either.<sup>76</sup>

Under such circumstances, Sigismund decided to use force to rise into power in Hungary,<sup>77</sup> but since he lacked substantial military power,<sup>78</sup> he had to ask his cousins, the Moravian margraves' Jobst and Prokop, to intervene. On 9 July 1385, he promised in pledge parts of the margraviate of Brandenburg (Altmark and Priegnitz) for 50 000 Prague groschen for his cousins' military aid. In the same charter, he promised them the territories situated west of the Váh River with the condition that if they acquired these by arms or treaties they were entitled to hold these possessions under their authority until the costs of their military undertakings were paid off.<sup>79</sup> At that time, Sigismund had not yet been crowned king of the kingdom; he was only Mary's spouse,

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\* I would like to thank Norbert C. Tóth and Stanislav Bárta for their suggestions and remarks on the chapter.

<sup>76</sup> Elemér Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund in Ungarn, 1387-1437* (Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó, 1990), 7-22. Julius Bartl, "Political and Social Situation in Slovakia at the Turning Point of the 14th and 15th Centuries and the Reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg," *Studia Historica Slovaca* 9 (1979):41-44. Márta Kondor, "Fejdelmi frigyek, választási ígéretek: Luxemburgi Zsigmond első koronái" [Royal convenants and election promises: Sigismund of Luxembourg's first crowns] in *Köztes Európa" vonzásában. Ünnepi tanulmányok Font Márta tiszteletére*. [Under the influence of Zwischeneuropa. Studies in honor of Márta Font], ed. Dániel Bagi, Tamás Fedeles, Gergely Kiss (Pécs: Kronosz, 2012), 277-281; Szilárd Süttő, *Anjou-Magyarország alkonya: Magyarország politikai története Nagy Lajostól Zsigmondig, az 1384-1387. évi belviszályok okmánytárával I-II* [The twilight of Anjou Hungary: The political history of Hungary from Louis the Great to Sigismund, with a chartulary about the kingdom's inner conflict, I-II] (Szeged: Belvedere Meridionale, 2003), I, 67-72. Hoensch Jörg K., *Kaiser Sigismund. Herrscher an der Schwelle zur Neuzeit 1368-1437* (Munich: Beck, 1996), 48-57. Daniela Dvořáková, "Jost a Uhorske kralovstvo" [Jobst and the Kingdom of Hungary] in *Morava v časech markraběte Jošta* [Moravia at the time of Margrave Jobst], ed. Jan Libor (Brno: Maticе moravská pro Výzkumné středisko pro dějiny střední Evropy, 2012), 44.

<sup>77</sup> Probably the siege of Žilina castle (Zsolna) was the first military act Sigismund took toward acquiring the Hungarian throne. Süttő, *Anjou-Magyarország* I, 65-66. Dvořáková, *Jost a Uhorske kralovstvo*, 45.

<sup>78</sup> At the beginning of May 1385 he had already started to recruit soldiers for the military campaign against Hungary. <sup>79</sup> "...hie disseit des Wages, es were mit macht, oder mit teidigen oder sust ...abtreten für alle scheden die sie genommen hetten und empfangen, das sullen sie ynnehaben geruesamlich und in gewere desselben von uns gesacht werden un darynne behalden als lang, uncz yn vor die egenanten scheden genug getan werde." Berthold Bretholz, Vincenz Brandl, *Codex diplomaticus et epistolaris Moraviae. Urkundensammlung zur Geschichte Mährens 1375-1408*, vol. XI. (Brünn: Mährischen Landes-Ausschusses, 1885) (hereafter CDM XI), 331. Süttő, *Anjou-Magyarország* I, 94. Four days later, Sigismund's brother, Wenceslas, king of the Romans, gave his consent to the pledge. Dvořáková, *Jost a Uhorske kralovstvo*, 46.



but this did not stop him from making this promise as the future ruler of the country.<sup>80</sup> This authorization was at the basis of bringing the lands between the Váh and Danube rivers under Moravian control.<sup>81</sup>

General mobilization had started before the charter of pledge was composed; the townsmen of Bratislava (Pozsony) expected the arrival of the main army on 3 June, but smaller numbers of Moravian troops might have arrived prior to this.<sup>82</sup> The fighting lasted from the summer of 1385 until autumn, when most of the territory had been conquered. With Charles of Durazzo's arrival in the country, Sigismund left for the Czech Lands and returned to Hungary only after Charles' death, in the spring of the following year, in the company of his brother Wenceslas, German and Czech ruler, and his cousins.<sup>83</sup> In May, in Győr, negotiations were conducted among Queen Elisabeth, her daughter Mary, Sigismund, and the Moravian margraves and they agreed that King Wenceslas should be the arbitrator in the dispute.<sup>84</sup> The final point of the resolution of Győr touched upon the issue of the territories west of the Váh River. According to this, although Sigismund was the one who gave the territories as collateral to the margraves, it was still not he but Queen Mary who had to clear the debt he had accumulated. She would have had to pay them 200.000 Hungarian golden florins from the royal revenues in Bratislava, Trnava (Nagyszombat) or Šintava (Sempte) before 11 November. However, if payment were made the occupied territories would have had to be ceded to Sigismund and not to Mary.<sup>85</sup> Another interesting point of the treaty

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<sup>80</sup> There are other examples of candidates for the throne donating domains away or promising estates situated in the country they wanted to rule. Ladislaus of Naples was crowned king of Hungary in Zadar in July 1403. Even before his coronation, when he was still in Naples, he donated away a castle in Slavonia. Borsa Iván, Norbert C. Tóth, Elemér Mályusz, Tibor Neumann, *Zsigmondkori oklevéltár 1387-1424, I-XI*. (Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltár, 1951-2009) (hereafter ZsO) II. 2226. He made other deeds of donation and even granted privileges to several settlements, *Ibid.*, 2275, 2341, 2517, 2519.

<sup>81</sup> During the negotiations held at Győr in the following year, Sigismund confirmed that the territory was subdued with his approval. "*super bonis, que sunt inter flumina Vag et Danubium sita, a nobis obtinere noscuntur*" CDM XI. 355.

<sup>82</sup> According to the same source of information, the castle of Ostrý Kameň (Éleskö) was already under the authority of a certain John Nyderspewger, thus the conquest of the territory could have started earlier, Süttő, *Anjou-Magyarország*, II, 228, Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archives] – Diplomatikai Levéltár (Collectio Diplomatica Hungarica) [Archives of Diplomacy] (hereafter DL) 42328. In spite of all this, the two margraves were at Brno at the beginning of July and they were present in Hungary only in August. Süttő, *Anjou-Magyarország* II, 228. DL 42328. Dvořáková, *Jost a Uhorske kralovstvo*, 45-46.

<sup>83</sup> For the events, see Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 18-22; Dvořáková, *Jost a Uhorske kralovstvo*, 46-48; Süttő, *Anjou-Magyarország* I, 101-126.

<sup>84</sup> CDM XI. 351, 354.

<sup>85</sup> *Et huiusmodi solucione facta plenarie dicte summe ducentorum millium florenorum auri legalis ponderis, extunc idem Jodocus marchio Moravie predictas terras et castra cum eorum pertinenciis dare et tradere debet ad manus dicti fratris nostri Sigismundi, de ipsis ulterius disponendum.*" CDM XI. 357. Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 21. Süttő, *Anjou-Magyarország* I, 133-134.

is that it names only Jodok as the conqueror of the lands between the Váh and Danube, and as a consequence the money had to be paid to him.<sup>86</sup> All this happened despite the fact that Prokop took part in subjugating the lands at his brother's side,<sup>87</sup> although he was probably not present at the negotiations.<sup>88</sup> Already at this time there was tension in the brothers' relationship; in 1381 they were fighting with each other over the Moravian estates of their brother John.<sup>89</sup> Later, the northwestern Hungarian lands became the source of another dispute, which likely had its origins in the negotiations at Győr.

## The Váh-Danube interfluvium under Moravian rule

Sigismund's self-proclaimed chronicler, Eberhard Windecke, provides information about exactly which lands were subdued by the margraves:

“During that time, the Moravian Margraves Jobst and Procop marched against Hungary with a powerful army, and attacked and conquered many towns and castles of the Hungarian counties situated in the vicinity of Moravia; among these were: Dobrá Voda (Jókő), Korlátka (Korlátkő) Ostrý Kameň (Éleskő), Plavecký hrad (Detrekő), Červený Kameň (Vöröskő), Devín (Dévény), Branč

<sup>86</sup> *Item de et super terris et earum pertinenciis, quas dictus patruus noster Jodocus marchio Moravie in regno Ungarie inter flumina Danubii et Wag acquisivit, dicimus pronunciamus et eiam diffinimus, quod dicta domina Maria de bonis regalibus regni Ungarie dicto Jodoco marchioni Moravie vel eius certis nunciis desuper mandatum suum habentibus dare assignare et persolvere debet...ducenta millia florenorum bonorum auri legalis ponderis de Ungaria...* CDM XI. 357. Süttő, *Anjou-Magyarország I*, 134. Dvořáková, *Jost a Uhorske kralovstvo*, 50.

<sup>87</sup> Although the two brothers were fighting on the same side in their military expedition in Hungary, it remains a question whether they joined their forces in a single army. This is relevant because apparently they controlled the lands between the Váh and Danube rivers separately, divided between them. For instance, the town of Bratislava was under Margrave Jobst's command, while the Szentgyörgyi family regained the castle of Malinovo from Prokop, ZsO I. 860, 1334. Furthermore, on 1 January 1389 Jobst promised 20 000 shock Prague groschen for Procop's Hungarian castles, CDM XI. 456. This sum was around 60 000 Hungarian golden florins (20 groschen to 1 golden florin), which was a bit more than one fourth of the 200 000-florin sum of redemption stipulated by the adjudication at Győr. This might have been the way the conquered territory was divided among the margraves. On the exchange rate see: Jiří Sejbal, *Dějiny peněz na Moravě*. *Studia numismatica 3* [The history of money in Moravia] (Brno: Blok, 1979), 173.

<sup>88</sup> In the charter of 11 May 1386 Sigismund, Jobst, and Procop together acknowledged Wenceslas as arbitrator in the dispute, yet the document was only sealed by Sigismund and Jobst. “*Presencium sub nostrorum Sigismundi et Jodoci predictorum sigillis testimonio litterarum*,” CDM XI. 355. Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archives] – Diplomatikai Fényképgyűjtemény (Collectio Diplomatica Hungarica) [Collection of Diplomatic Photographs] (hereafter DF) 287486.

<sup>89</sup> Moravian Margrave John Henry had three legitimate and one illegitimate son (“Johannes Bastardus”). Among his natural offsprings he divided his wealth, with Jobst receiving the largest share of it. However, first he fought with his brother John Sobieslaw for further domains, and when John died (around 1381), then with his other brother, Procop, for John's estates. In the end the conflict was solved only through external mediation, Jaroslav Mezník, “Die Finanzen des mährischen Markgrafen Jost” in *Acta Creationis, Unabhängige Geschichtsforschung in der Tschechoslowakei 1969-1980, vorgelegt dem 15. Internationalen Kongress für Geschichtswissenschaften, Bukarest 1980*, ed. Vilém Precan (Hannover: Selbstverlag, 1980), 74-77. Ondřej Schmidt, “Jan z Moravy, patriarcha aquilejský († 1394) a Jan Soběslav, markrabě moravský († cca 1381) [John of Moravia, Patriarch of Aquileia [† 1394] and John Sobieslaw, Margrave of Moravia [† ca 1381]” *Časopis Matice moravské* 132 (2013): 40-41.

(Berencs), Trnava, Szokolca (Skalica), Svätý Jur (Szentgyörgy), Pezinok (Bazin), Modra (Modor), Bernolákovo (Cseklész), Bratislava and other castles too.”<sup>90</sup>

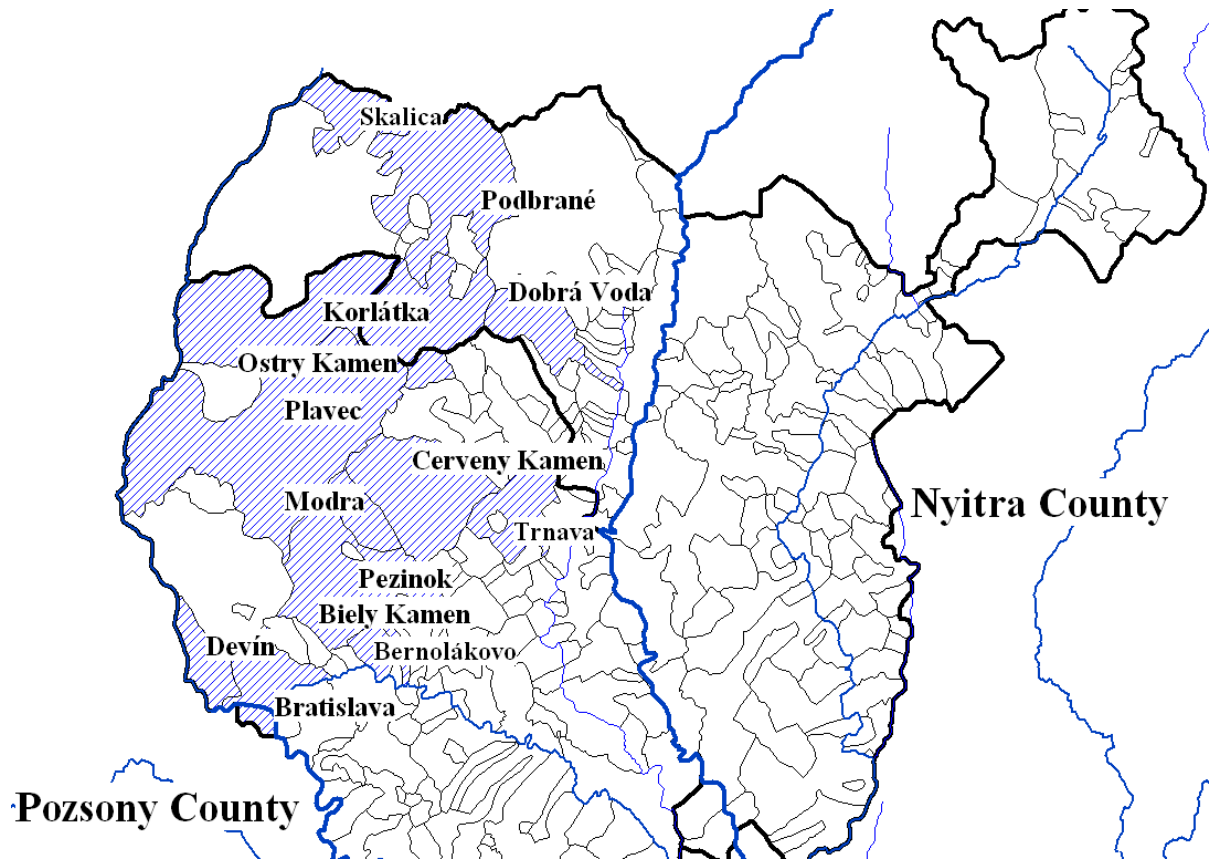


Fig. 1. The conquered territories (cross-hatched) according to Eberhard Windecke’s information.<sup>91</sup>

As this map illustrates, the Moravian conquest stretched to two counties to differing extents.<sup>92</sup> In Nyitra only the northern and northwestern part of the county was conquered,<sup>93</sup> but in Pozsony the

<sup>90</sup> Altmann, *Eberhard Windeckes Denkwürdigkeiten* (pars 13), 14. Unfortunately, Windecke does not specify his source of information.

<sup>91</sup> The maps have been created with the help of the computer program: Pál Engel, *Magyarország a középkor végén: digitális térkép és adatbázis a középkori Magyar Királyság településeiről* [Hungary in the late Middle Ages: Digital map and database about the settlements of the Hungarian Kingdom] (Budapest: Térinfo Bt.- Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Történettudományi Intézete, 2001. CDROM).

<sup>92</sup> According to Julius Bartl, apart from the counties of Nyitra and Pozsony, Trencsén also was affected by the Moravian conquest. Bartl, *Political and Social*, 50. Trencsén is situated on the eastern side of the River Váh, while Sigismund’s authorization for the conquest referred only to the lands west of the river. On the top of that, there is no any data proving that the parts of Trencsén County were subdued.

<sup>93</sup> Windecke does not mention it, but also the town and the castle of Nitra (Nyitra) was taken by the Moravians. Pál Engel, *Királyi hatalom és arisztokrácia viszonya a Zsigmond korban (1387-1437)* [The relation between royal power

troops managed to subdue larger parts of the county under their command. Because the Váh-Danube interfluvium covered all of Pozsony County, it is important to explore – beyond Windecke’s information<sup>94</sup> – how deeply the Moravian troops penetrated into the county. A piece of data from the year 1388 claims that “certain Czechs” captured the castle of Drégely of Hont County.<sup>95</sup> It is questionable whether these “Czechs” were identical with the troops of the Moravian margraves because the castle lay far from the Váh and Danube rivers, and the available information states that they only had territories under their command in this area. Nevertheless, it is almost certain that their conquest extended further south than Windecke suggests, since they managed to capture the castle of Malinovo (Éberhárd), which is situated south of the castle of Bernolákovo.<sup>96</sup> Regrettably, there is no further data about the extent of the Moravian conquest, but the available information demonstrates that the margraves conquered most of Pozsony County but not all of it. This is demonstrated by the fact that during the Moravian rule Sigismund had deeds of donation for the county’s domains.<sup>97</sup>

In this period, there were eleven castles in the county,<sup>98</sup> eight of which were certainly under Moravian authority. The remaining two were located near the borders of the county, Šintava close to the eastern border and Pajštún (Borostyánkő) near the western border. The map shows that castles surrounding Pajštún (Pezinok, Svätý Jur, Devín, Plavecký hrad) were all conquered; for this reason it might have happened that Pajštún was likewise captured.<sup>99</sup> Šintava was chosen as

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and aristocracy in the Sigismund era (1387-1437)] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1977), 137-138. Dvořáková, *Jost a Uhorske kralovstvo*, 46.

<sup>94</sup> Windecke himself states that the list of the conquered settlements and fortifications is not complete, he ends his enumeration with: “*ander slos mere*”. Altmann, *Eberhard Windeckes Denkwürdigkeiten*, 14.

<sup>95</sup> ZsO I. 646.

<sup>96</sup> Pál Engel claimed that Malinovo castle was built by Margrave Procop around 1386, Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 108. A charter from 1409 contradicts this, since the Szentgyörgyies stated in it that: “...*praefatam ipse munitionem seu castrum Eberharth vocatam simul cum suis pertinenciis per praefatum Procopium marchionem temporibus dudum in pacatis ab ipsis violenter ablatum et receptum...*” DL 9485. Fejér Georgius, *Codex Diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis*. vol. I-XI (Buda: Typis typogr. Regiae Universitatis Ungaricae, 1829-1844) (hereafter Fejér), X/4. 748. In his later work focusing on Hungary’s medieval archontology, Engel remained silent about the castle’s history prior to 1390, Pál Engel, *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1301–1457. I–II*. [The secular archontology of Hungary 1301–1457. I–II.] (Budapest: MTA, Történettudományi Intézet, 1996) I, 307.

<sup>97</sup> John and Desiderius Kaplai were granted Cifer village in January 1387, Süttő, *Anjou-Magyarország*, II, 439. The Cseklézi family received the custom of Bernolákovo in December 1387 and the village of Zeleneč (Kisszelincs) in April 1388 from the king as a donation. ZsO I. 329, 492. For more about the villages and the custom see: Jenő Házi, László Koncsol, *Pozsony vármegye középkori földrajza* [The historical topography of medieval Pozsony County] (Bratislava: Kalligram, 2000), 199-205, 219, 486-488.

<sup>98</sup> Ostrý Kameň, Plavecký hrad, Červený Kameň, Devín, Svätý Jur, Pezinok, Bernolákovo, Šintava, Bernstein, Malinovo, Bratislava.

<sup>99</sup> The castle of Pajštún was under the jurisdiction of the *ispán* of Pozsony, and because the margraves appointed the *ispán* of the county in the period, they should have been in charge of it. There is a charter from 1388 in which Leusták

one of the possible locations where the 200.000 florins had to be handed over by Queen Mary. The two other such settlements, Bratislava and Trnava, were under the margrave's command, thus it might be that they selected places for paying the money which were under their rule. After the summit at Győr, until an agreement was reached about returning the conquered northwestern territories, Sigismund did not visit the area;<sup>100</sup> Šintava was the only exception; he met his cousins there twice while conducting treaties about the status of the territory.<sup>101</sup> Even if this hypothesis is incorrect and the two castles were not captured, still the great majority of the county's castles, together with the private castles, were under their authority.

In July 1385, when Sigismund promised his cousins the lands west of the Váh River, he not only promised royal estates – which he as king-to-be could command – but essentially everything. Therefore, as expected, the Moravian margraves did not make any distinctions between royal, private<sup>102</sup> or church possessions when they entered the country. Regarding private domains, the Szentgyörgyi family (both branches) suffered the most as they lost not only Svätý Jur castle, from which they took their name, but also the castles of Pezinok and Malinovo together with their domains. The Cseklészi family's Bernolákovo castle was also captured by the Moravian troops.<sup>103</sup>

Because most of the castles (if not all) in Pozsony County were under Moravian authority, it is not surprising that the whole county was under their administration. This is proven by the fact that during their rule over these lands they appointed the *ispán* (*comes*) of the county. The first surviving document that mentions a certain Smil *ispán* of Pozsony County is from 9 December 1385, however it is almost certain that there were earlier such documents which unfortunately have not been preserved.<sup>104</sup> *Ispán* Smil can be identified with Smil of Kunštát, who was probably the local representative of the interests of the margraves, as they seldom visited the subdued Hungarian

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Jolsvai called himself *Lewstachius de Pernstain*. Engel, *Archontológia*, 285. Nevertheless, *Pernstain* might have referred to Bernstein castle of Vas County.

<sup>100</sup> Pál Engel, Norberth C. Tóth, *Királyok és királynék itineráriumai, 1382-1438* [Itineraries of kings and queens, 1382-1438] (Budapest: MTA, Történettudományi Intézet, 2005), 56-61. On 22 May 1388 there was an agreement about the redemption of the territory.

<sup>101</sup> First in May 1387, then two years later, again in May.

<sup>102</sup> Dvořáková, *Jost a Uhorske kralovstvo*, 51.

<sup>103</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 292.

<sup>104</sup> DF 227039. Engel, *Archontológia*, 168. In this document Smil refers to an earlier charter issued by himself, which is why it is certain that he was the *ispán* of the county prior to 9 December 1385, Szilárd Süttő, "Adalékok a 14–15. századi magyar világi archontológiához, különösen az 1384–1387. évekhez" [Additional data for the 14-15<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian lay archontology, especially the years 1384-1387] *Levéltári Szemle* 52 (2002/4), 33.

lands.<sup>105</sup> The *ispán* of a county was regarded as a baronial position in the Árpáadian period already from the time when this denomination of *baro* emerged, but during the 14<sup>th</sup> century this honorary title was abolished. However, the *ispán* of Pozsony County was an exception<sup>106</sup> and usually the list of dignitaries ended with the name of this officeholder.<sup>107</sup> Thus, Smil of Kunštát could justly consider himself one of the barons, since he held one of the most prominent offices in the kingdom. For him, this was not a mere title, but he actively took part in the county's administration by making decisions in court cases together with the noble magistrates,<sup>108</sup> by giving orders instituting people into estates,<sup>109</sup> and even by leasing domains pertaining to the castle of Bratislava.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> The two brothers might have come into the country in the second part of July 1385 and they probably left Hungary around the end of October. After this, they came in May only to discuss the situation of the occupied lands. First they met Sigismund in May 1386 in Győr (Prokop's presence here is questionable), then in May 1387 and 1388 in Šintava. Václav Štěpán, *Moravský markrabě Jošt (1354–1411)* [Moravian Margrave Jobst (1354–1411)] (Brno: Matice moravská, 2002), 807-810, 822-23. Apart from seldom visiting the country, they were not troubled with the administration of the territory. Apparently, Prokop was not involved in the issues of the subdued lands, only Margrave Jobst dealt with some of them. He mainly focused on the affairs of Bratislava, even when he was not present in Hungary, ZsO I. 464, 520, 634; Dvořáková, *Jost a Uhorske kralovstvo*, 53-55. On March 1388 he addressed an order to the burghers of Bratislava from Brno, ZsO I. 464.

<sup>106</sup> István Tringli, *Megyék a középkori Magyarországon* [Counties in medieval Hungary], in *Honoris Causa: Tanulmányok Engel Pál Tiszteletére* [Honoris causa: Studies in Honor of Pál Engel], ed. Tibor Neumann, György Rácz (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 2009), 508.

<sup>107</sup> Norbert C. Tóth, "A főpapi székek betöltésének gyakorlata Zsigmond király uralkodása alatt" [The practice of filling vacant episcopal sees during the reign of King Sigismund] *Gazdaság & Társadalom* (2012/ special issue), 102-103.

<sup>108</sup> Imre Nagy, Farkas Deák and Gyula Nagy, ed., *Hazai oklevéltár 1234–1536* [Charters of the homeland 1234–1536] (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1879), 315; Dvořáková, *Jost a Uhorske kralovstvo*, 53-54.

<sup>109</sup> ZsO I. 37, 676.

<sup>110</sup> ZsO I. 445

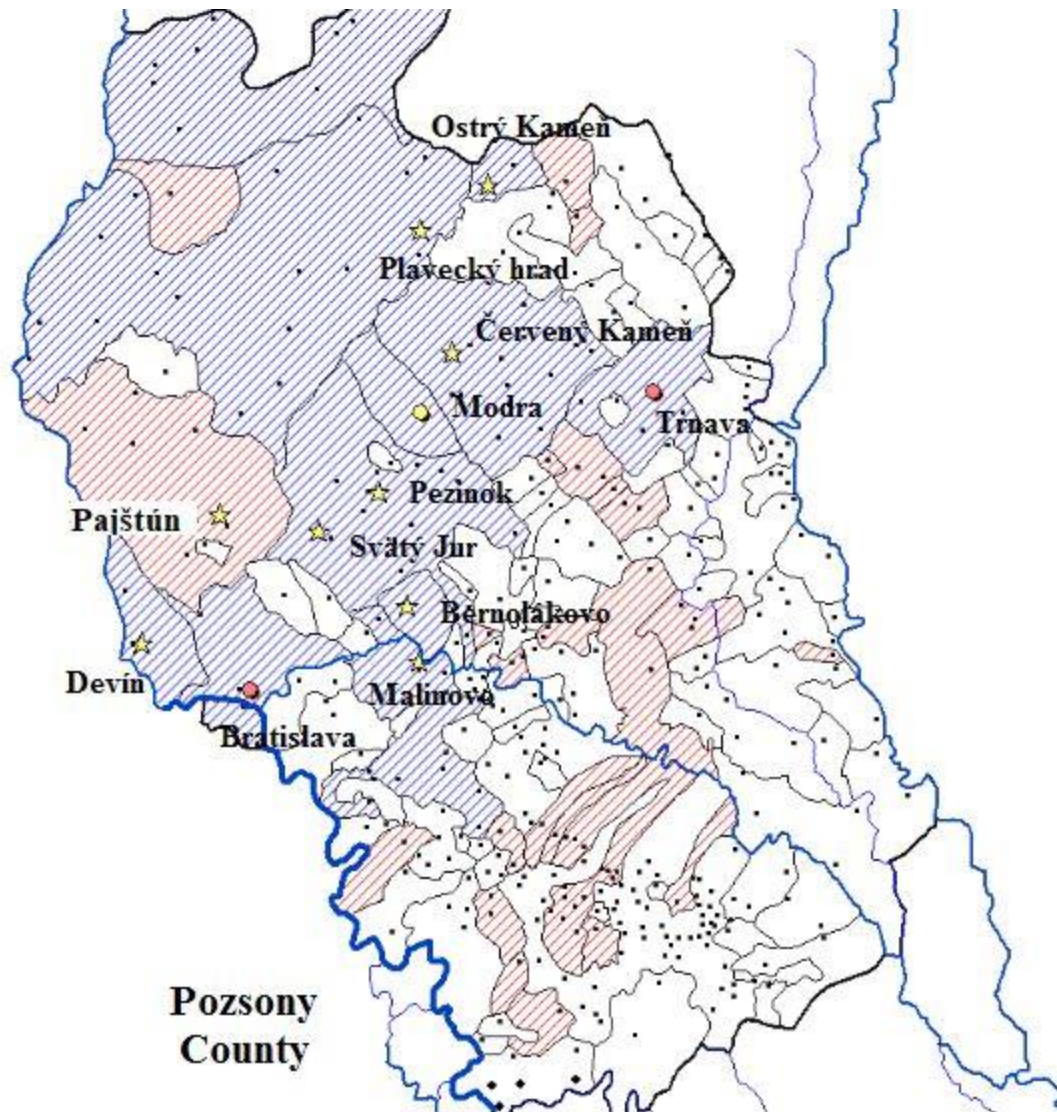


Fig. 2. The conquered territories in Pozsony County (blue cross-hatching) and the lands under the jurisdiction of the *ispán* (red cross-hatching). The overlaps are not indicated.

Smil had another title besides the *ispán* of Pozsony County. From March 1386 he preferred to call himself *comes et capitaneus Posoniensis*. Indeed, there was already a captain of the town of Bratislava, a position that emerged after King Sigismund's death, so it is unlikely that the title was related to the town<sup>111</sup> but rather to the castle. Before Smil's arrival in Hungary, there is

<sup>111</sup> Judit Majorossy, "A pozsonyi városi elit és az udvar (az udvari nemesség) kapcsolatának megközelítési módjai a késő középkorban és a kora újkorban" [Ways of studying the relation of the urban elite of Bratislava and of the court (the court nobility) in the late Middle Ages and in the pre-modern era] *Urbs* 7 (2012), 175.



information about Nicolaus *capitaneus Posoniensis* from 1327,<sup>112</sup> but because it is mentioned only once, probably this was only a title and not a real office. Smil is the second to have held this title, followed by Erik Silstrang in 1407<sup>113</sup> and Peter Kapler of Szullovic in 1413. There is no continuity regarding the office, the only common element that links the three of them is that they called themselves captains when the castle of Bratislava was under private authority. Erik Silstrang administered the castle and had held the title when the castle was in pledge to Princess Margaret of Bohemia, Sigismund's sister, and Peter Kapler had administered it when it was assigned to Burgrave Frederick VI of Nuremberg.<sup>114</sup> Pál Engel was the first to draw attention to the function of the captain by claiming that this title became widely used due to fashion or because it may have been a new way of managing castles during Sigismund's reign. Furthermore, he also pointed out that foreigners were primarily the captains of castles in this period.<sup>115</sup> In the case of Bratislava Castle, it seems that the reason for the presence of captains of foreign origin was that at that time it was under foreign authority.<sup>116</sup> The title of the *capitaneus* was probably an implementation of an already existing function in Hungary.

The contents of the treaty of May 1387 provide further information about how the margraves had extended jurisdiction in the seized lands (including Nyitra County). That section of King Wenceslas' arbitration which specified that Queen Mary had to pay 200.000 florins to recover the territories before 11 November was not met because Mary and her mother fell into captivity in the southern parts of the country. Therefore, Sigismund met his cousins at Šintava to conduct negotiations about the status of the territory between the Váh and Danube rivers after his coronation, when he was the legal and undisputed ruler of the kingdom. According to the

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<sup>112</sup> DL 2452. *Pozsony város története III. Mellékletek Pozsony 1300–1526. évi történetéhez* [The history of the town of Bratislava III. Additions to the history of Bratislava between 1300–1526], ed. Tivadar Ortvy (Pozsony: Stampfel Károly, 1894), 140.

<sup>113</sup> However, according to Tivadar Ortvy's information a mysterious Nicolaus Flis is mentioned in 1400 as *Hauptmann zu Presburgk*, the title referring to the captain of the castle rather than the captain of the town (*stat hauptman*). Ortvy's account is the only piece of evidence about his existence, far from being enough to find out whether he was a foreigner, if this was again only a title, or, if not, whether he held the office continuously, Ortvy, *Pozsony város története III*, 187.

<sup>114</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 317, 344, 395. See page 112-113.

<sup>115</sup> Pál Engel, "A honor" [The honor] in *Honor, vár, ispánság* [Honor, castle, domain (ispánság)], ed. Enikő Csukovics (Budapest: Osiris, 2003) 90.

<sup>116</sup> After these early attempts, the office was established later once and for all, from 1423 onwards George Rozgonyi called himself captain of Bratislava, Engel, *Archontológia*, 395.



agreement issued on 16 May 1387,<sup>117</sup> the margraves were authorized to appoint one of their own men to arbitrate at the *comital* court (*sedria*) together with the county's four noble magistrates, in accordance with the kingdom's customs. The only exceptions were cases falling under the jurisdiction of the royal court of justice.<sup>118</sup> Probably this point of the agreement referred to the appointment of the *ispán*, because it was his task to judge at the *sedria* along with the noble magistrates.<sup>119</sup> As noted above, Smil called himself *ispán* of Pozsony County as early as the end of 1385, thus this might have been only a formal recognition by Sigismund of an already existing status.<sup>120</sup>

Another passage of the agreement dealt with possible conflicts between the inhabitants of the territory and the margraves. In such cases, Sigismund and his cousins had to delegate two people, each chosen by them, to settle the dispute.<sup>121</sup> Concerning the ecclesiastical revenues, they decided that Jobst and Procop would return all the ecclesiastical possessions and stop collecting any kind of church revenues. Furthermore, they would leave the granting of ecclesiastical benefices to the clergy, exactly as had been a common practice earlier. Here, again, the exceptions were the churches under royal authority, where the margraves could enjoy patronage right until the territory was returned.<sup>122</sup> Besides ecclesiastical issues, they dealt with the problem of private domains, too, regarding which the margraves promised that they would surrender all private

<sup>117</sup> Elemer Mályusz elaborated one of the main points of the treaty, Julius Bartl and Daniela Dvořáková presented them briefly, Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 345; Bartl, *Political and Social*, 50. Dvořáková, *Jost a Uhorske kralovstvo*, 52-53.

<sup>118</sup> “*Item, supradicti domini marchiones in comitatibus, quos apud manus eorum habent et tenent, possunt locare iudicem hominem ipsorum Hungarum, qui unacum quatuor iudicibus nobilium eiusdem comitatus secundum consuetudinem regni iudicabunt causas inibi emergentes, taliter tamen, quod ea que ad curiam nostram regiam iudicanda dinoscuntur pertinere, ad eandem curiam remittantur.*” CDM. XI. 382.

<sup>119</sup> This task was often fulfilled by the *alispán* (*vicecomes*). Tringli, *Megyék*, 509-511. There are no data about the *alispánok* of Smil of Kunštát, but there is about Smil presiding at the *comital* court, ZsO I. 37, 634, 676.

<sup>120</sup> As stated by the agreement, the margraves would have to appoint one of their Hungarian men to arbitrate at the *comital* court with the noble magistrates. Smil was not Hungarian, but he was charged with this task even after the negotiations were over, ZsO I. 634, 676.

<sup>121</sup> “*Item si aliqua dampna et nocumenta inter regnicolas nostros parte ab una, et ipsorum dominorum marchionum in tenutis, que tenent in regno Hungarie parte ab altera evenirent seu fieri contingerent, ex tunc de parte nostri duo et ex parte dominorum marchionum similiter duo, quos duxerimus eligendos, hec eadem discuciant, cognoscant et faciant inter ipsos iusticiam expeditam.*” CDM. XI. 382.

<sup>122</sup> *Item quod dicti domini marchiones omnes possessiones utilitates et decimas ecclesiarum dicaciones et exacciones earundem ipsas concernentes reddere et dimittere debent, reddunt et dimittunt, sicut alias temporibus aliorum regum fuit observatum, ac eciam collaciones beneficiorum et ecclesiarum ad prelaturas et personas spirituales spectantes, exceptis collacionibus regalibus, que ad dominos marchiones spectare debent, quamdiu ipsa bona in Hungaria tenuerint, nec non citaciones, correcciones cleri, vocaciones ad synodos, visitaciones personarum ecclesiasticarum habeant processum pacificum, prout hactenus fuit observatum.*” Ibid.

properties to their just owners.<sup>123</sup> However, it was not stipulated in which form and under what terms. Lastly, Jobst and Procop had to assure their cousin, Sigismund, that they would not extend their authority further on either side of the Váh River and they would not introduce any kind of novelty.<sup>124</sup> The prohibition of novelties indicates that the Moravian margraves' rule in northwestern Hungary was considered only temporary. The authorization for seizing the territory from 1385 was valid only until their military expenditures were reimbursed. A long-term Moravian establishment was not among the options and the possibility of attaching these territories to Moravia did not even arise.

Sigismund, in return for all these obligations to his cousins, assured them that their rule in the conquered lands would be undisturbed and their rights would be respected until the redemption of the territory. The king of Hungary was accompanied to the negotiations by some of his barons and prelates, who stood as guarantors for the contents of the document by sealing it.<sup>125</sup>

## Regaining the territory

The agreement concluded at Šintava in 1387 regulated the authority of the margraves in the region, but it did not touch upon the question of redemption. Sigismund guaranteed his cousins undisturbed rule over the territory until the time of retrieval, but the form this would take was not specified in the document. Since the 200.000 florins were not paid until the deadline, it remains a question whether the sum of redemption remained unchanged. In the agreements concluded with the margraves, however, there is no mention of the possibility of redeeming the territory in instalments, but Sigismund began to collect money for it by putting royal possessions in pledge.<sup>126</sup> First, on January 31<sup>st</sup> he pledged the village of Herenen, attached to the castle of Topoľčany (Tapolcsány) of Nyitra County, to redeem the castles from the Czechs.<sup>127</sup> Then, on 29 April, he pledged the castle of Bernstein (Borostyánkő) of Vas County to Archbishop John Kanizsai (and

<sup>123</sup> “*Eciam nobilium bona ac possessiones debent reddere et reddunt cum effectu...*” Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> “*...extra tenutas, quas nunc in Hungaria tenent, plura castra, civitates, terras, opida et villas regni eiusdem et regnicolarum tam ex ista quam alia parte fluvii Wag non debent per se aut per suos occupare aut aliquas novitates introducere...*” Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> The following lords sealed the document: Bálint Alsáni, bishop of Pécs; John Kanizsai, bishop of Eger and court chancellor; Stephen Lackfi, palatine and voivode of Transylvania; George Bebek, the queen's master of the treasury; Emeric Bebek, *ispán* and judge royal; Frank Szécsényi, and Nicholas Treutel *ispán* of Pozsega. CDM. XI. 383.

<sup>126</sup> Bartl, *Political and Social*, 50.

<sup>127</sup> “*...pro... debitis quibus Bohemis pro liberatione et redemptione castrorum per ipsos occupatorum...*” DL 96613, ZsO I. 417

his brothers), who had taken part in the negotiations of the previous year. The king also needed money to retrieve a number of castles from the Czechs.<sup>128</sup> Later, on 9 July, he put Kamengrad (Kővár) castle of Pozsega County in pledge.<sup>129</sup> The original charter of the transaction did not survive, except for a later copy of its contents, therefore it remains unknown whether re-acquiring the captured castles was the reason for another pledge. The pledging was close in time to the two others, and the pledgee was the same Nicholas Treutel who was a participant of the negotiations at Šintava in 1387, therefore it is likely that the money was needed for the same expenditures as in the other cases. From these three pledges Sigismund gathered 2.947 florins, which was far from enough for redeeming the whole territory. In order to recover all the lands under Moravian rule, Sigismund met the margraves again at Šintava in May 1388.

Even though, Sigismund promised parts of Brandenburg, Altmark, and Priegnitz in pledge to his cousins, they could not take possession of them due to the resistance of the estates of Brandenburg.<sup>130</sup> Sigismund did not change his mind, but he strove to regain northwestern Hungary by pledging all of Brandenburg – with the sole exception of Neumark, the parts of Brandenburg situated east of the Odera River; for this he needed the approval of his brothers. Wenceslas gave his consent with the condition that the succession order laid out by their father should be changed. Furthermore, Sigismund also had to renounce his weekly revenue – provided by the chamber of Kutná Hora and bequeathed by Charles IV – in favor of Wenceslas.<sup>131</sup> The other brother, John, count of Görlitz, demanded Neumark. Apart from this, he wanted to change the succession order so that he could take over Sigismund's place. This would have provided him an excellent opportunity to inherit Bohemia in case of the demise of Wenceslas, who had no heirs.<sup>132</sup> It was not enough to have the consent of the brothers; the estates of Brandenburg had to be persuaded, too, which is why Sigismund invited their representative to hold negotiations at Trenčín on 16 March 1388.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> “...*pro imminente nostra et totius regni nostri valida expeditione, presertim pretextu redemptionis nonnullorum castrorum nostrorum erga manus Bohemorum...*” ZsO I. 521.

<sup>129</sup> DL 70822.

<sup>130</sup> Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 57; Sütő, *Anjou-Magyarország*, I. 134-135.

<sup>131</sup> After concluding the agreement, Wenceslas gave his consent to the pledging of Brandenburg on 28 June. Sigismund reached an agreement about it with the margraves on 22 May. Prior to this, Wenceslas authorized Jobst to conduct negotiations with Sigismund about the margraviate of Brandenburg, ZsO I. 500, 559, 622.

<sup>132</sup> Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 72.

<sup>133</sup> ZsO I. 467

During another summit at Šintava Sigismund finally managed to reach an agreement with his cousins. According to this, in order to restore Hungary to its old borders<sup>134</sup> Sigismund put the margraviate of Brandenburg in pledge for 565.253 florins, a sum double the 200.000 florins stipulated by the treaty of Győr. A time limit of five years was set for redeeming Brandenburg; if Sigismund failed to do so, then the margraviate would become Jobst and Procop's possession.<sup>135</sup> The reason behind this huge increase in the sum of redemption was that the 565.253 florins consisted of more items. Jaroslav Mezník proposed that it comprised the credits for the Czech nobles who served under Jobst in the military expedition of 1385, which Sigismund thus assumed.<sup>136</sup> It is even more probable that the 25.000 gold florins that Sigismund promised to pay back to his cousins within five years during the meeting at Šintava of 1388 were part of this sum as well,<sup>137</sup> plus the 50.000 shock Prague groschen (around 150.000 florins) for which Sigismund had promised parts of Brandenburg to the margraves back in 1385. In any case, the sum – already considered a fortune already by contemporaries – was so high that at the moment of signing the agreement it could be expected that Sigismund would not be able to repay it before the deadline.<sup>138</sup> Although an agreement was reached, it took some time until its contents were put in practice and finally brought changes for the subject territories. After the meeting in May nothing had happened; Smil of Kunštát still held the office of *ispán* of Pozsony.<sup>139</sup> At the beginning of the following year, in January 1389, Jobst could have given the Hungarian lands under his authority to Sigismund. On 1 January, Jobst absolved the burghers of Bratislava from their obligations towards him.<sup>140</sup> Smil ended his career of *ispán* of the county around the middle of the month, when Sibor of Stiboricz took over the office.<sup>141</sup> This meant that for the first time since the Moravian military expedition of autumn of 1385 – only from then onwards – the king of Hungary could control it. Margrave Jobst, the oldest male member of the Luxembourg dynasty, endeavored to obtain the leading role in the family, which for him meant the throne of the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>142</sup> Therefore he tried to

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<sup>134</sup> “*Volentes tamen regnum nostrum prefatum in suis pertinenciis, metis et terminis ac graniciis antiquis integre et plene reducere et reformare...*” CDM. XI. 420.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 422.

<sup>136</sup> Mezník, *Die Finanzen*, 79-80.

<sup>137</sup> CDM. XI. 423. Bartl, *Political and Social*, 51.

<sup>138</sup> Jobst permitted Sigismund to keep using the title of margrave of Brandenburg. Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 72.

<sup>139</sup> ZsO I.634.

<sup>140</sup> ZsO I. 860.

<sup>141</sup> ZsO I. 883.

<sup>142</sup> Mezník, *Die Finanzen*, 76; Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 72.

squeeze his brother out of the rule of Brandenburg. This was the pretext of the contract concluded on 10 January 1389 between the two brothers, according to which Procop would hand over the Hungarian castles under his authority to Jobst in exchange for 20.000 schock Prague groschen.<sup>143</sup> If the contents of the contract had been implemented, Jobst would have commanded all the possessions in Hungary under Moravian rule, he alone would have owned Brandenburg. However, Procop did not receive the promised sum,<sup>144</sup> consequently he kept his domains in Hungary.<sup>145</sup>

The last episode of regaining the land situated between the Váh and Danube was a military expedition against the castles commanded by Margrave Procop. Not much is known about the expedition itself. It probably occurred around the spring of 1390, when a law-suit was postponed because the respondent took part in the siege of Dobrá Voda castle together with the royal army.<sup>146</sup> Sigismund did not arrive on the spot until summer, but by then the fighting was over and he donated away the castle of Bernstein in a charter issued at Červený Kameň.<sup>147</sup> Thus, both castles were in his possession at that time,<sup>148</sup> but it remains a question whether they were transferred by Jobst or had recently been re-conquered from Procop. The goal of the expedition was the re-capture of the royal castles; private fortifications had to be redeemed at the expense of their owners, despite the fact that they had come under foreign occupancy thanks to Sigismund. The Szentgyörgyi family paid 4.000 florins for the castle of Pezinok and 1.900 for Malinovo,<sup>149</sup> although Sigismund tried to compensate for their losses, which is why he donated Pajštún castle to the family in the summer of 1390.<sup>150</sup> Besides the issue of the captured castles, a number of hostages had fallen into captivity during the Moravian conquest who were waiting for release. It

<sup>143</sup> He would have paid the sum in installments of 2000 shock Prague groschen, CDM. XI. 456; Mezník, *Die Finanzen*, 79-80; Bartl, *Political and Social*, 52.

<sup>144</sup> Jobst paid money to his brother but not as much he promised, Mezník, *Die Finanzen*, 83.

<sup>145</sup> Daniela Dvořáková, *A lovag és királya: Stiborici Stibor és Luxemburgi Zsigmond: képek és történetek egy középkori magyar nemes életéből* [The knight and his king: Stibor of Stiboriczi and Sigismund of Luxemburg: Moments and stories from the life of a medieval Hungarian nobleman] (Bratislava: Kalligram, 2009), 48-49.

<sup>146</sup> "...*Egidius filius Petri in obsessione castri regalis Jokv vocati existeret...*" DL 75579, ZsO I. 1414.

<sup>147</sup> ZsO I. 1543.

<sup>148</sup> According to the secondary literature Sigismund managed to regain all the castles and settlements by 1390, Dvořáková, *A lovag és királya*, 49 Engel, *Archontológia*, 277, 299,300, 308, 345. He donated away some of these castles in 1392 and 1394, which shows that they were certainly under his authority at that time.

<sup>149</sup> ZsO I. 1334, ZsO II. 5903. It is unknown when and for how much money the family bought back the castle of Szentgyörgy. Similarly, about the castle of Cseklész we all know that the king gave it in exchange for the castle of Appony; Engel, *Archontológia*, 292.

<sup>150</sup> Presumably for the same reason Nicholas Cseklészi received first the domain of Zeleneč (Kisszelincs) in April 1386 then the custom of Bernolákovo in December 1387; ZsO I. 329, 492. Dvořáková, *Jost a Uhorske kralovstvo*, 51-52.

was among the terms of Sigismund's coronation that any person taken into captivity by him or by any Czech would be released without making any payment. There is no information on whether this point of the terms was kept, but it is sure that for some reason it did not apply to Thomas (Temel) Szentgyörgyi.<sup>151</sup> He was only able to redeem himself from Margrave Jobst's detention in 1393 after selling one of his family's castles to raise the money for the ransom.<sup>152</sup>

It took long time for Sigismund to rise to power in Hungary, which did not end with his coronation at Székesfehérvár on March 1387. Gaining the throne of the kingdom would have been impossible without his relatives' help, but it had a price: ceding the territory west of the Váh River. It took years and much effort to retrieve the lands even though the price he paid was not extremely high. Although at the meeting at Šintava in 1388 it might have seemed that he had to sacrifice his family inheritance of Brandenburg for his rule in Hungary, the exchange of the two polities was still highly advantageous for him. However, after Margrave Jobst's death he even regained Brandenburg;<sup>153</sup> thus, after the initial troubles, eventually he was in command of both of them.

## Was it a pledging?

Although there seems to be a consensus in the international and Hungarian literature that the transaction discussed above was a pledging regarding the legal status of the conquered territory,<sup>154</sup> it is worthwhile discussing this question in detail because it is not so obvious. Approaching the question from the perspective of jurisdiction paints a more nuanced picture. In pledging, the right to the possession was not affected by the transaction; the pledgee held the pledge under his jurisdiction and only collected its revenues temporarily.<sup>155</sup> During the Moravian military

<sup>151</sup> "...omnes captivos per ipsum dominum Marchionem, et alios quoscumque Boemos tempore sue pristinae guerre captivos, ... absque omni pactione et pecuniaria solutione liberabit... dempto tamen et excepto signanter Thomlino de Sancto Georgio..." Gusztáv Wenzel, *Magyar diplomáciai emlékek az Anjou-korból. III.* [Hungarian diplomatic records from the Angevin era. III] (Budapest: MTA, 1876), 622; Dvořáková, *Jost a Uhorske kralovstvo*, 51.

<sup>152</sup> ZsO I. 2773; Dvořáková, *Jost a Uhorske kralovstvo*, 51.

<sup>153</sup> Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 95-96; Jan Winkelmann, *Die Mark Brandenburg des 14. Jahrhunderts: Markgräfliche Herrschaft zwischen räumlicher "Ferne und politischer Krise"* (Berlin: Lukas-Verl., 2011), 100.

<sup>154</sup> Süttő, *Anjou-Magyarország I*, 134-135; Dvořáková, *A lovag és királya*, 48-49; Norbert C. Tóth, *Magyarország története 6. Luxemburgi Zsigmond uralkodása (1387-1437)* [The history of Hungary 6. The reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg (1387-1437)] (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 2009), 23; Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 55. Julius Bartl uses the word "collateral" when referring to the issue of the Váh-Danube interfluvium, by which he probably means pledging, since he uses the same term for the pledging of Altmark and Priegnitz in 1385. Bartl, *Political and Social*, 43-44.

<sup>155</sup> In one of his charters of pledge Sigismund stipulated that without his approval the pledged village could not be sold, alienated or given as security, DL 8993. For more see János Incze, "The Pledge Policy of King Sigismund of Luxembourg in Hungary (1387-1437)" in *Money and Finance in Central Europe during the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Roman Zaoral (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 92.

occupation, the king of Hungary's authority was limited in the subject lands. Sigismund could not intervene too much in the affairs of the territory; he did not appoint the *ispán* of Pozsony and probably had no authority at all over Smil of Kunštát, who called himself captain or something similar. The situation is reflected well in the circumstance that after the arrival of the Moravian troops in Hungary, Sigismund visited the Váh-Danube interfluvium only once, after Charles the Short's death in April 1386, when he came back to Hungary in the company of his cousins. Then he issued two charters that were only related indirectly to the occupied territory; he simply borrowed money from Bratislava through them.<sup>156</sup> After that, he never went beyond Štintava until the issue of the redemption of the territory was settled. Furthermore, during the Moravian occupancy Sigismund had the donation of royal domains of Pozsony County, but these were among the few possessions not conquered by the margraves' troops. Beyond these, the king of Hungary did not have any measures pertaining to the issue of the seized lands, which was only discussed at the first summit at Štintava. However, precisely this meeting proves that the territory was not entirely taken out of the king's authority. Even if the *ispán* of Pozsony County was appointed without Sigismund's knowledge, his approval was still needed for legitimizing it. Additionally, in December 1387 he donated the custom of Bernolákovo, which pertained to the castle of Bratislava, to the Cseklészi family.<sup>157</sup> The castle was under the margraves' jurisdiction, yet Sigismund could donate its custom away without any problem.

Examining the phrasing of the documents related to the case, we get a similar picture. In the charter of June 1385 – with which the whole story began – Sigismund authorized his cousins to bring the lands under their authority without calling it a pledging. This was contrary to Brandenburg, which was deliberately called as such.<sup>158</sup> Nonetheless, in the next month, when the conquering of the territory was going on, he issued a charter assuring the burghers of Bratislava that although he would pledge the town to his cousins, they should not worry because he would

<sup>156</sup> Süttő, *Anjou-Magyarország II*, 361, 367.

<sup>157</sup> "...quoddam tributum nostrum regale, in dicta possessione sua Cheklez vocata exigi consuetum, ad castrum nostrum Poseniense pertinens..." Ernő Kammerer, *A Pécz nemzetség Apponyi ágának az Apponyi grófok családi levéltárában őrizett oklevelei. I. 1241–1526* [The charters of the Appony branch of the Pécz kindred and of the archives of the family of the counts of Appony I. 1241–1526] (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1906), 218. ZsO I. 329.

<sup>158</sup> See footnote 79. "Und vor dasselb gelt czu einer grosser sicherheit vormachen, vorschreiben und in pfandes weis vorseczen wir yn das lant, die alde Mark genant..." CDM. XI. 331.

redeem it.<sup>159</sup> Wenceslas' adjudication of Győr claims that the land was acquired by Margrave Jobst, but it does not specify on what grounds.<sup>160</sup> The document of the first agreement of Šintava is similar; it simply states that various settlements, domains, and fortified places pertaining to the crown of Hungary are under the authority of the margraves.<sup>161</sup> Nevertheless, it also brings up the question of redemption or redeeming the territory back.<sup>162</sup> The last charter concerning the problem is the clearest in its wording; it mentions Sigismund's earlier document in which he pledged a number of settlements and castles.<sup>163</sup> Thus, there should have been a charter that has not survived in which Sigismund pledged the conquered lands to his cousins.<sup>164</sup>

In conclusion, it can be stated that the case of the Váh-Danube interfluvium cannot be considered as an ordinary pledge transaction. Most probably it resembled to another case of Sigismund, that by which he authorized members of the Order of Saint George to hold all the settlements in pledge which they would conquer from Frederick IV, Duke of Austria.<sup>165</sup> As presented above, the territory between the rivers Váh and Danube was first conquered by Moravian troops – following Sigismund's authorization – and later at some point its legal status was changed by pledging it to its conquerors by the ruler.

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<sup>159</sup> *Nos civitatem nostram Poseniensem illustribus Jodoco et Procopio marchionibus Moraviae patris nostris dilectis pignoris titulo obligaverimus*" Fejér X/8, 181. This is not a common pledging contract just as the transaction itself was not usual.

<sup>160</sup> *Item de et super terris et earum pertinenciis, quas dictus patruus noster Jodocus marchio Moraviae in regno Hungariae inter flumina Danubii et Wag acquisivit*" CDM. XI. 357.

<sup>161</sup> "... domini marchiones predicti assumunt et promittunt omnino castra, civitates, terras, opida et villas ad coronam regni nostri Hungariae spectantia, que in manibus ipsorum existunt et pro nunc tenent..."

<sup>162</sup> "...dum et quando nos ab ipsis redimere voluerimus, eadem secundum continencias litterarum inter nos et ipsos dominos marchiones prius emanatarum libere et pacifice sine contradiccionem et dilacionem tenentur et debent dare ad redimendum..." CDM. XI. 381-382

<sup>163</sup> "...in ingressu nostro ad regnum Hungariae cum armorum gentibus pro eorum gratis et acceptis serviciis culmini nostro fideliter exhibitis, ex causis rationabilibus et iustis nonnulla et nonnullas castra, opida, civitates et villas mediantibus aliis nostris litteris ipsis titulo pignoris obligavimus tamdiu habenda et tenendas, quousque de certa pecunie quantitate satisfaceremus eisdem iuxta modum in dictis litteris expressatum..." CDM. XI. 420. Also the previous charter makes an allusion to an earlier charter of pledge, when it says that the territory would be redeemed under the conditions agreed in another document.

<sup>164</sup> This earlier document could not be the charter of June 1385 because Sigismund only promised the lands to his cousins in it, and could not be the adjudication of Győr either since King Wenceslas issued it.

<sup>165</sup> Wilhelm Altmann, *Regesta Imperii XI. Die Urkunden Kaiser Sigmunds (1410-1437)*. (Innsbruck: Wagner, 1896–1900), 228. ZsO III. 2143.



## Chapter 3. The Royal Revenues in Hungary during King Sigismund's Reign

The previous chapter described the circumstances of Sigismund's ascension to the throne and the financial transaction which played a great role in it. The next chapter will focus on the financial foundations on which he could base his governing of the country.

### Ordinary revenues

The revenues of the medieval kings of Hungary belong to those obscure topics that are difficult to study due to the lack of sources. Unfortunately, despite the relatively more abundant source materials available for the late Middle Ages, rulers of this period are often no exception either. That is the case of Sigismund's revenues too,<sup>166</sup> nonetheless his situation is more fortunate than his predecessors', the Angevin rulers', since his incomes at least could be estimated whereas King Louis I's (1342-1382) or Charles I's (1308-1342) are impossible.<sup>167</sup> However, Sigismund had the longest rule in Hungary among the medieval kings of the country, and there might have been great differences in the amount of his revenues in different periods of his reign. Most likely, he was able to gain more revenues in the second part of his rule than in the first. For instance, between 1385 and 1396 not all royal revenues could be collected in large areas of the southern part of the kingdom

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<sup>166</sup> For the late Middle Ages, the reports of foreign envoys to Hungary provide the most abundant information regarding the revenues of the Hungarian kings. This is especially the case for King Matthias (1458-1490) but also for the Jagiellonian rulers. Envoy reports with this type of information are not available for Sigismund's time. István Kenyeres, "A bányakamarák szerepe a Magyar Királyság jövedelmeiben a 15–16. Században" [The role of the mine chambers in the Kingdom of Hungary's revenues of the 15-16<sup>th</sup> centuries] in *Tiszteletkör. Történelmi tanulmányok Draskóczy István egyetemi tanár 60. születésnapjára* [A Lap of Honour: Historical Studies for the 60th Birthday of Professor István Draskóczy] ed. Gábor Mikó, Bence Péterfi, András Vadas (Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, 2012), 178-180. Norbert C. Tóth, "A Magyar királyság 1522.évi költségvetése" [The Kingdom of Hungary's budget in 1522] in *Pénz, posztó, piac. Gazdaságtörténelmi tanulmányok a magyar középkorról* [Money, cloth, market. Economic historical studies about medieval Hungary] ed. Boglárka Weisz (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2016), 84. István Draskóczy, "A királyi jövedelmek a 16. század elején Magyarországon: Szempontok bányászatunk és külkereskedelmünk történetéhez" [Royal revenues in Hungary in the sixteenth century: notes on the history of country's mining external trade], in *Historia critica: tanulmányok az Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Karának Történelmi Intézetéből* [Historia critica: studies from the Historical Institute of Eötvös Loránd University's Faculty of Humanities], ed. Manhercz Orsolya (Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, 2014), 75-76.

<sup>167</sup> Engel, *The realm*, 186. Engel, *A magyar királyság jövedelmei*, 426.

due to the Ottoman advancement.<sup>168</sup> Also, in his last years Sigismund paid great attention to hiring such officials who would facilitate a more efficient collection of taxes, and filled important financial positions with experts of finances to increase incomes.<sup>169</sup>

It is telling that the best source which can be used for this purpose is an account of royal revenues compiled around 1453 or 1454.<sup>170</sup> Thus, even for estimating Sigismund's revenues, the information of a text compiled more than a decade later after his death needs to be retrojected to his lifetime. This document is commonly known in scholarly literature as the "Birk account",<sup>171</sup> named after the nineteenth-century Austrian archivist Ernst Birk, who discovered and published it for the first time. The source is known in Hungarian historiography thanks mainly to two historians, János Bak and Pál Engel. Bak was the first who recognized the importance of the text, and prepared a publication of it that complies to modern standards. Bak's work was followed by Pál Engel, who complemented the account's information with data of the charters from Sigismund's time. Even so, the Birk account's information with Engel's data is only enough to estimate Sigismund's revenues in the last decade of his rule. The Birk account bears with major importance for the king's revenues not primarily for the figures given,<sup>172</sup> but because it enumerates the main types of his ordinary revenues.

The uncontested number one source of revenue was the salt monopoly, which reached 100.000 Hungarian golden florin a year.<sup>173</sup> This was followed by the chambers' profit (*lucrum*

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<sup>168</sup> Attila Bárány, "King Sigismund of Luxemburg and the preparations for the Hungarian crusading host of Nicopolis (1389-1396)" in *Partir en croisade à la fin du Moyen Âge. Financement et logistique*, Vol.4, ed. Daniel Baloup, Manuel Sánchez Martínez, (Toulouse, 2015): 165.

<sup>169</sup> Bak, *Monarchie im Wellental*, 356.

<sup>170</sup> The text itself is undated, but scholars managed to narrow down its compilation to the years 1453 and 1454 respectively. Furthermore, they also managed to identify Ulrich Eitzinger, a trusted adherent of King Ladislaus V (1444-1457) as the author of the document. Engel, *A Magyar királyság jövedelmei*, 426-427.

<sup>171</sup> In the scholarly literature the account is also known as the Eitzinger account, named after the author of the text.

<sup>172</sup> Sometimes the numbers listed in the account as the amount of certain revenues of King Ladislaus V correspond almost exactly with Sigismund's.

<sup>173</sup> The 100.000 florins was the highest amount that a late medieval Hungarian king could gain from the salt monopoly. King Matthias' revenues from salt ranged between 80.000 and 100.000, while in the Jagiellonian period a steep decline was registered, resulting in an annual 14.000-50.000 florins income from this monopoly. István Draskóczy, "Salt mining and the salt trade in medieval Hungary" in *The Economy of Medieval Hungary*, ed. József Laszlovszky, et al. (Leiden: Brill, expected year of publishing: 2018), 214-216. In the lack of data the yearly output of salt cannot be determined but only the inland volume of sales. For more see: István Draskóczy, "Zur Frage des ungarischen Salzwesens unter König Sigismund" in *Kaiser und König in Mitteleuropa, 1387-1437 Beiträge zur Herrschaft Kaiser Sigismunds und der europäischen Geschichte um 1400*, ed Josef Macek, Ernő Marosi, Ferdinand Seibt (Warendorf: Fahlbusch, 1997), 186-188.

János Bak presumed that this figure could reach even 120-125.000 florins in case of proper handling of the salt administration. Bak, *Monarchie im Wellental*, 356.

*camerae*) yielded on the peasants and the king's people (except the *udvornici*<sup>174</sup>). The basic unit of imposition was the *porta*, which corresponded basically to a peasant household, and each *porta* was obliged to pay one fifth of a florin.<sup>175</sup> The Birk account calculates with 200.000 *portae* for the mid-fifteenth century<sup>176</sup> (Slavonia was not included), but makes an allusion to a double amount of this figure for Sigismund's lifetime (400.000) resulting in 80.000 florins annual income.

The third largest ordinary revenue came from the royal monopoly of precious metal. Hungary has been Europe's leading gold producer from 1330 onwards, with a yearly output of 2 - 2.5 tons of gold. Silver and copper mining were also significant.<sup>177</sup> Indeed, so much silver was unearthed in Hungary, that only Bohemia produced more in this period. However, this "Eldorado period" – as Oszkár Paulinyi, the doyen of Hungary's medieval mining history — phrased it, lasted only until the end of the fourteenth century. The reason for this fall was that the near-surface gold deposits became depleted, and digging deeper mine shafts was a more complex task, which required investment of larger capital, and had higher risks.<sup>178</sup> At the beginning of the fifteenth century the conditions of precious metal mining deteriorated to such extent that the yearly output of gold decreased to 1,15 tons while silver dropped from a yearly 10 tons only to 3.<sup>179</sup>

<sup>174</sup> They were half-free people with specific obligations such as providing food for the royal court. *KMTL*, 696; Bak, *Glossaries and select subject index*, 150, entry *udvarnok*.

<sup>175</sup> The very first account of the *lucrum camerae* that have been preserved is exactly from Sigismund's time, more precisely from 1427. However, this list of record is incomplete since it covers mainly five north-eastern counties. That year, the collection of the chamber's profit was reformed which primarily consisted in not leasing it to private persons but rather collecting it directly for the royal treasury. By the reform the collection of the tax became more efficient and yielded a higher amount of revenue than the years preceding it. Pál Engel, *Kamarahaszna-összeírások 1427-ből* [Chamber's profit records from 1427] *Fontes minores ad historiam Hungariae spectantes* vol. 2 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1989), 3-9.

<sup>176</sup> The number of households of Slavonia and of the County of Pozsega is usually not included in such calculations since here, instead of the chambers profit, a different tax was collected, the so-called marten's fur (*marturina*). Engel, *The realm*, 226.

<sup>177</sup> The copper mining reached its peak in the late fifteenth and mid-sixteenth century. Zoltán Batizi, "Mining in medieval Hungary" in *The Economy of Medieval Hungary*, ed. József Laszlovszky, et al. (Leiden: Brill, expected year of publishing: 2018), 177.

<sup>178</sup> Another relevant factor in the decline of precious metal was the Hussite incursions to the northern part of the country in the 1430s. During one of these, in 1433 the town of Kremnica was sacked by Hussite troops. One year later a fire broke out, and parts of the town burnt down. István Draskóczy, "Kamarai jövedelem és urbura a 15. század első felében" [Chamber revenues and *urbura* in the first part of the fifteenth century] in *Gazdaságtörténeti könyvtártörténet. Emlékkönyv Berlász Jenő 90. születésnapjára* [Economic history – library history – Honorary volume celebrating the ninetieth birthday of Jenő Berlász], *Gazdaság- és Társadalomtörténeti Füzetek I* (Budapest: MTA-BKAE Gazdaság és Társadalomtörténeti Kutatócsoport, 2001), 157.

<sup>179</sup> Oszkár Paulinyi, "Mohács előtti nemesfémtermelésünk és gazdaságunk" [Hungary's economy and precious metal production prior to the battle of Mohács] in *Gazdag föld - szegény ország. Tanulmányok a magyarországi bányaművelés múltjából* [Rich land – poor country. Studies on the history of mining in Hungary] reprint ed. János Buza, István Draskóczy, (Budapest: Budapesti Corvinus Egyetem, 2005), 184-189. Batizi, *Mining in medieval Hungary*, 174-176, 180. Martin Štefánik, "Metals and power: European importance of export of metals from the

According to the account, the revenues from mining and minting<sup>180</sup> were annually 24.000 golden florins,<sup>181</sup> but definitively this sum had to be higher in Sigismund's time. The incomes of the Kremnica chamber are the best documented among all chambers from the period. This chamber was the largest comprising a number of mining towns and also a mint.<sup>182</sup> There are two data about the chamber's productivity, one from 1427 when it was donated to Queen Barbara, and it is said that the chamber yielded around 28.000 florins a year. The second piece of information is from 1434-1435 when 34.000 golden florins were recorded as annual incomes.<sup>183</sup> Thus, the chamber of Kremnica alone yielded a higher annual sum than the one proposed by the Birk account as the total revenue of the mining monopoly. Therefore, Pál Engel proposed that most likely the precious metal monopoly produced yearly 60.000 florins in the second part of Sigismund's reign.<sup>184</sup>

The fourth most important source of revenue was the tax of the royal towns and of the Transylvanian Saxons. This category comprised numerous smaller entries, which together resulted in a significant sum of approximately 30.000 florins. Just to mention randomly some of these data, among the free royal towns Pest and Buda had the highest annual tax, 4.600 florins together. Also Košice and Timișoara paid larger amount of tax (2.000, and 1.000), and on the lower end were

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territory of Slovakia in 14th and 15th century: The interest of Italian businessmen in the field of competence of Kremnica Chamber under rule of the House of Anjou and Sigismund of Luxembourg" in *Historiography in Motion. Slovak Contributions in the 21st International Congress of Historical Sciences*, ed. Roman Holec, Rastislav Kožíak (Bratislava: Institute of History of Slovak Academy of Sciences - State Scientific Library, 2010), 86. Franz Irsigler, "Die Bedeutung Ungarns für die europäische Wirtschaft im Spätmittelalter" in *Sigismund von Luxemburg. Ein Kaiser in Europa. Tagungsband des internationalen historischen und kunsthistorischen Kongresses in Luxemburg, 8-10. Juni 2005*, ed. Michel Pauly, Francois Reinert, (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2006), 27-29.

2006.  
<sup>180</sup> After Charles I's reform, the mining and minting functioned together under the same chamber. This arrangement had helped to supply the mints with sufficient precious metal. Márton Gyöngyössi, "Coinage and Financial Administration in Late Medieval Hungary (1387–1526)" in *The Economy of Medieval Hungary*, ed. József Laszlovszky, et al. (Leiden: Brill: 2018), 296.

<sup>181</sup> Bak, *Monarchie im Wellental*, 381

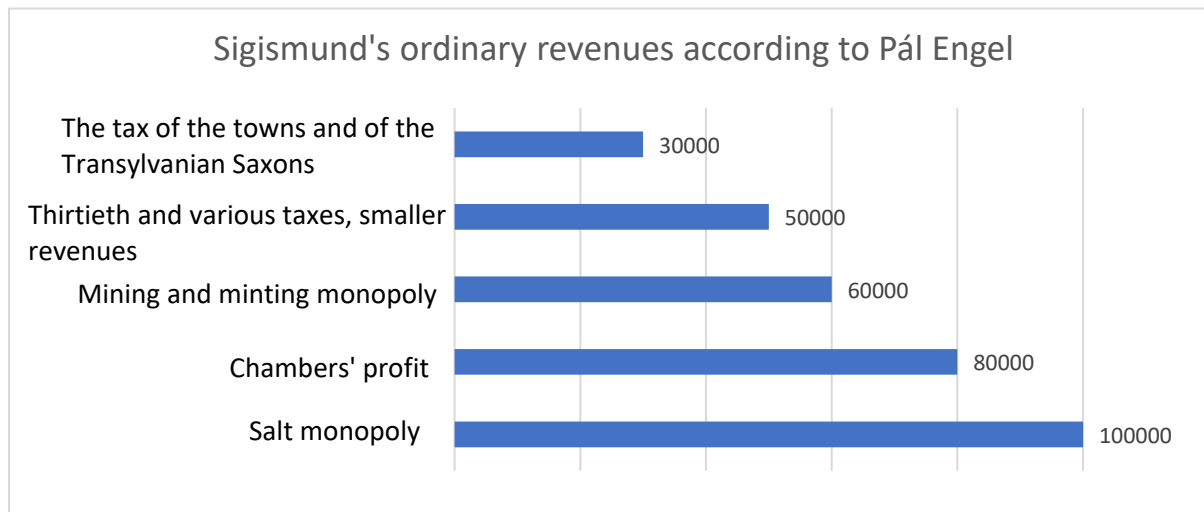
<sup>182</sup> Two third of the country's precious metal production was produced by this chamber. Draskóczy, *Kamarai jövedelem*, 156.

<sup>183</sup> As part of the chamber, Sigismund donated the incomes from mining precious metals (except copper) of eight mining towns to Barbara, together with the revenues from minting gold and silver coins. Daniela Dvořáková, "The Economic Background to and the Financial Politics of Queen Barbara of Cilli in Hungary (1406–1438)" in: *Money and Finance in Central Europe during the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Roman Zaoral (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015), 118. Engel, *The realm*, 225-226. Engel, *Die Einkünfte*, 180-181. Oszkár Paulinyi published the financial account of Kremnica from the years 1434-1435. Oszkár Paulinyi, "A körmöcbányai kamara 1434-1435 évi számadása" [The financial account of the Kremnica chamber between 1434-1435], in *Gazdag föld - szegény ország. Tanulmányok a magyarországi bányaművelés múltjából* [Rich land – poor country. Studies on the history of mining in Hungary] reprint, ed. János Buza, István Draskóczy, (Budapest: Budapesti Corvinus Egyetem, 2005), 171-182.

<sup>184</sup> Engel, *The realm*, 226.

Bardejov and Kremnica with 500 and 600 florins.<sup>185</sup> The seven autonomous districts (seats) of Transylvanian Saxons had to pay 6.500 florins; the same amount as the seats of Medgyes and Selyk.<sup>186</sup>

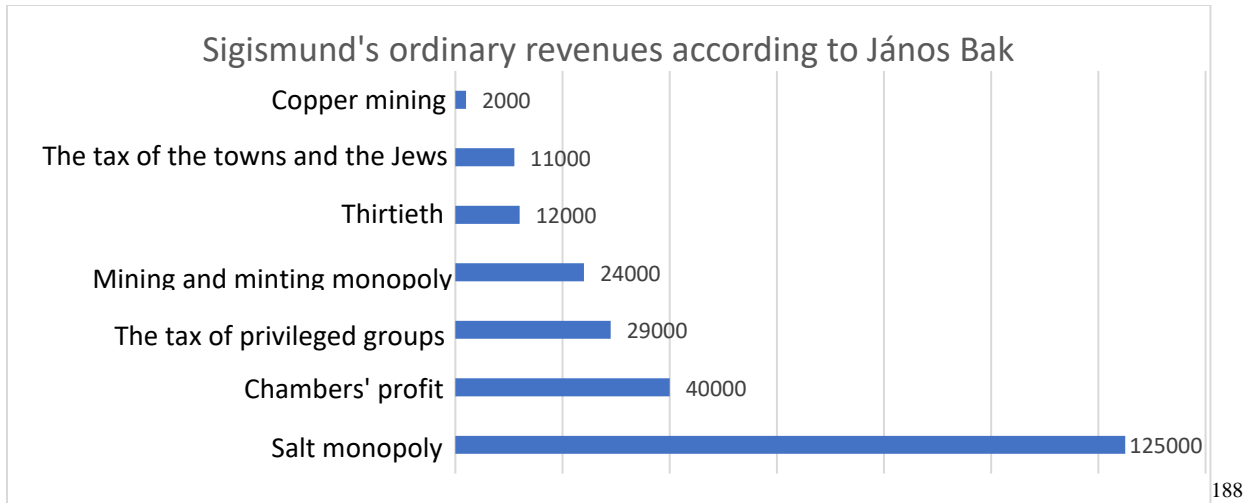
The last group of ordinary revenues consisted of various items, predominantly taxes. Here can be included the already mentioned Slavonian marten's fur tax which was 8.000 florins *per annum*, the fee for fishing in the Danube (2.000 florins), but also special levies on Jews (4.000 florins), the Cumans and the Jazygs (10.000 florins) and of the Romanians of Transylvania (2.000 florins) can be inserted into this category. In addition to these, the custom duty charged on foreign and internal trade (thirtieth) yielded 20.000 florins annually, while the copper production of Lubietová (Libetbánya) ranged around 2.000 florins. Altogether, according to Pál Engel's calculation based on the information of the Birk account and on the data of the charter evidence, Sigismund's ordinary revenues could have reached an annual 320.000 florins in the last decade of his rule.<sup>187</sup>



<sup>185</sup> Bardejov's yearly tax was put in pledge in 1412, and in that document it is also mentioned how much tax the town had to pay annually to the royal treasury. Besides the yearly tax, the free royal town had to pay the so called New Year's gift too. In the case of these two towns for example, Kremnica's was 100 florins, while Bardejov's was 12 marks of silver. DF 212748. Martin Štefánik, "The Kremnica town book of accounts: the economy of a mining and mint town in the Kingdom of Hungary" in *Money and Finance in Central Europe during the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Roman Zaoral (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 49.

<sup>186</sup> Engel, *A magyar királyság jövedelmei*, 429. Zsolt Simon, "Az erdélyi szászok adói Zsigmond idején" [The Transylvanian Saxons' taxes during Sigismund's reign] in *Tiszteletkör. Történeti tanulmányok Draskóczy István egyetemi tanár 60. születésnapjára* [A Lap of Honour: Historical Studies for the 60th Birthday of Professor István Draskóczy] ed. Gábor Mikó, Bence Péterfi, András Vadas (Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, 2012), 148-149.

<sup>187</sup> Engel, *A magyar királyság jövedelmei*, 429. Engel, *The realm*, 226. 182. Engel, *Die Einkünfte*, 182. Lately, Attila Bárány dealt with topic of Sigismund's revenues briefly, which he estimated to 314.000 florins. Bárány, *King Sigismund of Luxemburg*, 165. It is noteworthy to draw comparison between Sigismund and his successors' revenues.



With his ascension to the throne, Sigismund inherited the immense royal demesne of the Angevin rulers, which was so large that almost half of the castles of the country were in royal possession.<sup>189</sup> This could have been a major source of wealth, but on the one hand in the first decade of his rule this extensive royal domain had been significantly shrunken;<sup>190</sup> and on the other hand, the majority of the royal possessions were assigned to dignitaries for the time of the king's pleasure (*durante beneplacito regis*). Apparently, the royal treasury collected no revenues from these domains administered as "honors" (*honores*). The officeholder had the right to dispose of all the honor's domanial revenues,<sup>191</sup> and only in exceptional cases could it happen that some incomes were sent to the treasury, or if the revenue was not a seigniorial one.<sup>192</sup> The royal private domains — which

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The 320.000 florins yearly ordinary revenue was higher than the 243.000 florins of King Ladislaus V's, but it was less than a half of Matthias Corvinus' which is estimated to 678.000 florins (in exceptional cases it could reach even 800.000 florins with extraordinary revenues). This latter sum probably represents the peak of the Hungarian royal revenues in the Middle Ages, which can be considered especially high in the light of the fact that Vladislaus II (who succeeded Matthias on the throne between 1490-1516) could collect usually around 250-260.000 florins. Kenyeres, *A bányakamarák szerepe*, 178-181. C. Tóth, *A Magyar királyság*, 83.

<sup>188</sup> The diagrams were created by the author.

<sup>189</sup> The castles of Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia under the authority of the Hungarian king are not counted in this figure. Engel, *The realm*, 150.

<sup>190</sup> For more about this, see page 150.

<sup>191</sup> There are not many accounts preserved about the revenues and expenses of a royal honor. There is one from 1372 about the estate of castle Temesvár, when Benedict Himfi administered this honor. The account provides a brief insight into the type of incomes collected and also into the expenditure of a large royal estate administered as a *honor*. The revenues primarily originated from customs, markets, and various taxes. Concerning the expenses, Himfi used the incomes of the honor for the upkeep of the household, for visiting the royal court, for providing allowances to his adherents, and for covering the cost of construction of his own castle, etc. Pál Engel, "Honor, vár, ispánság" [Honor, castle, *ispanate*] in *Honor, vár, ispánság* [Honor, castle, *ispanate*], ed. Enikő Csukovics (Budapest: Osiris, 2003), 112-115. Engel, *The realm*, 151.

<sup>192</sup> Pál Engel, "A honor" [The honor] in *Honor, vár, ispánság*, [Honor, castle, *ispanate*], ed. Enikő Csukovics (Budapest: Osiris, 2003), 81-83. Engel, *Honor, vár, ispánság*, 114.

included the queenly possessions too — represented the smaller part of the demesne.<sup>193</sup> The role of these crown lands was to meet the needs of the royal household and of the royal *familia*. At the time of Sigismund’s reign, the king’s private revenues were not separated from the kingdom’s; with this purpose in mind was established the *provisor*’s office of the Buda castle.<sup>194</sup> It was the *provisor*’s role to administer the private domains and to provide supplies for the royal household.<sup>195</sup>

## Extraordinary revenues

Besides these regular ordinary revenues, Sigismund had various methods to raise some extraordinary income in case of need. One of the most important among these was the extraordinary tax, which he levied at least nine times during his reign.<sup>196</sup> These taxes had different names; were imposed irregularly and on various grounds, and the tax rates varied. The very first one was levied not long after his coronation, in autumn 1387. It was called “seventh” (*taxa septime*), and it was basically a property tax payable by peasants and burghers alike. Presumably this was one of the heaviest among all extraordinary levies, and the money collected was needed for the king’s military campaign against the opposition of his rule, led by John Horváti.<sup>197</sup> Seven years later another extraordinary tax was imposed, this time to raise funds for the Ottoman wars.

<sup>193</sup> According to Pál Engel’s calculation, out of the 150 royal castles only 15-20 could have represented the ruler’s private possessions in 1380. There is not such estimation available for the Sigismund period. Engel, *Honor, vár, ispánság*, 138.

<sup>194</sup> The roots of this process of the *provisor*’s emergence go back to Sigismund himself. Since there were no domains pertaining to Buda castle, there were no clearly separated revenues for its upkeep and for covering the expenses of the royal court. Therefore, Sigismund decided to change this situation and to create the estate of Buda castle. András Kubinyi, “A budai vár udvarbírói hivatala, 1458–1541: Kísérlet az országos és a királyi magánjövedelmek szétválasztására” [The office of Buda castle’s *provisor*, 1458-1541: an attempt to separate the private from the state revenues] *Levéltári Közlemények*, 35, nr. 1 (1964): 70.

<sup>195</sup> István Kenyeres, “A királyi és királynéi ‘magánbirtokok’ a 16. században” [The royal and queenly private domains in the sixteenth century] *Századok* 138, nr. 5 (2004):1103-1105. Engel, *The Realm*, 314. It is unknown how costly the running of the royal kitchen was in Sigismund’s lifetime, presumably it was not cheap at all, taking into account that in 1523-1524 25 florins (yearly 9.125) were spent on it daily. Kubinyi, *A budai vár udvarbírói hivatala*, 82.

<sup>196</sup> The exact number is unknown due to the fragmentary archival materials; Elemér Mályusz found data for this amount.

<sup>197</sup> Only some fragmentary data can be used for assessing the tax’s magnitude. According to this it was so heavy that for example the free royal town of Sopron — whose yearly tax was 400 florins — was obliged to make a payment of 1.700 florins. Understandably, the town was unable to put up this amount of money in time and the payment was made only with two years of delay. Elemér Mályusz, “Les débuts du vote de la taxe par les ordres dans la Hongrie féodale”, *Nouvelles études historiques publiées à l’occasion du XIIe Congrès International des Sciences Historiques*, vol 1, ed. D. Csátrai et al., (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1965), 55-56. Engel, *A magyar királyság jövedelmei*, 429.

Peasants and people with seigniorial obligations were charged 1 golden florin after two *portae*. After the battle of Nicopolis, in 1397 the imposition of another extraordinary levy was decided by the ruler and the royal council (later approved by the diet of Timișoara). This was heavier than the one from 1394, reaching 1 florin 21 new pennies. The last extraordinary levy imposed before the turn of the fifteenth century was from 1399; that time 0.5 florins and 21 new pennies was the tax rate charged on peasant holdings. There were two longer hiatuses of around fifteen years in the extraordinary levies; the first was triggered by the defeat of the Ottoman army at the battle of Ankara, after which the Ottoman incursions to Hungary ceased for a while.<sup>198</sup> As a consequence, from 1400 until 1415 there was no imposition of extraordinary taxes registered. Then, from 1415, in three successive years some kind of extraordinary payment was levied. All three were decided in the absence of Sigismund, who was taking part in the council of Constance. The first, in 1415 was called *taxa generalis*, and its imposition was justified by the imminent attack of Sultan Mehmed I (1413-1421). The next year the levy was collected for ransoming John Maróti, ban of Mačva (Macsó), and other prominent lords who had fallen into Ottoman captivity after the battle of Lašva in Bosnia.<sup>199</sup> Finally, about the tax levied in 1417, unfortunately little is known. It was again charged on the peasantry but there is no data about the tax rate nor about from whom was collected exactly. After another fifteen years hiatus, the imposition of extraordinary levies was resumed in 1432. This time it was imposed following a diet to which even the representatives of certain important towns were invited. The taxable social groups were the peasantry and the burghers, who were obliged to pay 66 small coins called *quarting*.<sup>200</sup> The last extraordinary tax was from 1434, which established a new form of taxation unknown in Hungary until then. It was called the fiftieth and it was charged on incomes no matter where they came from, only weapons, cloths and horses used for personal needs were not subject to the levy. Both clergy and the laity — from the barons to the poor — were obliged to pay 0,5% of their annual income, only the ones

<sup>198</sup> Pál Engel, “Ungarn und die Türkengefahr zur Zeit Sigismunds (1387-1437)” in *Das Zeitalter König Sigismunds in Ungarn im Deutschen Reich*, ed. Tilmann Schmidt, Péter Gunst, (Debrecen, Universität Debrecen, Institut für Geschichtswissenschaften, 2000), 63-65. János Bak, “Sigismund and the Ottoman Advance” in *Studying medieval rulers and their subjects: Central Europe and beyond* ed. Balázs Nagy, Gábor Klaniczay, (Farmingham: Ashgate, 2010), 3-4. Ferenc Szakály, “Phases of Turco-Hungarian Warfare before the Battle of Mohács (1365–1526)” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 33, nr.1, (1979): 76-78.

<sup>199</sup> About the battle see: Károly Kranzieritz, “A Lašva környéki csata 1415-ben” [The battle around the Lašva River in 1415] *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 125, nr.4, (2012): 959–984.

<sup>200</sup> At the time of its introduction this was meant to be small silver penny (equivalent with a quarter of a new penny), but it devaluated so much that in Sigismund’s last years of rule contained mainly copper. Engel, *The realm*, 223-224.



without stable regular revenue were required to pay just 6 pennies. The idea of the fiftieth emerged during the council of Basel and initially it was planned for the Holy Roman Empire, but after some discussion the matter was dropped. Nonetheless, Sigismund presented it in Hungary as it would have been approved, moreover, he even expanded the tax that originally was meant for the clergy to the whole nobility.<sup>201</sup> According to the initial plan, the money was meant to provide support for the town of Plzeň besieged by Hussite troops, and to cover the expenses of the council of Basel. However, the tax collection stalled so much that it took two years to collect it, and by that time none of these matters were current anymore. Indeed, there is proof that it was ever collected in only three counties (Szepes, Pozsony, Sopron), and because this took so much time, it is doubtful how effective it was.<sup>202</sup> This was not solely the case of the 1434 extraordinary levy, but it was a general issue of the other extraordinary taxes. However, in cases where collection was successful, then these levies could yield significantly higher sums than Sigismund's annual ordinary revenues. For example, the one from 1397 could have produced around 500.000 florins.<sup>203</sup>

Another extraordinary revenue of primary importance was the tax charged on the church. At the diet of 1397 held in Timișoara, a statute was accepted, which prescribed that the clergy was obliged to hand in half of their incomes to the royal treasury. The decision was justified by the Ottoman advance, and in principle, the money was to be collected until the fight against the “pagans” was over. The decree required also that the sums collected could only be spent on the defense of the kingdom's borders. However, it seems that the newly adopted decree was simply the codification of a practice already in existence from at least 1393 onwards. In spite of the statute's phrasing, in practice only the dioceses paid fifty percent of their annual incomes. For the ecclesiastical institutions such as chapter houses, archdeaconates, etc. there was an unchanged quota stipulating that they were obliged to pay on a yearly basis. Because the high clergy contributed to the kingdom's defense with equipping military contingents (*banderia*) and taking part in the armed expeditions, in fact it fell on the middling clergy to meet the demands of the decree and to pay the tax. According to the research of Norbert C. Tóth, the tax was collected each year after its imposition; the only exceptions were the years of civil war shortly after the turn of the fifteenth century. The middling clergy's financial contribution to the defense of the kingdom

<sup>201</sup> Of course, the nobles protested it, therefore Sigismund had to promise that he would not levy further taxes on them.

<sup>202</sup> Mályusz, *Les débuts du vote de la taxe*, 55-61. Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 140-152. Engel, *The realm*, 227. Bárány, *King Sigismund of Luxemburg*, 167-168.

<sup>203</sup> Engel, *The realm*, 227.

could be estimated around an annual 11.800 florins, while the dioceses' yearly payment was around 55.000 florins.<sup>204</sup> Sigismund intentionally kept vacant seats of bishoprics and archbishoprics in order to dispose of their revenues. He could do this following the issuance of the famous royal decree of 1404, by which he reserved the right to himself that no ecclesiastical benefices could be filled without his consent.<sup>205</sup> Keeping void seats of bishoprics affected many dioceses and the time-span of the vacancy varied between 13 and 254 months (more than 21 years). During these periods, the crown's revenues from the dioceses may have reached even an annual 75.000 florins.<sup>206</sup>

Sigismund was infamous for his many loans, the list of creditors ranged from private persons to urban communities. For the royal towns, these came in the form of forced loans, which most probably were never paid back, and only in the best case were the urban communities able to receive some kind of remuneration in the long term.<sup>207</sup> Sigismund had begun to use this practice well before he was even crowned king of the country. During his struggle to gain the throne, in April 1386 the town of Bratislava lent money to him twice, but such extraordinary payments were recurrent,<sup>208</sup> and besides Bratislava, generally the richest royal towns were all required to lend occasionally.<sup>209</sup> There was also a wide circle of private lenders ranging from a nobleman who

<sup>204</sup> Norbert C. Tóth, Bálint Lakatos, Gábor Mikó, *A pozsonyi prépost és a káptalan viszálya (1421–1425). A szentszéki bíráskodás Magyarországon – a pozsonyi káptalan szervezete és működése a XV. század elején* [The dispute between the provost and the chapter of Bratislava (1421-1425). The Holy See's judicature in Hungary – the function and structure of Bratislava's provost at the beginning of the fifteenth century] *Subsidia ad historiam medii aevi Hungariae inquirendam*, 3 (Budapest, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Támogatott Kutatócsoportok Irodája, 2014), 179-197.

<sup>205</sup> For the background see: Elemér Mályusz, *Das Konstanzer Konzil und das königliche Patronatsrecht in Ungarn. Studia historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, vol. 18, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1959). Imre Bard, "The Break of 1404 Between the Hungarian Church and Rome." *Ungarn Jahrbuch* 10 (1979): 56-69. Péter Tusor, "Hungarian Royal Patronage and Supremacy in the Hunyadi and Jagiellonian Age", in: *Das Konzil von Konstanz und Ungarn. Memoria Hungariae*, vol. 1, ed. Attila Bárány, Balázs Antal Bacsa (Debrecen: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 2016), 198-204. C. Tóth, *A főpapi székek*, 107-110.

<sup>206</sup> C. Tóth, et al., *A pozsonyi prépost*, 199-200. Norbert C. Tóth, "Az esztergomi érseki szék üresedése 1418-1423 között" [The vacant seat of the Esztergom archbishopric between 1418-1423] *Századok* 137, No.4 (2003): 885-896. Bárány, *King Sigismund of Luxemburg*, 173-174. C. Tóth, *A főpapi székek*, 112-114.

<sup>207</sup> For example, according to a contemporary story, the town of Pest was granted with the right to elect its own judge for providing a loan of 1.000 florins to Sigismund, which initially the king wanted to borrow from Buda, but they were unwilling to do it. Szende, Szende, *Between hatred and affection*, 205.

<sup>208</sup> Ortway, *Pozsony város története* III, 12-13. Sigismund turned to Bratislava for additional payments to finance his wars in Bosnia and against the Hussites. Szende, *Between hatred and affection*, 205.

<sup>209</sup> For example, Košice provided loans to Sigismund so often that the town had even a register solely for the king's loans. Ondrej R. Halaga, "Kaschau Rolle in der Ostpolitik Siegmunds von Luxemburg I. (1387- 1411)" in *Hochfinanz, Wirtschaftsräume, Innovationen. Festschrift für Wolfgang von Stromer*, ed. Uwe Bestmann, Franz Irsigler (Trier: Auenthal, 1987), 390. The town of Kremnica lent regularly to the king, and various payments of Sopron,

would sell even his own lands to provide money to his king to the Italians doing business in Hungary.<sup>210</sup> The Florentine businessmen were favored creditors of the king, but this sympathy was not mutual since the king was widely regarded as a bad debtor among them.<sup>211</sup> To illustrate the fact that the Florentines' reservations about lending to Sigismund were not completely unfounded, the case of Duke Louis VII of Bavaria-Ingolstadt can be mentioned. In July 1415, Sigismund was preparing his journey to Spain to facilitate antipope Benedict XIII's abdication. For this, he borrowed 11.000 florins from Duke Louis with the promise that he not only would pay back the original sum in a month's time, but he would also give him a further 12.000 florins, not as an interest but as an annuity. To show how serious his intention was, Sigismund even chose guarantors. Nonetheless, not only one month had passed without any payments but years, and Duke Louis' efforts to get his money back from the king or the guarantors failed consecutively.<sup>212</sup> Sigismund accumulated further extraordinary revenues from the debasement of coinage,<sup>213</sup> sale of royal domains, from seizure of land, and from the escheat of private estates whose owner died without an heir.<sup>214</sup> However, just as in the case of the loans, it is difficult to estimate how much revenue he could raise from these sources. It is considered in the scholarship that Sigismund collected around 160-180.000 golden florins from the extraordinary revenues together with the ordinary ones, which could reach around a yearly 500.000 florins.<sup>215</sup> In the Holy Roman Empire as a result of the continuous pledging and alienation of lands, the *Reichsgüter* had shrunken to such an extent that the princes of the realm were wealthier than the ruler himself. In 1412,

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Prešov, Košice, Cluj, etc. had been also registered. Štefánik, *The Kremnica town book*, 50-54. Bárány, *King Sigismund of Luxemburg*, 168-169.

<sup>210</sup> In 1392 the king commissioned the palatine and the former voivode of Transylvania to recover the pledged castle of Steničnjak (Sztenicsnyák) for him, who promised to the ruler that they would go as far as selling their own possessions in raising the required sum for the redemption. ZsO I. 2396. However, it must be added, that probably they were so prompt to put in putting up the money because in fact they redeemed the castle for themselves. For Sigismund's loans from Hungarian noblemen see: Rázsó, *A zsoldosság*, 167-169.

<sup>211</sup> For example, Giovanni di Bartolomeo Panciatichi lent 9.287 florins to the ruler, and he claimed that he would never been able to get the promisory note from the king, because he is generally known as a bad debtor and this fact could be confirmed by anyone who did business in Hungary. Arany, *Florentine families*, 82-87.

<sup>212</sup> Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 100-101. ZsO V. 742, 840, ZsO VI. 1376, 2582.

<sup>213</sup> Attila Ulrich, "Geldpolitik und Geldverkehr in Ungarn während der Herrschaft Sigismunds" in *Das Zeitalter König Sigmunds in Ungarn und im Deutschen Reich*, ed. Tilman Schmidt, Péter Gunst (Debrecen: Universität Debrecen Institut für Geschichtswissenschaften, 2000), 123-131. Gyöngyössy, *Coinage*, 304-305. Bárány, *King Sigismund of Luxemburg*, 175-176

<sup>214</sup> Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 219-223. Rázsó, *A zsoldosság*, 167-169.

<sup>215</sup> Engel, *The realm*, 227. Engel, *A magyar királyság jövedelmei*, 430. Bárány, *King Sigismund of Luxemburg*, 167.

Sigismund claimed that his yearly revenues in the empire did not even exceed 13.000 florins.<sup>216</sup> Probably he exaggerated when stated this,<sup>217</sup> nonetheless, most likely his ordinary revenues in Hungary were significantly higher than in the empire.<sup>218</sup> Exactly because of the dissipation of the *Reichsgüter*, already before Sigismund's time, the rulers of the Empire had had to rely on the financial resources of their dynastic hereditary lands (*Hausgut, Königsgut*).<sup>219</sup> Since Sigismund pledged even his family inheritance (the Margraviate of Brandenburg), his kingdom of Hungary had to fill this role. The next chapter will discuss how he could make even more use of all the country's financial resources by putting in pledge the royal domains.

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<sup>216</sup> This could have been the ordinary revenues only. His extraordinary revenues were much higher, for instance for his imperial coronation he collected around 150.000 florins extraordinary income. Isenmann, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 260-261. Engel, *The realm*, 228.

<sup>217</sup> His father, Emperor Charles IV's revenues are estimated to a yearly 164.000 florins. Isenmann, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 260.

<sup>218</sup> Also, in view of that the annual revenues of many important western countries (England, France, Venice, Milan, Castile, etc.) at the end of the fifteenth century ranged between 300.000 and 900.000 florins, Sigismund a number of decades earlier with his yearly 500.000 florins could not have been counted among the poor rulers of the continent. *Ibid.*, 261.

<sup>219</sup> Isenmann, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 252.

## Chapter 4. How did Pledging Work?

Chapter two, with the case of the Váh-Danube interfluvium, has already briefly touched upon the question what can be regarded as pledging and what can not. Most commonly, the notion of pledging was described by the sources with the words *impignorare*, or *obligare*. However, it also could happen that these two verbs were not used in the charters of transactions, still, in the eyes of contemporary people they were pledgings. These were usually sales deals with a buy-back clause. Presumably, the most important such deal of made by Sigismund was the selling of the Međimurje district to Hermann II of Celje for the staggering sum of 100.000 florins through two transactions. The phrasing of the two transactions' charters speak explicitly about selling the domains to Hermann II with the ruler's right to buy them back. Nonetheless, in the list of the royal possessions of 1439, Međimurje was included under the category of pledged estates.<sup>220</sup> The major difference between sale and pledging was that a sale necessitated a transfer of ownership, however, seemingly for the contemporaries a sale with a buy-back clause was practically the same as a pledging.<sup>221</sup> After presenting the problems of what was and what was not pledging, next the sources and the characteristics of these transactions will be explored.

### The sources of pledgings

Sources about Sigismund's pledgings are scarce; however, various types of surviving documents can be used for research.<sup>222</sup> One could get the fullest picture about the domains given in pledge from the registers of the royal domains, but only one such register has been preserved from the given period. This is a document known as the *Consignatio castrorum pro honore Sigismundi regis datorum*, which is undated but probably written around 1439. It presents the domain structure

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<sup>220</sup> See footnotes 1036,1061.

<sup>221</sup> Interestingly, also in the case of the count of Luxembourgs' pledgings there was no difference between the two types of transactions, sometimes they were called pledging, sometimes sale for repurchase. Winfried Reichert, *Landesherrschaft zwischen Reich und Frankreich: Verfassung, Wirtschaft und Territorialpolitik in der Grafschaft Luxemburg von der Mitte des 13. bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts* Vol.1. (Trier: Verlag Trierer Historische Forschungen, 1993), 347-348.

<sup>222</sup> It is worth to compare the sources which can be found in Hungary, with sources in today's Czech Republic. There, exists for the pledging of church properties only, three separate registers which can be used besides the charter evidence. Bárta, *The pledge policy*, 77.

during the period around Sigismund's death, listing which castles, towns and domains were in whose hands, and on what legal basis, including also pledged possessions.<sup>223</sup> The fact that, in some cases, the listed data is the only source of information about the pledging of certain domains, shows the relevance and importance of the register; at the same time, it sheds light on the poor availability of sources in Hungary.<sup>224</sup>

The contracts of pledge contain most of the data about the pledgings:<sup>225</sup> the object and the terms of pledging, the sum, the information concerning the pledgees; in some cases, they also indicate why the ruler needed the money, and of course they have the date and place of conclusion the contract. At the same time as the contract was concluded, usually the same day<sup>226</sup> (but this was not always the case), an order of instituting the pledge holder into the pledge was issued together with another separate document. In this second document, the ruler informed all the inhabitants of the pledged domains about the contract and ordered them to obey the pledgee and accept him as their new lord and to pay the seigniorial taxes to him.<sup>227</sup>

Besides these two types of sources almost any kind of document related to the royal domains can contain data about pledges,<sup>228</sup> but usually these are scarce, and their information sheds only some a thin ray of light on certain transactions. Therefore, in many cases, the order of instituting into the pledge or the report on this are the only preserved sources with information about certain

<sup>223</sup> Only a seventeenth-century copy of the register has been preserved. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 194-196.

<sup>224</sup> For example, the pledging of Castle of Veliki Kalnik (Nagykemlék) to the Bosnian king. *Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>225</sup> These documents were not contracts in the genuine meaning of the word, but since they contain clauses and provisions of the transaction that the contractual sides had to keep, I think it is appropriate to call the such.

<sup>226</sup> For example: DL 63134, DL 63136. It could also happen, that the order of instituting into the pledge was issued only months later, like in the case of some Transylvanian villages pledge to David Lack in 24 August 1421. The order of instituting into the villages was issued only on 15 November 1421. DL 81478, DL 27006. ZsO VIII. 888, 1148.

<sup>227</sup> "...vestre universitati et cuiuslibet vestrum fidelitati firmiter precipiendo mandamus, quatenus agnita presencium noticia, prefato domino archiepiscopo vel suis officialibus vestri in medium per eum deputandis in omnibus et singulis parere, obedire et obtemperare de universisque censibus, proventibus, obvencionibus et emolimentis vestri ex parte provenire debentes respondere et eosdem sibi effective amministrare debeatis." DF 248257. In case of *honor* domains the wording of documents were similar concerning how they call upon obedience and the payment of the royal income. Engel, *A honor*, 86-87. Zsigmond Jakó, "Az erdélyi vajdák kinevezéséről"[On the appointment of the Transylvanian Voivodes]in *Társadalom, Egyház, Művelődés. Tanulmányok Erdély történelméhez*. [Society, church, culture. Studies on the history of Transylvania] (Budapest: Magyar Egyháztörténeti Enciklopédia Munkaközösség, 1997), 80. It was no different in the case of donation, as the example of Moldava nad Bodvou (Szepesi) granted to the Rozgonyis proves. DL 4238.

<sup>228</sup> Such as testimonies (Fejér X/7. 436), charters of domain swap (DL 11225), letters of domain division (Ortvay, Tivadar, Frigyes Pesty. *Oklevelek Temesvármegye és Temesvár város történetéhez*. 1183-1430 [Documents illustrating the History of Timiș County and Timișoara I. 1183-1430] (Pozsony: Eder István könyvnyomdája 1896, vol. 1), (hereafter: Temes) 631. donations (bestowment/gifts/donation) (DL 71239), further pledging (Fejér X/5. 81) or documents on redemption from pledge (DL 10202).

pledgings, but they regularly do not contain the exact sum,<sup>229</sup> the date and other details of the transaction.

## On pledging

The granting of royal property rights could take basically two forms: eternal or temporary right. The latter included transferring a property as an *honor*, lifelong donation, and pledging.<sup>230</sup> It was characteristic of all three temporary forms of donation that the ownership stayed with the original owner and that the beneficiary could enjoy the donated rights only temporarily,<sup>231</sup> putting it more simply, the right of possession was transferred without the transfer of ownership. In the case of pledging, in practice this meant that Sigismund, as the rightful owner of the pledged property could exchange it any time<sup>232</sup> and even donate it without consulting the pledge holder. A good example of this is a transaction from 1427, by which the king donated half of the domains of János Janki — deceased without male heirs — to the piror of Vrana (Vrána), Albert Nagymihályi. The domains were held in pledge by George Csáki, the *ispán* of the Székelys however, this did not prevent the king from making the transfer.<sup>233</sup> There is another case which also highlights that pledging meant only temporary possession. In the first years of Sigismund's reign, in 1391 he had to call upon John Kaplai to defend the inhabitants of the market town of Moldava nad Bodvou against the provost of Jasov (Jászó), who wanted to seize some territory from them. According to the charter,

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<sup>229</sup> Sometimes we find exceptions, but these are very rare. The pledging of the village Veseuş (Vesszős) is like this; its report on instituting into the pledge contains the sum of the pledging. DL 29744., 62753.

<sup>230</sup> Engel, *A honor*, 85–86.

<sup>231</sup> In the *Tripartitum* Werbőczy defines the pledging as the following: “...on the part of the pledger: pledging is the temporary transfer of his own property right to another's use, out of necessity. On the part of the creditor or recipient: pledging is the dangerous, damnable and temporary retention of the right of another, with the gathering of its fruits and demanding the capital sum.” First part, chapter eighty-one - Stephen Werbőczy, ed. János Bak, Martin Rady, Péter Banyó, *The Customary Law of the Renowned Kingdom of Hungary: A Work in Three Parts, the "Tripartitum" = Tripartitum Opus Iuris Consuetudinarii Inclyti Regni Hungari* (Salt Lake City: Charles Schlacks, Jr., 2006.), 158-159 (translation quoted).

<sup>232</sup> For example, on 4 March 1436, Sigismund took back pledged villages of Sopron County and exchanged them with other domains. He did this because he wanted to put the villages again in pledge, this time to Duke Albert V of Austria. DF 287126.; Károly Ráth, A soproni kapitányság és királyi adóról szóló oklevelek [Charters about captaincy of Sopron and the royal tax]. *Magyar Történelmi Tár* ser. 1, vol.1 (1855): 144.

<sup>233</sup> George Csáki could not do anything against the donation, but at least he had to give over the domains only when he got the sum of the pledging back. DL 85720, Gyula Nagy ed.: *A nagymihályi és sztárai gróf Sztáray család oklevéltára*. [The cartulary of the families of Nagymihályi and of the Sztáray counts of Sztára] vol II. (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1889), 256.

Kaplai had the town only in pledge, thus temporarily and he therefore asserted that he could not defend the interests of the inhabitants against anyone.<sup>234</sup>

One of the most significant differences among temporary donations was the duration of possession. In the case of anthe *honor*, the duration was determined by ruler's will (*durante beneplacito*),<sup>235</sup> in the case of lifelong donations, of course, it was for the lifetime of the grantee, while in the case of pledging, only the redemption brought an end to the possession.<sup>236</sup> This is the reason why the Spiš region, which was given in pledge in 1412, was still in pledge after 360 years,<sup>237</sup> similarly to the castle of Lednica (Lednic) which was put in pledge in 1403 and was still held in pledge in 1475.<sup>238</sup> Likewise, the annual royal tax of Bardejov (Bártfa) pledged by Sigismund, was redeemed only after almost 100 years.<sup>239</sup> Since in Sigismund's charters of pledge there was rarely a temporal restriction included, that is why such pledgings of several decades or even of some hundred years' duration could occur.<sup>240</sup> Although it was in the pledgees' interest to restrict the right of redemption and to avoid that the pledge to be transferred to another person,<sup>241</sup> they could include such restriction into the charter of pledge only occasionally. The restriction generally referred to when the pledge could be redeemed or until when it could not. During Sigismund's reign, there are only three examples of the first instance, out of which two are connected to the same person, István Kis Leszkóci, a court knight, and the third to George Kővágóörsi, one of the ancestors of the Batthyány family. The transactions with Leszkóci were concluded on the same day, 24 February 1419, and from then on the ruler had ten years to redeem

<sup>234</sup> ZsO I. 2069, page number 224. Mistakenly there are two excerpts of charters with the number 2069 on the pages 224 and 231. DL 7693.

<sup>235</sup> Engel 2003: 86.

<sup>236</sup> Landwehr, *Die Verpfändung*, 327–328.

<sup>237</sup> See the subchapter about the pledging of the Spiš region.

<sup>238</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 356–357.

<sup>239</sup> More precisely, in 1505. Stanisław A. Sroka, *A középkori Bártfa és kapcsolatai Kis-Lengyelországgal* [The relations of medieval Bardejov with Lesser Poland] (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2016), 40. Incze, *Bound by pledge*, 94.

<sup>240</sup> There was a time limit set more often in case of pledging a certain source of income. In such cases, usually it was possible to collect the revenues until this reached the amount of the lent sum. For example, under such conditions was the castle of Kittsee (Köpcsény) with the thirtieth custom of Rusovce (Oroszvár) given in pledge to Peter Kapler. As this example shows, sometimes the sources of income were given in pledge together with the domains, not only on their own, and these also had to be given back when the revenues raised from the pledges reached the sum of the transactions. ZsO IX. 777. The German literature calls these types of transactions “Totsatzung.” Landwehr, *Die rechtshistorische*, 108-109.; Landwehr, *Die Verpfändung*, 330-333.

<sup>241</sup> Krause, *Pfandherrschaften*, 402.



the pledge. The transaction concluded with Kővágóörsi gave only one year for redemption.<sup>242</sup> These three pledgings show why Sigismund did not like to have similar transactions in a larger number, since in these cases, if the domains put in pledge were not redeemed within the given deadline, they had to be donated to the pledge holder. The order of instituting into the pledges was formulated accordingly: Leszkóci had to be instituted first, on ground of pledging, second, on ground of donation in case the sum was not paid back in time.<sup>243</sup>

The other temporary restriction provided the pledgees with an assurance against redemption for a certain period, mostly for their lifetime. Presumably, most of Sigismund's pledge transactions with his second wife, Queen Barbara were concluded in this form.<sup>244</sup> This is understandable, because only in this way could the king make sure that the domains remained with the queen even after his death. Besides the queen, only a few people, like Vladislaus II of Opole and his wife, the Rozgonyi brothers, two widows (of Stephen Losonci and of Peter Kapler) and Pongrác Szentmiklósi received this kind of concession from the king.<sup>245</sup> Most pledgees were less successful, and obtained such concessions for only a few years or for some decades. To the latter group belonged Matko Talovac and his brothers, who got exemption under redemption for ten years for the castle of Đurđevac (Szentgyörgy); and there was Nicholas Frankopan, who could secure castle of Bihác (Bihács) for himself only for two years.<sup>246</sup>

<sup>242</sup> "...si et in quantum usque lapsum predictorum decem annorum integrorum predictas possessiones nostras Streche et Zulio pro premissa pecunie summa a prelibato Stephano et eius heredibus redimere non curaverimus, extunc ipsas possessiones Streche et Zulio simul cum universis iuribus et pertinenciis tam annexis, quam annectendis, quibus prefatus quondam Nicolaus Cych eas tenuisset et tenere potuisset quibusque ad manus nostras regias sunt devolute, in eo casu ipsis Stephano Parvo ipsiusque heredibus et successoribus universis damus, donamus et conferimus jure perpetuo et irrevocabiliter possidendas, tenendas pariter et habendas..." DL 71794. ZsO VII. 137. The charter of the other transaction is DL 63121. ZsO VII. 136. Similar phrasing was used in the contract of pledge concluded with George Kővágóörsi. DL 100279. For more about the latter transaction see: György Rác, "Egy főnemesi család eredete és „pályakezdése”. A Batthyányiak az Anjou- és Zsigmond korban" [The origins and the beginnings of career of an aristocratic family. The Batthyányies in the era of the Angevin rulers and of Sigismund] in *Honoris Causa: Tanulmányok Engel Pál Tiszteletére* [Honoris causa: Studies in Honor of Pál Engel], ed. Tibor Neumann, György Rác (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 2009), 333.

<sup>243</sup> "...introducatur prefatum Stephanum Parvum in dominium earundem statuatque easdem eidem impignorationis et nostre donationis titulo perpetue possidendam..." DL 43442. "...impignorationis titulo aut ubi modo premissis redimere non valeamus aut nollemus in perpetuum possidendas..." DL 100280.

<sup>244</sup> DL 68977, 12383, 12351, 71469, 89907, 71678, DF 287804.

<sup>245</sup> CDS XXXI. 22–23.; DL 12919., 94474., 11755., DF 286391.

<sup>246</sup> DL 34067. Lajos Thallóczy, Samu Barabás, ed.. *Codex diplomaticus Comitum de Frangepanibus I. A Frangepán család oklevéltára. 1333-1527* [The chartulary of the Frangepán family, vol I. 1333-1527] vol. I. (Budapest: Magyar Tudományok Akadémia, 1910) (hereafter: Frangepán), 235.

Apart from lending money,<sup>247</sup> it was possible to get a domain in pledge in exchange for service for the king, regardless of the fact that the service had already been done or would be done in the future.<sup>248</sup> In both cases, the service was converted to money, and this sum was regarded as a debt just like the lent money. It was similar in the case of the expenses spent on Sigismund or the kingdom itself, so the expenses were seen as debts which the king tried to redeem by pledgings.<sup>249</sup>

## The process of pledging

According to Elemér Mályusz the usual procedure for pledging royal properties was the following: the ruler was in great need of money and since his treasury was empty he turned to the aristocrats who promised him loans if they got the pledges they had wanted for a long time. In Mályusz's understanding, the lords at the royal court knew exactly when the ruler was more yielding than usual.<sup>250</sup> Certainly this could be the process of pledging in many cases, but it also happened numerous times that not the creditors approached the king, but Sigismund searched for prospective lenders, whose loans would be secured by pledges. Such stories can be read also in Eberhard Windecke's chronicle. According to one of these, during the council of Constance, Sigismund asked the burghers of Basel, whether they would be willing to take in pledge castles and towns which Sigismund had recently acquired from Frederick IV, Duke of Austria (1402-1439). Even Windecke himself was commissioned by Sigismund with a task of a similar character: he had to make an offer to the burghers of Mainz, Speyer and Worms concerning taking in pledge certain towns.<sup>251</sup>

As well, it was not always long coveted domains that the lenders desired to acquire indeed, sometimes the lenders provided money to the ruler without specifying in the charter of pledge that

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<sup>247</sup> According to the phrasing of the charters of pledge, the lenders gave the money to the request of the king in the hope that they will get it back at a certain point, and until then the king would give them domains as a security of the future payment. It can be claimed that the phrasing of Šintava (Sempte) castle's charter of pledge from 1426 is almost a general one: "...*maiestati nostre accomodarunt et nomine certi mutui ac sub spe restitutionis dederunt [...]; nos volentes eosdem...de rehibitione huiusmodi summe floreni certos reddere et securos castrum nostrum Sempte appellatum...pignori duximus obligandum ymo impignoramus...*" DL 86789.

<sup>248</sup> For example, in July 1417, the king gave in pledge all the *honor* domains that Stibor of Stiboricz the younger held, because he promised to accompany Sigismund to France, together with 100 soldiers. DL 10596. Frederick Scharfenecki received the castle of Tátika and the town of Keszthely in pledge for his services and for his arrears of his wages. DF 200390.

<sup>249</sup> George Majtényi and John Újfalusi, the castellans of Csejte castle, received domains in pledge for their services and mainly for the expenses they spent on maintaining the castle. DL 73105.

<sup>250</sup> Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 33

<sup>251</sup> Altmann, *Eberhard Windeckes Denkwürdigkeiten*, pars 85, pages 85-86.

which domains exactly they would like to take in pledge. This was the case with Peter Alsólendvai Herceg and his wife. They lent 3.000 florins to the king who in exchange promised to pledge to them such lands, domains and domain rights to their liking, which would be useful for them and would have the same value as the lent money.<sup>252</sup>

Although, in most of the cases the transactions of pledge were concluded directly by Sigismund himself, there were instances when he commissioned someone with this task. The above-mentioned pledging is one of such transactions. In this case, Stephen Aranyi mediated between the contractual sides. He was the one who reached an agreement concerning the terms of the pledging with Herceg and his wife, and also he received the money from them. Because it was not specified which domains exactly would be given in pledge, Aranyi stood as the guarantor of the pledging charter's contents by promising to the lenders that if the ruler would not be able to pledge them the domains then Aranyi himself would clear off the ruler's debt. Moreover, in case if he could not do this then he was ready to pledge some of his own lands.<sup>253</sup> It was not only Stephen Aranyi who helped the king to conclude transactions of pledge. His case is interesting because he was "only" a royal *familiaris* at that time,<sup>254</sup> while the others entrusted with similar tasks held important positions in Sigismund's government. John Kanizsai was archbishop of Esztergom and royal chancellor in 1398 when he pledged the castle of Ozalj in the name of the king to Nicholas Frankopan.<sup>255</sup> Eberhard, Bishop of Zagreb, was also royal chancellor when he raised a loan based on the pledging of Ozalj in 1412 to the Frankopans.<sup>256</sup> Another type of transaction was again related to the Frankopan family. This time not Nicholas, but his son's, John's widow received in pledge the castle of Rmanj from Matko Talovac, the ban of Slavonia and Croatia in 1437 in the name of the king.<sup>257</sup> While in the first two cases is not clear why the two chancellors

<sup>252</sup> "... *pro quibus scilicet tribus millibus florenorum prescriptis memoratus dominus rex noster terras, possessiones et iura possessionaria ad valorem dictorum trium millium florenorum se extendentes iuxta nutum et voluntatem ac beneplacitum egregii domini Petri Hercegh et domine Margaretha vocate, consortis eiusdem, dare et conferre [...] assumsisset.*" Fejér X/6. 842. DL 43677.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> From 1425 onwards, he is mentioned in the sources mainly as *familiaris* of the royal court until 1435, when he became the *ispán* of Gömör and Nógrád counties. Engel, *Archontológia*, 131, 138, 158, 503.

<sup>255</sup> The charter of the pledging end with the following lines: "*Datum per manus reverendissimi in Christo patris et domini domini Johannis de Kanyasa, archiepiscopi alme ecclesie Strigoniensis locique eiusdem comitis perpetui, necnon primatis et sedis apostolice legati, ac aule nostre regie sumpmi cancellarii dilecti nostri et fidelis.*" Frangepán, 128.

<sup>256</sup> "*Datum per manus reverendi in Christo patris domini Eberhardi episcopi Zagrabiensis, auleque nostre maiestatis sumpmi cancellarii, fidelis nostri grate dilecti.*" Frangepán, 172.

<sup>257</sup> "... *quod nos illas litteras fidelis nostri dilecti magnifici Mathkonis de Thalowcz, regnorum nostrorum Dalmatie et Croatie, ac totius Sclavonie bani...quarum vigore ipse Mathko banus auctoritate nostre maiestatis sibi per nos in*

were assigned to handle the pledgings, supposedly Matko Talovac was chosen for the job because he held Rmanj castle as a *honor* before the pledging, therefore it was practical to entrust him with it.<sup>258</sup>

After the ruler and the prospective pledge holder reached common terms concerning the conditions of the pledging, the charter of pledging was issued together with two other documents. One was a royal mandate demanding obedience for the pledgee from the inhabitants of the pledge, the second was the letter of instituting the pledge holder into the pledge. After he was instituted successfully he could have the pledge usufruct until the time of redemption.

## The content of the transactions

The content of the contracts was defined by the terms of agreement reached between the ruler and the pledge holder. The king, as the owner of the domains chosen for pledging could decide what<sup>259</sup> and under what conditions<sup>260</sup> he was willing to give in pledge. Of course, these conditions had to be agreeable by the prospective pledgees too, otherwise they would not be interested in doing business with the king.<sup>261</sup> That is why the contracts' conditions show great diversity; for instance, the king could pledge the same domains under new terms.<sup>262</sup> Despite these alterations, there were some passages of the contracts that were present in almost all of them. Such is the justification of the need of pledging. In most of the cases, these usually allude to the kingdom's general troubles or Sigismund's hardships (*pro arduis nostris et regni nostri negotiis*) without providing any concrete information. This intentional vagueness ensured that the ruler was

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*hac parte attributa et concessa castrum nostrum Ermin vocatum...sub certis conditionibus impignorasse dinoscitur et obligasse...*" Frangepán, 292.

<sup>258</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 401.

<sup>259</sup> Sigismund pledged primarily real estate, these were the transactions of the highest values, but of course he also had transactions when only a certain revenues or movables were pledged. For example, he put jewels in pledge: ZsO V. 976. Áldásy, *Zsigmond császár koronázása*, 5–6.

<sup>260</sup> For instance, he pledged almost the entire the town of Debrecen to the Polish Andrew Balicki in 1410 except for the immovable pertaining to the salt chamber, which of course was too important for him to transfer into private hands. "[...] *et excepta una integra curia in dicta civitate Debrechen pro domino pertinente et per nos pro camera seu reposito salium nostrorum regalium reservata et deputata [...]*" DF 212 742, published - Fejér X/5. 79–81.

<sup>261</sup> Apparently, it was difficult to refuse the king's request for money when he turned to members of his entourage for loans. George Kővágóörsi had even his own village of Bendek in Somogy County sold just to provide loan to the ruler. ZsO I. 4807. The transaction is also mentioned in: Rácz, *Egy főnemesi család*, 333.

<sup>262</sup> The castle of Tátika for example was put in pledge to Valentinus Vince Szentgyörgyi and his sons, with the authorization that when the ruler yields extraordinary tax then they can collect this from the inhabitants of the pledge. Three years later George and Stephen Marcali took the castle in pledge but without such authorization. DF 200420, 200424.

at liberty to spend the lent sums according to his will. On other occasions, more detailed information is provided about the spending of the loan, in such cases usually the protection of the country, military expeditions, construction and travel costs are denoted as the expenses to be covered by the pledgings.<sup>263</sup>

Another recurrent element of the deeds of pledge is the clause of warranty. This legal institution was present not only in the case of pledging but was also an indispensable component of the other forms of domain alienations (swap, sale and division of a domain (*osztálytétel*)).<sup>264</sup> By the warranty, Sigismund guaranteed the lender's rights to the pledge, which meant that if there was a claimant contesting the pledgee's rights to the property, then he had to prove this and also cover the expense of the law suit in which the pledge was involved. In case the ruler failed to do that, then he was obliged to give another domain of similar value in pledge to the lender.<sup>265</sup> Usually, Sigismund took this promise of warranty in his own name and in the name of his successors, just as the other warranty clause by which he assured the pledge holder that he would not take back the pledge without paying. Ladislaus Blagai experienced how binding this was even for the ruler. In 1427 Blagai could not take possession of certain domains which the ruler donated to him, because they were held in pledge by somebody who did not want to hand them over until the money he had lent to the ruler has been repaid. Sigismund took the pledge holder's side and obliged Blagai to pay off his (Sigismund's) debts if he wanted to get hold of the donated possessions.<sup>266</sup>

When the contracts of the pledging were formulated, great attention was paid to determine precisely which domains with which appurtenances were given in pledge. Omitting some crucial details could after all, result in severe consequences for the pledge holders because in case of need they would not be able to prove on what grounds they held the pledges. Or on the contrary, the precise enlisting of the domains served to avoid the possibility of someone holding more domains

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<sup>263</sup> See chapter 8.

<sup>264</sup> Zsoldos 1994: 620.

<sup>265</sup> “si [...] *Stephanum Parvum et eius heredes in dominio ipsarum possessionum Streche et Zulio conservare, protegere et expedire non possemus aut nostri successores non possent, extunc alias consimiles possessiones de nostris possessionibus regalibus eisdem Stephano Parvo et eius heredibus perpetuo dare et assignare [...] teneamur ac nostri successores supradicti teneantur [...]*” DL 71794. Before his death, Sigismund promised to John Kakas Berényi and his relatives that if is not able to defend their and their offspring rights pertaining to the villages and customs they took in pledge from him, then he would give them domains having equal value, quality, productiveness and profitability: “[...] *nos vel ipsi nostri successores loco huiusmodi possessionis et tributi aliam possessionem et tributum in qualitate et quantitate ac fructuositate et proventibus eisdem equipollens ipsis Ladislao, Blasio et Johanni [...] titulo pignori dare et assignare teneamur teneanturque.*” DF 249243.

<sup>266</sup> DL 48801. The charter of pledge related to this case: DL 43695.

in pledge than he or she was entitled to. A case from July 1417 illustrates this well. At that time, Sigismund entrusted the palatine and the judge royal judge with investigating the circumstances of pledging Óvár castle of Moson County to Ulrich Wolfurt. He did this because Wolfurt took under his authority not only the villages pertaining to the castle estate, but also three villages of the neighboring Saint Jacob monastery of Lébény. Therefore, Sigismund ordered the examination of the charters related to the pledging, and ordered that if these villages were not enlisted in the charter of pledge then they should be returned to the monastery.<sup>267</sup>

In principle, it was possible to pledge only such property which was in one's possession, but Sigismund found ways to promise in pledge goods that were not his, albeit only if he managed to gain them in the future. Palatine Nicholas Garai became beneficiary of one such transaction. In 1424 he made Sigismund promise him the castle of Voćin (Atyina) — possessed by the Atyinai family at that time — in pledge, in case the male line of the family would die out and the castle would revolve on the crown. Sigismund Atyinai was only 27 years old at that time but he died six years later in 1435 without an heir leaving the estate in the hands of the king. By then, palatine Garai was already deceased, but as had been promised his son Ladislaus received the castle in pledge from the ruler.<sup>268</sup> Besides enumerating all the domains, it was also included in the charters of pledge that the pledge holder could enjoy all the revenues (in kind or cash) and rights pertaining the pledged possessions.<sup>269</sup> Practically these revenues represented the interest rate in the transactions, since the pledge holders received not only the sum initially lent but they could also collect all the revenues of the pledge during the pledging.<sup>270</sup> This covered charge of interest and the prospect of obtaining the pledge as a perpetual grant made concluding transactions with the ruler attractive in the eyes of creditors. Also, they had the possibility of gaining some extra revenues beyond the general incomes of the domains in the form of extraordinary taxes. However, this depended on royal authorization, albeit obtaining this was not a privilege only of certain people.<sup>271</sup> From 1426 onwards such charters began to be issued by which the king gave permission

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<sup>267</sup> ZsO VI. 668.

<sup>268</sup> DL 33411, 33941, 33788. Engel, *Archontológia*, 270. Pál Engel, *Középkori magyar geneológia* [Medieval Hungarian genealogy] (Arcanum Digitéka, CD-ROM, Budapest, 2001) (hereafter: *Geneológia*), entry: Atyinai family.

<sup>269</sup> In many charters of pledge can be read this or similar phrasing: “[...] *usque tempus vero redemptionis dictarum possessionum universos census et proventus consuetos recipiendi et exigendi ipsi Ladizlao, filio Ladizlai plenam annuimus* [...]” DL 11088.

<sup>270</sup> If Sigismund did not decide otherwise, like in the case of Debrecen pledged to Andrew Balicki. See page 63.

<sup>271</sup> Michael Hoffer was a knight in 1435 when he received such authorization for the pledged village of Bzenica (Szénásfalu), while Peter Pelsőci as a baron was authorized for the pledged castle of Jelšava in the same year. DL

to the pledgees to collect the extraordinary tax for themselves when the ruler imposed a general extraordinary tax.<sup>272</sup> Nonetheless, there was a restriction according to which the tax should be moderate for the settlements to remain populated.<sup>273</sup>

This principle of “using but no using up the pledge”<sup>274</sup> was general and was valid not only in the case of extraordinary tax levied but also the collection of pledge’s ordinary revenues should not have depleted its resources. A good example of this is Sigismund’s transaction concluded with his son-in-law, Albert V Duke of Austria (later king of Hungary) in 1436. In this document, Sigismund pledged domains close to the Austrian border with the condition that Albert and his people should clear the forests and hunt down the wild animals to the usual extent and not more.<sup>275</sup>

Similarly to enlisting exactly the domains to be pledged, great attention was paid to the precise enumeration of the pledge holders. The same practice can be observed here as in the case of granting or alienating possessions that pledge holders strove to expand their rights over the pledge to their relatives. That is why, often the relatives were also included in the charters of the pledgings.<sup>276</sup> This had even a greater importance in case of ecclesiastical pledge holders, because

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71469. László Bártfai Szabó, *Oklevéltár a gróf Csáky család történetéhez*. I. köt. *Oklevelek 1229–1499*. [Collected charters about the history of the Csáky counts. vol.I. Charters of the period 1229–1499] (Budapest: Stephaneum Nyomda R.T., 1919), 358.

<sup>272</sup> The first such known document is from 7 October 1426. By it Valentinus Vince Szentgyörgyi and his son were authorized to collect such tax from the inhabitants of the pledged Tátika castle. József Körmendy, “A veszprémi püspöki és káptalani levéltár Mohács-előtti oklevelei” [The Ante Mohacsiana charters of the bishopric’s and chapter house’s archives of Veszprém] *Levéltári Szemle* vol. 30 (1980):470–471. Interestingly the clause concerning the extraordinary tax was not included in the charter of the pledging as later became common, but a separate document was issued for it for months later after the pledging.

<sup>273</sup> “...annuimus ...quandocunque nos aut predicti successores nostri reges, scilicet Hungarie super alias civitates et possessiones regales generales taxas extraordinarias imposuerimus seu imposuerint, tunc et ipsi super populos et iobagiones in opidis, villis, possessionibus et pertinentiis predictorum nostrorum castrorum Ilswa et Fylek residentes taxam similiter extraordinariam levem tamen et moderatam, per quam huiusmodi opida, possessionesque ville et pertinentie ac populi in eisdem residentes non desolentur...” DL 12770.

<sup>274</sup> Landwehr, *Die Verpfändung*, 325.

<sup>275</sup> “...prefatus filius noster et officiales sui silvas nostras ad eadem bona pertinentes per incisionem et ferarum captionem teneant, quemadmodum hactenus est observatum, itaque huiusmodi silva atque fere ultra modum et solitum non devastentur...” DF 287126.

<sup>276</sup> It is not always clear whether the sums were lent together with the relatives or only by a single person who requested that his family members to be included in the document. Some examples when this can be known: Domokos Dobó Ruzskai lent the money to the ruler for which he took the village of Koson (Kaszony) situated in Bereg County in pledge, but he included his father in the agreement. ZsO I. 841. DL 71900. Andrew Balicki did the same thing in 1404 when he took the castle of Hangovice (Újvár) in pledge. The castle was pledged due to his services done for the ruler, but he wanted that his brothers’ name to be incorporated in the document of the transaction. ZsO II. 841, DL 8944.

this way and also by obtaining right to inherit the pledges they could achieve that the pledges remain under their family's authority after their death.<sup>277</sup>

Besides the domains and the pledge holders, special attention was also paid to the sum of the transaction. The Hungarian golden florin was the most commonly used currency in Sigismund of Luxembourg's transactions of pledge. It also occurred from time to time that the sum of the transaction was calculated in florins (calculation florin) but paid in silver coins (groats, pennies, quartings).<sup>278</sup> Foreign currencies were also sometimes used (especially Prague groschen,<sup>279</sup> and to a lesser extent Rhenish guilders, and Viennese penny<sup>280</sup>), mostly when the creditor itself was foreigner.

Having the charter drafted did not mean automatically that there was also a deal, since sometimes the agreement remained just a promise and only the completion of introducing into the pledge proves undoubtedly that a deal was reached. This is well illustrated by the pledging of Stupčanica (Szaplónca) castle of Körös County in 1424. On May 31 Sigismund swapped the castle with Šintava which was held in pledge by George Bazini.<sup>281</sup> Bazini had reason to be content with the swapping since holding Šintava under his jurisdiction was not without troubles.<sup>282</sup> However, it turned out that this was only a promise of Sigismund and George could never manage to get Stupčanica under his authority, because two months after reaching an agreement with Bazini, the king pledged the castle to palatine Nicholas Garai. Probably, it was more than a simple coincidence that palatine Garai was the referent (*relator*) of that charter issued on 31 May. Garai even managed to take the castle in pledge for 500 florins less than it was promised to Bazini. Sometimes, the authorizations for redemption were also similarly only promises. In 1430, Sigismund's father-in-law, Hermann II of Celje received such authorization for redeeming castles held in pledge by the

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<sup>277</sup> In line with this, for instance the castle of Šintava was taken in pledge by George Pálóci, archbishop of Esztergom together with his brothers Matthew and Emeric. The bishop of Zagreb, John Albeni proceeded the same way. He took in pledge the town of Keszthely and half of Rezi castle with his brother Rudolf. DL 86789, 92575. In case the relatives' name were not incorporated in the charter of the transaction then it was practical to obtain authorization of inheriting the pledge from the ruler. Archbishop George Pálóci did this in 1436 when he took villages of Nógrád County in pledge alone. DF 248255.

<sup>278</sup> DL 7655, 58797, 11300, 70875. On the currencies during Sigismund's reign see: Gyöngyössi, *Coinage and Financial Administration*, 304-306.

<sup>279</sup> DL 11300 (ZsO VIII. 563), 103008. There are exceptions of course, for instance Stephen Leszkóci Kis who was no foreign nobleman, still he lent Prague groschen to the ruler. DL 58188.

<sup>280</sup> DF 287090, 287126.

<sup>281</sup> DL 11514. Šintava was initially put in pledge to the Polish nobleman Mościc of Sęszew, who transferred it to Bazini in accordance with the ruler's approval. DL 86787, 10970, 11300 (ZsO VII. 1595., 2152., 2256). For more about the castle held by Sęszew-i Mościc in pledge see: Engel, *Archontológia*, 409.

<sup>282</sup> Dvořáková, *Lengyelek*, 403-404.



Frankopan family. This may have triggered the value of the pledges and improved Sigismund's chances for increased sums which the Frankopans were ready to pay for keeping the pledges.<sup>283</sup>

## Transferring the pledge

There were multiple ways of transferring the pledge. The simplest and the most common was to bequeath it. Already the contracts of pledge were concluded in such a way that the royal domains were given in pledge not only to the original creditors but to their heirs also. This is how a pledge could be inherited within a family until it was redeemed. Sometimes the pledges went through several generations of family members, like the annual tax of Bardejov which was put in pledge in 1412 and almost hundred years later still the family could dispose with it.<sup>284</sup> Inheriting the pledge was also possible for women, but it required the ruler's approval. In 1435 Paul Wolfurt managed to obtain it for the pledged market town of Modra and some villages in Pozsony County. By this, his female relatives were entitled to inherit these pledges if he would die without a male heir which would have resulted in the extinction of the family on the male line.<sup>285</sup>

Although with the death of the original pledge holder the pledge could be inherited by the family, this did not work smoothly always since this was a good opportunity for the ruler to demand additional payments from them. In Sigismund's pledging practice it was not rare that he requested such payments on top of the initial sums of the transactions, however it is striking how regularly this was requested from the widows and children of the deceased pledgee. Among the most interesting examples is the case of Steničnjak (Sztenicsnyák) castle, originally pledge by King Louis to Stephen Frankopan for 10.000 florins in 1380. Nonetheless, Sigismund was bold enough to demand an additional 10.500 florins loan from Frankopan's widow and daughter several

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<sup>283</sup> DF 258343, 287113. In 1431 the Frankopans lent 14.000 florins in addition to the initial sum of the pledging, and an additional 3.000 florins three years later. The family paid 45.000 florins altogether to the king for the castles. Frangepán, 235, 247.

<sup>284</sup> See footnote 239.

<sup>285</sup> "...annuimus etiam et concedimus eidem Paolo Wolfardi, quod si ipsum iudicio divino absque heredum solatio ab hac luce decedere contingerit, extunc predictum opidum Modra ac possessiones Nemethdyos et Ikran...nobiles dominas Susanam, relictam quondam egregii Elderbah de Monyarokerek ac Elenam, egregii Stephani de Rozgon, comitis Posoniensis et Ursulam, egregii Georgii Groff de Bozyn consortes, sorores carnales ipsius Pauli Wolfardi et successores earundem ipso titulo pignoris devolantur et devolui debeant." DL 12717. The women mentioned in the charter were Paul's sister, all his brothers have died before 1435. Engel, *Geneológia*, entry: Wolfurt family.

decades later. Since Sigismund first wanted to grant away the castle in the 1390s, later he wanted to put in pledge to someone else, the widow had no other choice but to pay if she wanted to retain the castle.<sup>286</sup> Another example is interesting not because of the high amount of money involved, but because it shows how easily Sigismund could substitute out one pledged domain for another. Stephen Losonci took in pledge the castle of Cheresig (Körösszeg) of Bihar County in 1390, but he died a few years after and the castle was inherited by her widow Orsolya Vezsenyi. She did not keep it for long however, because Sigismund swapped the castle with the market town of Segesd. Later, he changed Segesd with another market town, that of Virovitica (Verőce), before finally exchanging this with the castle of Buják in 1405.<sup>287</sup>

Besides bequeathing, there was also the possibility to leave the pledge to a chosen beneficiary by a last will, but royal permission was needed for this. This option could be the most advantageous for ecclesiastical pledgees,<sup>288</sup> since in case their relatives were not included in the contract of pledging, then they could bestow the pledge on them through the testament. This is exactly what George Pálóci, the archbishop of Esztergom did. He took in pledge some villages of Nógrád County in 1436, with the authorization that during the pledging he could bestow the lent sum and the pledged villages to anyone, including a church.<sup>289</sup> Not every churchman bequeathed his pledges to family members, surprisingly there was someone who left these to the king and even canceled his debts. This person was John Albeni, the bishop of Zagreb who in his testament of 1432 bequeathed the pledged town of Gradec to the ruler. He also held the castle and the town of Koprivnica in pledge from the king, but these he chose not to leave to the king.<sup>290</sup>

<sup>286</sup> In 1392 Sigismund promised the castle to John Kaplai and Leusták Jolsvai, a year later he wanted to pledge it to Mikcs Prodavizi. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 158. Stephen Frankopan's widow paid the 10.500 florins in two installments, first 8.500 in 1401, and 2.000 florins four years later. *Frangepán-oklevéltár*, 131, 140.

<sup>287</sup> There is a royal mandate for instituting Stephen Losonci into Cheresig from October 1390 according to which the castle would have been donated to him. ZsO I. 1715. The charter of pledge from 1405 contradicts to this by claiming that Cheresig was given in pledge to Losonci and his wife for 1.333 florins. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 125. DF 286 391.

<sup>288</sup> Of course, not only them obtained such permissions, but widows, knights, etc. Like John Frankopan's widow for the castle of Rmanj and the district of Lapac, or Gregory Majtényi for the villages of Zavar and Žilkovce (Zsúk). *Frangepán-oklevéltár*, 292. DL 73107.

<sup>289</sup> “*Annuius preterea et presentibus concedimus sepefato domino Georgio archiepiscopo, ut ipse de pretactis suis pecuniis, puta tribus milibus et quingentis ac octoginta florenis aurei, pro quibus prefate nostre possessiones... sibi pignori existunt obligate aut de eisdem possessionibus infra tempus redemptionis ipsarum cuicumque seu quibuscumque hominibus personis aut ecclesiis in vita pariter et in morte mauulerit liberam, tutam et absolutam disponendi seu legandi habeat facultatem.*” DF 248255.

<sup>290</sup> Fejér X/7. 436.

Another method of transferring the pledge was to pledge it further, for which again royal approval was needed.<sup>291</sup> Such permissions regularly stipulated that it was possible to pledge it further only to Sigismund's faithful adherents,<sup>292</sup> or in other cases to the inhabitants of the country and the subjects of the Holy Crown of Hungary.<sup>293</sup> On other occasions the king directly prohibited pledging the royal possessions further to foreigners.<sup>294</sup> It was no problem if the pledgees could not gain such royal permission at the time of concluding an agreement about the pledging, because they could even obtain it later. The Polish knight Mościc of Stęszew took the castle of Šintava in pledge from Sigismund before 1410,<sup>295</sup> and in 1420 he approached the ruler with the request that with regard to his urgent need, Sigismund permitted him to pledge it further.<sup>296</sup> After the king gave his consent to this, Mościc pledged the castle further and earned at least 1.000 florins on the transaction, because he took in pledge Šintava for around 9.217<sup>297</sup> florins and transferred it for 10.500 florins.<sup>298</sup> Not everyone was so lucky and gifted with this much talent for business, because occasionally it was included in the charters of pledge that the royal domain could be pledged further (sub-pledged) only for the same amount of money for which it was initially given in pledge.<sup>299</sup> For example, Nicholas son of Ders was involved in such a case. In April 1404 he turned to the ruler with an appeal of asking to sub-pledge the village of Lehnice (Lég), situated in the Žitný ostrov region, for the same sum that he had lent to the ruler.<sup>300</sup> Also in cases of further

<sup>291</sup> A certain hunter called Michalko received a village of Trencsén County in pledge with the condition that neither him, nor his heirs could not alienate, sell, or pledge it without royal consent. "...*Mihalko seu sui heredes eandem possessionem Chochoľna nulli alteri vendere, alienare et obligare presumatis sine nostre regie maiestatis licencia speciali ...*" DL 8993. Stibor of Stiboricz received a charter of pledge with a similar clause concerning the pledged castle of Vršatec (Oroszlánkő). DL 8158.

<sup>292</sup> "... *ac idem castrum aliis quibus maluerit nostris dumtaxat fidelibus ulterius impignorare ac cum eodem sicuti legitimo pignore disponere valeat atque possit...*" DL 8170. Instances when it was possible to pledge further only to "*regnicoles fidelibus*", or to "*regni nostri Hungarie subditis*", and not foreigners. DL 88317, 12725.

<sup>293</sup> "...*quibuscumque regnicolis nostris scilicet et sacre corone predicti regni nostri Hungarie subditis et fidelibus pro premissa florenis summa, pro qua sibi idem opidum nostrum...est impignoratum, impignorandi liberam habeat facultatem...*" DF 94472. A charter of similar phrasing: DL 71678.

<sup>294</sup> For example: "...*antedictum castrum nostrum usque tempus redempcionis eiusdem per nos aut successores nostros pretactos fiende cuiquam impignorare voluerint, extunc huiusmodi impignoracionem non aliis, nisi fidelibus regnicolis nostris et non alienigenis pro premissa summa florenis facere valeant atque possint...*" DL 11514.

<sup>295</sup> DL 11300. Lederer, *A középkori pénzüzletek*, 236–237.

<sup>296</sup> "...*nunc urgentibus ipsum certis causis pignori obligare necesse haberet ... Ad rationem pignoris huiusmodi iuxta regni nostri Hungarie consuetudinem accomodare presto fores dum ad id noster regius liberalis accederet consensus pariter et assensus.*" DL 86787.

<sup>297</sup> Mościc lent money twice to the ruler, first 2.000 schok Prague Groschen, later 4.000 florins. At the time of the first transaction 1 florin equaled 23 schok Prague groschen, thus 2.000 schok was around 5.217 florins. Sejbál, *Dějiny peněz*, 173.

<sup>298</sup> Dvořáková, *Lengyelek*, 403.

<sup>299</sup> DL 12725.

<sup>300</sup> DL 8956.

pledging, it depended on the ruler what he was willing to transfer and what not, thus obtaining a permission did not mean automatically that it was generally valid to all the pledges of the pledge holder. For instance, bishop John Albeni and his brothers took the town of Keszthely, half of the *castellum* of Pölöske, and the castle of Rezi in pledge with the condition that only one of them could be sub-pledged.<sup>301</sup>

## Redeeming the pledge

In accordance with the stipulations of the charters of pledge, the creditors were obliged to return the pledge once their loan was repaid. The ruler — as the owner of the possessions — and his successors had the right to redeem the pledge, but under extraordinary circumstances it could even happen that in a charter of pledge the kingdom’s barons were designated for it. There is data only about one such instance. This happened a day before Sigismund’s death, in the middle of the succession crisis,<sup>302</sup> so presumably it remained only a promise and the transaction never materialized.<sup>303</sup>

It was characteristic of Sigismund’s pledging practice in Hungary that he seldom redeemed the pledges in the original sense of the word. One of these rare examples is the redemption of *Nemeche* (Nemecse) village of Pozsony County, recovered from a burgher of Trnava by Michael Gúti Ország, royal treasurer in 1437.<sup>304</sup> Generally, when the ruler entrusted people to redeem a pledge, they assumed the task because in fact they redeemed it for themselves. However, this was not the case here, though the royal treasurer was not completely uninterested in the redemption, because Michael Ország achieved that the redeemed village be granted to his own *familiaris*.<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>301</sup> “...*hoc tamen specificato, quod ydem dominus Johannes episcopus et Rodulphus, si et in casu, quo aliquam habuerint necessitatem, unum eorundem castrorum aut dictum opidum Keztel pro certa pecuniarum sumpma, qua fuerint necessarii, quibus valuerint pignori obligare valeant atque possint...*” DL 92575. Since only half of Pölöske was in pledge the authorization should have referred to the castle of Rezi.

<sup>302</sup> “... *et quandocumque nos aut nostri successores reges utputa Hungarie seu barones eiusdem regni nostri Hungarie huiusmodi castrum...redimere voluerimus seu voluerint...*” DL 63135.

<sup>303</sup> Sigismund promised the castle of Cserép in pledge to Just Frankussói and Henning Czernin, knights of the court in 8 December 1437. Since the castle was under the queen’s jurisdiction half a year later it is most likely that the transaction was not concluded after all. Engel, *Archontológia*, 293.

<sup>304</sup> The charter’s phrasing leaves no doubts that the pledge was redeemed for the ruler: “...*eandem possessionem nostram nobis remittere debeas et resignare ...*” DF 254604 (*Nemeche*).

<sup>305</sup> In the same month when the village was redeemed, the king donated it to the sons of Paul Ulmai, among whom George was certainly member of Michal Ország’s *familia*. DL 38765, 56 774.

If a person had enough financial resources then he had good chance to obtain a royal permit for redeeming pledges, because often Sigismund demanded high price for them.<sup>306</sup> He requested higher payment for the royal license of redeeming Gyöngyös market town than the sum for which it was pledged. Nonetheless, it was still lucrative for Peter and Stephen Rozgonyi to pay 2.100 florins to the king besides paying 2.000 florins to the pledge holder for the redemption.<sup>307</sup>

Beyond redeeming the pledge by clearing off the debt, the king had other ways at his disposal for recovering his property, namely the swap of domains and seizure of the pledge. Sigismund was entitled to take back the pledge at any time if he gave other domains in pledge of the same value.<sup>308</sup> He could also do that he took back one property from the pledges without paying, and it was enough to promise to the pledgee that the remaining pledges could be redeemed in the future only for the initial sum of the transaction.<sup>309</sup> As the example of Orsolya Vezsenyi showed, Sigismund swapped pledges frequently, in fact this was his main method when he intended to recover a pledge. However, he needed a well-grounded reason for seizing a pledge without any recompense, such as the accusation of fraudulent misuse of funds. Nicholas Mezöklaki Zámbo, former master of the treasury was charged with this by the Archbishop of Esztergom, John Kanizsai. As a consequence, the ruler seized Zámbo's pledged domains situated in Žitný ostrov and pledged them to the Kanizsai instead. Later, the king even took back the pledged town of Segesd from Zámbo's widow.<sup>310</sup> Although one of the decisions of the diet held at Timișoara authorized the ruler to take back the pledged crown properties without paying, apparently the ruler seldom resorted to this right, doing so only in the case of the properties pledged to the Kaplai and Szécsényi families. The Szécsényis had to return their pledged domain of Szentjakab situated in

<sup>306</sup> There are also examples of Sigismund granting a royal permit for redeeming a pledge for free. The Talovac brothers paid 12.000 florins for redeeming the castle of Srebrenik (Szebernik) from the Garai family. The Garais held the castle in pledge for the same amount of money. Engel, *Archontológia*, 435. DL 11225, 43837.

<sup>307</sup> DL 12725.

<sup>308</sup> In the charter of pledge of Chocholná village from the year 1412 the following lines can be read: "...*pro ipsa sumpma pecunie aut equivalenti possessione redimemus seu rediment ...*" DL 9926. ZsO III. 2393.

<sup>309</sup> Following the king's request, in 1431 Nicholas Besenyő Özdögei handed over the village of Lökösháza and the domain located at Bánréve to George Balogi, and he also renounced to all his rights pertaining to these pledged settlement and domain: "... *idemque Nicolaus, filius bani omni iuri, quod ad pretactas [possessionem et portiones] alias [ratione] pmissae impignorationis sibi competisset, penitus cessit et renuntiavit...*" In return Sigismund promised him that the rest of the domains which he holds in pledge can be redeemed only for paying back the initial sum of the pledging. DL 44065, 65031.

<sup>310</sup> János, Incze. "Luxembourgi Zsigmond városzálogosításai: Segesd és Bártfa esete" [The Town Pledgings of Sigismund of Luxembourg: the case studies of Segesd and Bardejov]. In *Micae Mediaevales. Fiatal történészek dolgozatai a középkori Magyarországról és Európáról* [Studies of young historians about the medieval Hungary and Europe]. Ed. Bence Péterfi et al., (Budapest: ELTE BTK, 2012), 114. Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 44-45.

Körös County,<sup>311</sup> while the Kaplais gave back four castles and the market town of Moldava nad Bodvou.<sup>312</sup> The ruler even accused the family of collecting more revenues from the market town during the pledging than the sum of the transaction was.<sup>313</sup>

In case of redemption, the loan had to be paid back in the same currency, but if the pledgee had any special requests concerning this, it had to be taken into consideration and included in the charter of the pledging. There were pledgees who wanted to get their money back in cash and only in the same currency in which they lent,<sup>314</sup> for others this was not relevant and they would accept any currency.<sup>315</sup> In certain cases, Sigismund even gave his consent that the loan would be paid back either by him or his successors wherever the pledge holder desired. However, he made his promise to not a common pledgee, but to his influential adherent, palatine Nicholas Garai.<sup>316</sup>

## Conclusion

It would be difficult to fit Sigismund of Luxembourg's pledgings into a unified system, since apart from the constant elements of the transactions there were certain clauses that were determined by the agreement reached between the king and the pledge holders. Moreover, during the half century-long reign of Sigismund, the charters of pledge's structure also changed. From at least as early as 1426, certain pledgees were invested with the right of collecting the extraordinary tax from the inhabitants of the pledged properties if general extraordinary tax was levied by the ruler. The

<sup>311</sup> Rácz, *Egy főnemesi család*, 337.

<sup>312</sup> These were the castles of Litva (Lietava), Rajec, Hričov (Hricsó) of Trencsén County, and Oponice (Appony) castle of Nyitra County. DL 7519., 7786. Gusztáv Wenzel, *Diósgyőr egykori történelmi jelentősége* [The historical significance of Diósgyőr] (Pest: Eggenberger-féle Akad. Könyvkereskedés, 1872), 42. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 39.

<sup>313</sup> “... a tempore pmissae impignoracionis usque nunc, multo plus, quam ipsam sumpmam pecunie, pro qua fuerat impignorata, de dicto nostro opido Scepsy, dinoscitur excepsisse...” Temes, 277. Most probably the accusation was not grounded since it was not likely that the Kaplais would collect more than 400 florins annually from the town pledged to them for 4.000 florins from 1388 onwards. The 400 florins was so high that could reach the annual tax of some free royal towns. Concerning the date of pledging see: ZsO I. 61, about the sum of the transaction: ZsO I. 2468. Even if in Moldava nad Bodvou's case does not seem probable that the pledge holders would collect more money than the sum of the pledging, there were certainly transactions where this happened. The already mentioned case of Bardejov's annual tax is a good example for that. The yearly tax of 500 florins was put in pledge with some domains for 13.000 florins to the Balicki family in 1412. The pledging lasted for 93 years, during which they could collect altogether 46.500 florins. Sroka, *A középkori Bártfa*, 40. Incze, “*Bound by pledge*”, 93-94.

<sup>314</sup> “...quingentis florenis auri promtis in florenis et non cum aliqua estimatione rerum...” DL 73105. A similar phrasing can be read in: DL 11211.

<sup>315</sup> Stibor of Stiboricz was open to accept payment made in Hungarian florin or in Prague groschen for the pledged royal castle of Vršatec. DL 8158.

<sup>316</sup> “...in quo ipse voluerit et securus ac bona sua voluntate plene contentus fuerit persolvere et deponere debeamus et debeant idem nostro successores...” DL 87960. ZsO IX. 608.

ruler, as the owner of the pledges had the last word in the transactions, therefore it depended much on him under which circumstances he was willing to put something in pledge.<sup>317</sup> However, it could highly influence content of the charter of pledge how great the ruler's need for money was.<sup>318</sup> Because pledging did not mean the transfer of the possessions right, the pledges remained the ruler's property and he could decide what would happen with them. He had a great deal of room for maneuvering in this (if there was no temporal restriction), he could redeem, swap or transfer the pledge at anytime. It was not characteristic for Sigismund to redeem the pledges with money, but he could easily recover them by swapping. He had a preference for further pledging, because he could gain significant sums by it, as often either the original or a new pledge holder was willing to pay the requested sums. The possibility to raise cash swiftly, and the fact that pledging meant no transfer of possession right are some of the explanations why he turned so frequently to this fund-raising method.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Pledging was wide-spread in the kingdom, not only crowned heads resorted to it but also noblemen, aristocrats, burghers and others. One of the most interesting cases involving pledge holders of high social status is the transaction concluded between the children of palatine Leusták Jolsvai and the Kanizsais. By this Jolsvai's children pledged one of their castles to the Kanizsais in order to raise money for the ransom of their father from Ottoman captivity. ZsO II. 135. The case is mentioned also in: Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 134. On the pledging practice of Bratislava's burghers see: Renáta Skorka, "Pozsony gazdasági szerepe a 15. század első felében a zálogszerződések tükrében" [The economic importance of Bratislava of the first half of the fifteenth century in the light of the pledge transactions] *Századok* 138, No. 2. (2004): 433-463.

<sup>318</sup> For instance, presumably Sigismund pledged royal villages of Somogy and Fejér county to George Kővágóörsi reserving for himself only a year's time for redeeming them, because Kővágóörsi had strived so much to fulfill his ruler's request for money, that he even sold some of his domains. See page 187.

<sup>319</sup> Since, not other Hungarian ruler's pledging practice was studied, it is not known how many similarities can be found in their and Sigismund's. Also, it is not known how frequently they turned to pledging to complement their revenues.

## Chapter 5. The Scale of Pledging, and its Place in Royal Finances

A frequently occurring statement in the works touching upon Sigismund's rule in general or his finances is that he had numerous pledgings, and that he practiced the pledging of royal possessions on a large scale.<sup>320</sup> Understandably, one of the main concerns of Hungarian historiography regarding the pledgings of King Sigismund has been to provide a grounded estimation of the extent of this practice. To date, Emma Lederer's, József Deér's and Gyula Rázsó's have been guides in this respect, and based on their works it has become widely accepted that Sigismund's pledgings during his half a century reign can be estimated to have reached around 500.000 florins.<sup>321</sup> However, in the 1930s and the 1960s, when these publications were written, browsing in the source material was much more difficult than today, and it is thus no wonder that they could not use all the relevant sources. According to my calculations, this sum was in fact, much higher than the earlier estimated one, exceeding over 1.006.259 florins, and since there are many transactions whose value is unknown, it is very likely that this sum much higher. It is enough to bring up as an example on one such unknown figure, by regarding the pledging of the territory situated at the Váh-Danube interfluvium whose value could have been very high but for which no figures are given in the sources. Another major problem in calculating the magnitude of Sigismund's pledgings is that the source material is so fragmented that not only the value of certain transactions is missing, but — despite my best efforts to collect all the sources regarding these transactions — there could be numerous instances for which the sources in the course of time have simply been lost. This is especially true in the case of pledged villages, and smaller settlements, whereas in the case of the castles, presumably, more documents have been preserved.

It would be misleading to calculate the average value of the fifty years' pledgings because there were certain years when no records of pledging have been preserved,<sup>322</sup> whereas in other years several dozen transactions have been concluded. For this reason, studying fifty years of pledgings in a decade-by-decade breakdown would provide a more reliable picture.<sup>323</sup>

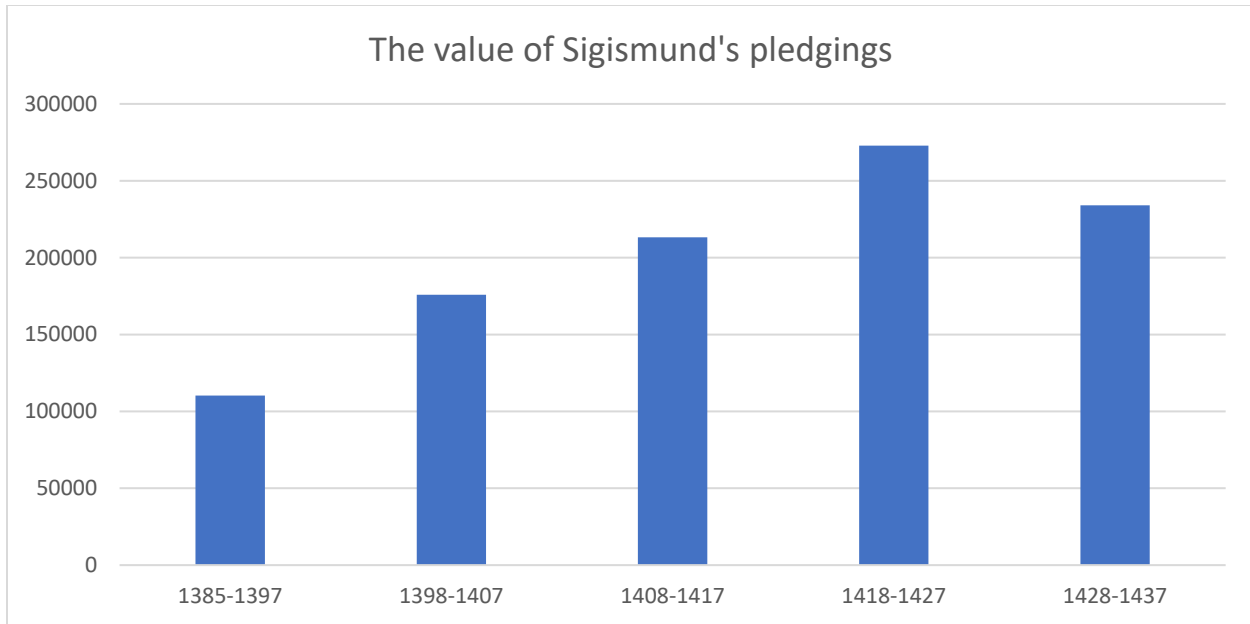
<sup>320</sup> For example: Pál Engel, Gyula Kristó, András Kubinyi, *Magyarország története 1301-1526* [History of Hungary 1301-1526] (Budapest: Osiris, 2002), 127. According to Attila Bányai, Sigismund pledged castles for financing almost each of his military campaigns. Bányai, *King Sigismund of Luxemburg*, 171.

<sup>321</sup> Engel, *The realm*, 227. Bak, *Monarchie im Wellental*, 351. Also see the introduction and chapter 8.

<sup>322</sup> For instance, there is no data about pledging from 1408.

<sup>323</sup> I have included the pledging of the Váh-Danube interfluvium in 1385 and of Somló castle in 1386 to the first decade, thus the first interval covers 12 years.





As the chart above shows, a steady increase with a minor decline in the 1430s can be observed in the value of the pledgings; thus, pledging gained ground gradually and reached its peak in the last two decades of Sigismund's life.<sup>324</sup> A somewhat different picture is given by the number of concluded transactions, nonetheless the conclusion is the same: Sigismund pledged the most in the 1420s and 1430s.

The possible reasons behind this trend could be multiple. Since an entire chapter is dedicated to the probable ways of spending the loans acquired by pledging, here I will elaborate on this question only briefly. As was pointed out in Chapter 3, Sigismund had higher revenues at his disposal in the second half of his reign than the first, but apparently his expenses had also increased. Usually, scholars explain the high number of the king's pledges by citing the expenses of waging war and the collected data supports this view. Indeed, war financing became an even more aggravating issue in the 1420s and 1430s, when Hussite troops led raids to the northern part of the kingdom. Unsurprisingly, often it can be read in the charters of the pledges that the sums were needed for the defense of this region.<sup>325</sup> Besides the Hussite problem, the Ottoman threat intensified especially after 1427, when the troops of Sultan Murad II (1421-1444; 1446-1451) conquered the eastern part of Serbia.<sup>326</sup> To stop the Ottoman attacks, a chain of castles was built

<sup>324</sup> According to the earlier scholarship, Sigismund pledged the most in the last years of his life. Lederer, *Középkori pénzüzletek*, 183. Deér, *Zsigmond király*, 198.

<sup>325</sup> See footnote 820.

<sup>326</sup> Engel, *Ungarn und die Türkengefahr*, 27.

at the southern borders of Hungary, the majority of which was erected after 1419.<sup>327</sup> Pledgings could have contributed not only to the constructions of the forts, but also to stationing soldiers in them. This was very costly. A contemporary calculation estimated the wages of thirteen castles' garrisons to more than 124.000 florins annually, thus exceeding one-third of the king's yearly regular revenues.<sup>328</sup> Moreover, this sum did not include the upkeep of the castles, and this chain of frontier castles consisted of more than thirteen fortifications. The sums gained from pledgings were used for internal conflicts as well; the military campaign against the Frankopans in 1430s was mainly financed through this fundraising method. Also, the extensive constructions at Bratislava castle — which in the first phase focused on the fortifications and later on its residential aspects — occurred during this period.<sup>329</sup> The Rozgonyi brothers, Stephen and George, were entrusted with the supervision of the constructions, and during this time, they received a number of pledges from the king, often mentioning that their expenses related to the constructions as the grounds for acquiring the pledge.<sup>330</sup> Finally, Queen Barbara became an important pledge holder, receiving large estates in pledge from her spouse. All the transactions concluded between the royal couple are dated to this period.

Elemér Mályusz proposed that there was a significant difference in the transactions of pledge concluded in the first and in the second part of Sigismund's reign. In his understanding, the early pledgings were signs of decaying royal power and the royal domains were pledged under their value, whereas in the second part of his rule the king could demand their real value.<sup>331</sup> This would also serve as a further explanation for the increase of royal pledgings in the 1420s and 1430s. However, it is very difficult to determine how much the sums of the pledgings corresponded to the real value of the pledges, because there are very little data that would reflect on this.<sup>332</sup> One example that could be used for this purpose is the case of Drenovac castle, which

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<sup>327</sup> Engel, *The realm*, 237. Erik Fügedi, *Castle and society in medieval Hungary (1000-1437)* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1986), 135-136. Valentin Cseh, "A magyar-oszmán háborúk története a kezdetektől 1437-ig, és a déli végvárrendszer kialakulása" [The history of Ottoman-Hungarian wars from the beginning until 1437, and the emergence of the southern border castle system] *Bácsországi* 73, No.2 (2015): 10-11.

<sup>328</sup> Engel, *The realm*, 238.

<sup>329</sup> Fügedi, *Castle and society*, 131. Szilárd Papp, "Die neue Residenz Sigismunds in Preßburg" in *Sigismundus Rex et Imperator: Kunst und Kultur zur Zeit Sigismunds von Luxemburg 1387 – 1437, Ausstellungskatalog*, ed. Imre Takács (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2006), 240.

<sup>330</sup> See footnote 727.

<sup>331</sup> Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 88-89. Daniel Dvořáková shared Mályusz' opinion. Dvořáková, *A lovag és királya*, 398-399.

<sup>332</sup> Stanislav Bárta reached to the same conclusion concerning Sigismund's pledgings of church estates in the Czech lands. Stanislav Bárta, *Zástavní listiny*, 140.

was pledged for 4.000 florins before 1406 and sold for 7.000 in 1421.<sup>333</sup> Based on this, it can be assumed that the pledging value represented only a bit more than half of the castle's real value. Unfortunately, the rest of the data reflects more on the correspondence between the value of the transaction and the yearly revenues yielded by the pledge than the connection between the real worth of the pledge and the value of the transaction. The town and the castle of Trenčín, for instance, was pledged for 40.000 Rhenish guilders to Louis II, Duke of Brzeg in such way that he would have an annual 4.000 guilders income from them.<sup>334</sup> Accordingly, the incomes represented 1/10 of the pledgings' value.<sup>335</sup> This was not exceptional and occurred regularly when the pledge's revenues were counted in the sum of the redemption. Sigismund had only a few such transactions, known as *Totsatzung* in the German scholarship; he chose this type of business especially when he put in pledge a certain revenue.<sup>336</sup> Apart from this, the value at which a property was given in pledge could easily change over time - it could lose its worth, or become more valuable. Tática castle stands out as the property most frequently pledged by Sigismund.<sup>337</sup> The castle with its estate was first pledged on its own in 1426 and the transactions' value was 6.345 florins while in 1435 when it was pledged again, the value had decreased to 2.000.<sup>338</sup> The case of Komárno castle serves as an example of the opposite phenomenon. The castle was originally put in pledge by Queen Mary for 8.000 florins, and a few decades later this sum had been increased to 13.000 florins when, in 1422, Palatine Garai took it in pledge.<sup>339</sup> Furthermore, another factor that might have determined the value of the transaction is that presumably the possibility that the king would ask for further

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<sup>333</sup> The same charter informs about the pledging and the sale of the castle. According to this, Drenovac was sold with all of its appurtenances, but the document remains silent concerning the pertaining domains in the case of pledging. Also, it is not known whether any construction works were carried out on the castle between 1406 and 1421. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 104. DF 34112.

<sup>334</sup> DF 287090. RI XI/ 4510

<sup>335</sup> Stanislav Bárta found the same ratio in Sigismund's living gages in Bohemia, and the German scholarship reached the same conclusion concerning the pledging of customs and taxes. Bárta, *The Financial Dimension*, 81. Landwehr, *Die Verpfändung*, 324. Isenmann, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 256.

<sup>336</sup> For example, in 1425, a burgher from Levoča (Lőcse) took in pledge a mill of Kremnica with the condition that once the pledgee collected as much revenue from the mill as the sum of the transaction was, then he had to give it back to the king. DL 11703. ZsO XII. 1005.

<sup>337</sup> See pages 84-85.

<sup>338</sup> Tática was first pledged with the town of Keszthely for 8.020 florins before 1401. DL 8.020. Besides the sums lent to the king, the new pledge holders had to pay additional sums to first redeem Tática from the current pledgees. The number of pertaining domains was the same in 1426 as in 1435, thus this could not be the reason for the decrease in the castle's value. In 1426 Tática was pledged "...cum singulis suis utilitatibus et pertinentiis..." in 1435 "...simulcum universis opidis possessionibus villis et prediis necnon tributis ac aliis cunctis utilitatibus .... spectantibus..." DF 200436, 200420, 200421.

<sup>339</sup> Garai paid the sum through two transactions, first 6.840 and later 6.160. DL 87960, 11231. Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 88-89.

sums was taken into consideration in advance. This allowed the prospective pledgee to take a royal domain in pledge for a lower initial sum and to pay the rest later, sometimes in several further deals. These later payments could be so high that they could even exceed the initial sum. Ozalj castle and its district originally were put in pledge for 17.000 florins to the Frankopans, later they paid another 24.000, and then a further 3.000 florins.<sup>340</sup>

Mályusz was right about the fact that certainly there were transactions when the king put royal domains in pledge at a highly favorable price, and these sums had not been increased later by loans. For example, Dezső Kaplai received three castles in pledge only for 3.000 florins, thus one castle for just 1.000 florins. This happened in the early years of Sigismund's rule over Hungary, in 1392, and this was such a low figure that even villages were pledged for higher sums in this period. Koson village was pledged for 1.250 florins and Hodoş for 2.000 florins.<sup>341</sup> However, the king had similar transactions at the end of his reign too. In 1430 Liptovský Hrádok was pledged for 2.000 florins, Tátika only for 1.100 florins in 1435, and Blatnica for 2.300 florins next year.<sup>342</sup> Hence, there is no clear pattern to when the royal properties were put in pledge under their value, perhaps the only distinction was that there could be slightly more such pledgings in Sigismund's early rule.

Nonetheless, already in this period he could get the same sum or if not, then an amount close to this figure that other pledgors asked for certain domains. For instance, the king pledged the castle of Šintava for altogether 9.217 florins before July 1410, which although this amount was lower than that for which the pledge holder sub-pledged it a decade later (10.500 florins), the difference was not huge.<sup>343</sup> Consequently, Sigismund could demand nearly the same sums as other pledgees would have asked already in the first part of his reign. Therefore, the increase in the number of transactions in the 1420s and 1430s was not due to the earlier supposed underpayments of the first half of his rule.

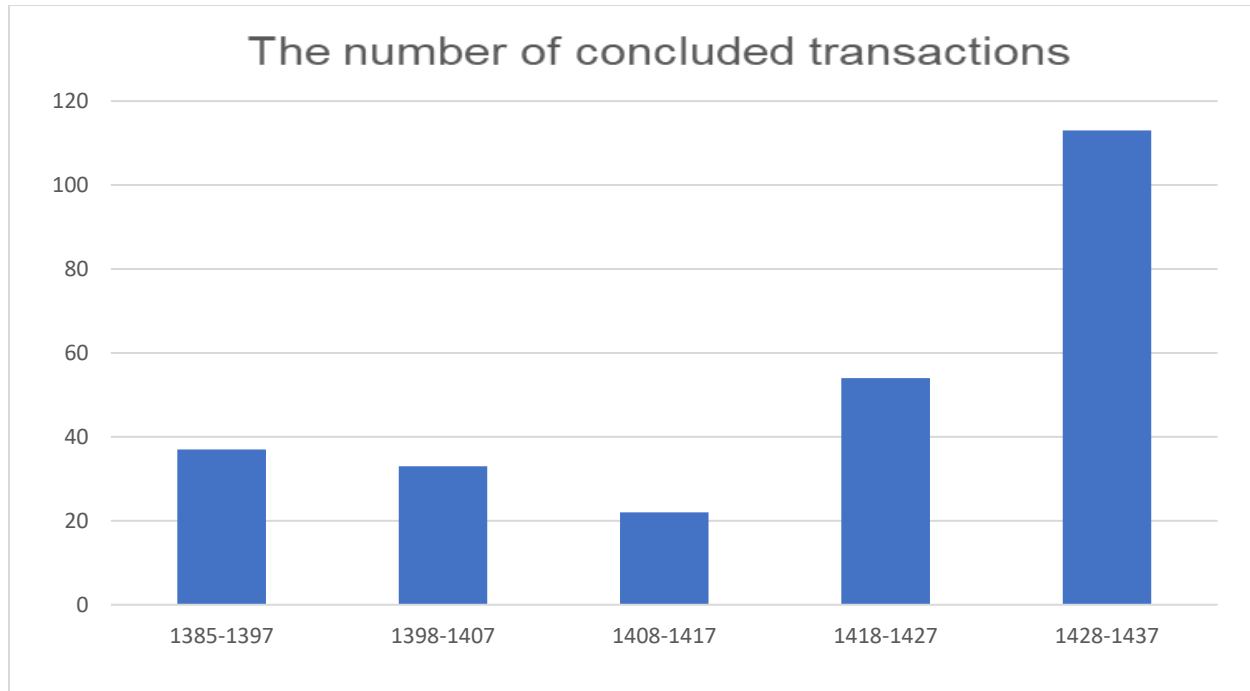
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<sup>340</sup> It should be added that the 24.000 florins were paid by different family members than the two other sums. However, since no redemption was mentioned it could not have been the reason for this high sum. DL 33980, 33285, 33982.

<sup>341</sup> Ortway, *Temes* I. 181, DL 71900.

<sup>342</sup> DL 200437, DL 94474, DF 287804.

<sup>343</sup> DL 11300. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 149.



There are sources preserved for 259<sup>344</sup> transactions of pledge connected to Sigismund, and it must be emphasized that out of this number only three were not concluded by himself originally. Steničnjak castle was pledged initially by King Louis I, the *comitatus* of Bužane by Queen Mary, and Somló castle jointly by Mary and Sigismund.<sup>345</sup> The number of transactions shows a gradual decline until the third decade of Sigismund's rule, when it started to increase radically. It should be added that from the 115 pledgings of the last decade, in the case of 24 transactions the only source in which they are mentioned is the register of royal possessions, from 1439, and the exact date of their conclusion is unknown. Nonetheless, if we take these out, the remaining 91 pledgings are still almost double the 50 of the period between 1418-1427 and are four times higher than the 22 transactions of the years between 1408-1417. The highest number of pledges were contracted in the year 1435, when Sigismund had no less than 22 transactions adding up to a value of 66.536 florins, out of which eleven were concluded in a single month (June) reaching a value of 45.821 florins.<sup>346</sup>

Another indicator that helps to assess the extent of Sigismund's pledgings is the number of royal castles involved in such dealings.

<sup>344</sup> In this number the loans contracted on pledges are included also.

<sup>345</sup> DL 34052, 33933, 100237.

<sup>346</sup> The value of pledging the market town of Gyöngyös and the estate of Bene is not included in this sum. A charter from June 1435 informs about the transaction, but it is not known precisely when it was concluded.



<sup>347</sup>According to the calculations of Pál Engel and Erik Fügedi, at the time of King Louis I's death (1382) half of the country's castles were in royal possession. This represented 150 castles, but unfortunately the castles of Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia are not included in this number.<sup>348</sup> Together with the castles of these lands an astonishing number of 86 castles<sup>349</sup> were pledged by Sigismund, and if we count here also those of the Váh-Danube interfluvium, then this number increases even more, to 93.<sup>350</sup> Therefore, it can be stated without exaggeration that Sigismund put in pledge more than the half of the royal castles. This number is high enough on its own, but if we take into consideration that Sigismund's predecessor, King Louis I had only around 4 pledged castles,<sup>351</sup> then we can get an even clearer picture regarding the scale of pledging.

The explanation behind this staggeringly high number of castle pledges may lie in Sigismund's austerity policy concerning the donations of the royal lands. He began his rule in Hungary with granting away the major part of the royal demesne inherited from the Angevin rulers. In the first decade of his reign 65 out of the 150 royal castles were alienated. However, after he managed to stabilize his rule, from 1396, he was careful to reward the services only of his most faithful supporters with donation of lands.<sup>352</sup> For this reason, it is plausible to argue that since the king did not want to shrink the royal demesne by even more donations, he had no other option to reward the services of his loyal adherents but to pledge castles to them. Furthermore, the pledgings had the advantages over the donations that they could be recovered any time, thus, by such dealings the royal domains would have not decreased irreversibly.

However, it was not entirely the case that due to his strict austerity policy Sigismund did not grant away royal properties, because, in fact he managed to get hold of not less than 64 castles

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<sup>347</sup> These six maps had been created by Béla Nagy, research fellow at the Research Center for Humanities of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

<sup>348</sup> Fügedi, *Castle and society*, 115. Engel, *The realm*, 150. Engel, *A honor*, 74.

<sup>349</sup> Somló and Steničnjak are included in this number. Sigismund and his wife put in pledge Somló together while concerning Steničnjak, he contracted loans on the basis of the earlier transaction concluded by King Louis.

<sup>350</sup> There were seven castles that were not pledged on their own, but put in pledge only to the Moravian margraves: Dobrá Voda, Korlátka, Plavecký hrad, Biely Kameň, Pezinok, Malinovo, Nitra. Among the castles occupied by Moravian troops, the castles of Biely Kameň, Pezinok and Malinovo were private while Nitra castle was ecclesiastical property. Engel, *Archontológia*, 275, 307, 378, 426. The number of the royal castles often changed, due to alienation it decreased, but it could also increase by confiscation, new constructions, swap of domain or by escheat.

<sup>351</sup> Concerning the royal castles, Louis I continued his father's, Charles I's cautious policy, which mainly consisted of keeping together the royal demesne. Therefore, Louis I alienated only 18 castles, which number was far behind the 80 which were granted away by Sigismund. Fügedi, *Castle and society*, 114-115. The pledged castles were: Sirok, Červený Kameň, Altenburg and the already mentioned Steničnjak. Engel, *Archontológia*, 385, 411, 436. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 168.

<sup>352</sup> Engel, *The realm*, 200. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 31

by escheat and confiscation between 1387 and 1436.<sup>353</sup> As might be expected, the king did not keep all of them, but granted numerous castles to his supporters. Consequently, the pledgings might have taken over the role of donations partly during the austerity period, particularly considering that this was not without precedent. For instance, in Greater Poland during the Jagiellonian rule pledging began to take over the role of donations gradually.<sup>354</sup> Nonetheless, it should be emphasized that even so, in Hungary the pledgings' role was not the exclusive means by which to reward adherents for their services, the ruler still had other means at his disposal. Sigismund not only used the escheated and confiscated domains for this purpose, but he also resorted to the licences of building castles and *castella*, which were also considered as significant grants. He indeed turned to this granting method frequently, since the 50-60% of the preserved permits from medieval Hungary are dated to his and King Matthias' reign.<sup>355</sup>

An accurate assessment of Sigismund's pledging practice cannot be given without considering the redemption of his pledges. One of the chief questions related to the pledges is how easily they were turned to definite alienation. One of the commonplaces of scholarly literature related to the issue is that they were alienated very easily.<sup>356</sup> Yet, while there has not until now been any thorough research conducted to clarify this issue, and in lack of this, such statements might seem unfounded, this research shows that they were not far from the truth. The king could recover the pledges by seizing it, for example, if the pledgee was charged with something;<sup>357</sup> another method was to simply swap them with other domains, and the last one was paying back the sum of the transaction. This last, genuine form of redemption was indeed not characteristic of Sigismund, since only a few such instances are known, and because usually the pledges were redeemed only to be put in pledge again to the persons who redeemed them. However, there are a few cases when the pledge was recovered and kept in royal hands. For example, in 1434 judge

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<sup>353</sup> 37 castles in the first two decades of his rule, and 27 between 1423 and 1436. About the alienation of royal castles and the escheats of larger estates during Sigismund's reign see: Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 215-223, and also Fügedi, *Castle and society*, 125-128,145.

<sup>354</sup> Ludwig, *Besteuerung und Verpfändung*, 102.

<sup>355</sup> Richárd Horváth, "Várak és uraik a késő középkori Magyarországon. Vázlat a kutatás néhány lehetőségéről. [Castles and their lords in late medieval Hungary. Possible directions of research.]" in *Honoris causa: tanulmányok Engel Pál tiszteletére* [Honoris causa: Studies in Honor of Pál Engel], ed. Tibor Neumann, György Rácz (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem, 2009), 99

<sup>356</sup> In Emma Lederer's opinion, this form of pledging was very close to the sale of property. Lederer, *Középkori pénzüzetek*,184. Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 27.

<sup>357</sup> This happened for example with the domains of Nicholas Zámbo in Žitný ostrov or with the pledged estates of the Kaplai family. See pages 72 and 153.



royal John Perényi redeemed the castle of Spiš *in persona serenissimi principis domini nostri Sigismundi*.<sup>358</sup>

Due to the incomplete source material it is not possible to make a survey on the redemption of all pledges, but fortunately the surviving documents are complete enough to carry out such work concerning the recovery of castles. From the 86 pledged castles two were demolished during Sigismund's lifetime, and one was pledged by his father-in-law.<sup>359</sup> At the time of Sigismund's death, from the remaining 83 castles only 22 were in royal (or queenly) hands again at the end of 1437, thus only 26,5%.<sup>360</sup> The recovery percentage is slightly better if the castles pledged to the Moravian margraves are included (7 castles). Here, an additional four castles have to be taken out from the calculation, since they were initially either private or ecclesiastical properties, and after the pledging they were returned to their legal owners.<sup>361</sup> In this way, 86 castles remain with additional two recovered,<sup>362</sup> thus 24 in total, and that results in a 27,9% recovery rate. However, if we do not count here those 5 castles pledged to the queen which she still held under her authority<sup>363</sup> at the end of 1437, then the recovery rate drops to 20,4% (17 recovered out of 83). It is not known what was the recovery percentage in case of other pledges than castles, but presumably it was even lower than this figure, because castles carried political importance too, besides their economic and military significance, therefore they enjoyed priority at the time of redemption.

This means that a property which Sigismund put in pledge once had great chance to remain in private hands. It did not necessarily become donated to the pledge holder by default, but sometimes pledges changed hands several times until they were granted away. The case of Tátika castle is an ideal example of this. The castle became royal property in 1397, and soon after, around

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<sup>358</sup>DL 70875.

<sup>359</sup> Demolished: Rajec, Veľký castle. Steničnjak castle was originally not pledge by Sigismund, he just borrowed more money from the pledge holder and increased the value of the pledging with these sums. Engel, *Archontológia*, 373, 398, 435-436.

<sup>360</sup> I decided to focus on the recovery of the castles rather than their redemption, because sometimes the pledged castles were put in pledge again after they were regained, or in other cases, they were redeemed only to be granted away. For example, the castle of Blatnica was pledged in 1399 to Vladislaus II of Opole was recovered around 1418/21 but pledged again in 1436. Tállya castle was pledged to John Garai in 1410, recovered in 1422 and granted away to the Serbian despot. Engel, *Archontológia*, 282, 438. That is why what counted ultimately from the royal authority's point of view was that whether the pledged castles were in royal hands again at the time of Sigismund's death or not. The 22 royal castles were: Súča, Vršatec, Solymár, Buják, Trenčín, Bystrica, Starhrad, Strečno, Slovenská Lupča, Hajnáčka, Diósgyőr, Dédes, Cserép, Fiľakovo, Ostrý Kameň, Komárno, Lab, Vrlika, Knin, Ostrovica, Čovka, Spiš. For the data see the corresponding pages of Engel, *Archontológia*.

<sup>361</sup> Private properties: Biely Kameň, Malinovo, Pezinok, ecclesiastical: Nitra.

<sup>362</sup> Korlátka, Plavecký hrad.

<sup>363</sup> Hajnáčka, Diósgyőr, Dédes, Cserép, Fiľakovo.

the turn of the century, it was put into pledge for the first time. Before his death, Sigismund donated it to the last pledge holder after it was involved in seven consecutive pledge transactions involving numerous pledgees.<sup>364</sup> Additionally, it could also happen that the king recovered the pledge and donated it to a person different from the pledge holder.<sup>365</sup>

The overall picture is further nuanced by the fact that of the 22 castles that were returned to royal hands, almost one third were regained by seizure. The castles of Litva and Hričov were seized from the Kaplai family in 1397 based on a decree of the diet of Timișoara, which prescribed that the ruler could take back the earlier sold or pledged domains without any compensation.<sup>366</sup> The Frankopan family lost even more castles than the Kaplais. Their castles were confiscated in the context of the conflict between the ruler and John Frankopan over the inheritance of the Nelipčić family. John was even accused of collaborating with Sultan Murad II. The conflict ended with John's death and his widow began negotiations with the king.<sup>367</sup> In order to receive a royal pardon, among other obligations, she had to cede five castles pledged earlier to the family.<sup>368</sup> Another conspicuous issue related to the regaining of the pledged castles is that a great part of these had been granted to Queen Barbara. Out of the 22 pledged and later recovered castles, 9 were given to the queen,<sup>369</sup> and these contributed to Barbara becoming the wealthiest landowner of the country at the time of her husband's death.<sup>370</sup>

## Spatial analysis

The many pledges of Sigismund were dispersed all over the kingdom, but with an uneven distribution, since there were certain regions with abundant pledged royal domains, whereas in others, the number of these was very much limited.

<sup>364</sup> Among Tática's pledge holders there were Friedrich von Scharfeneck, the Marcali brothers, Bálint Vince of Szentgyörgy with his sons, Ivanka and George of Krbava and Ladislaus, Peter and Pető of Pető. The documents of the pledgings: DF 200390, 200389, 200420, 200424, 200436, 200437, DL 13103.

<sup>365</sup> For instance, this happened with the castle of Hanigovce. Engel, *Archontológia*, 453.

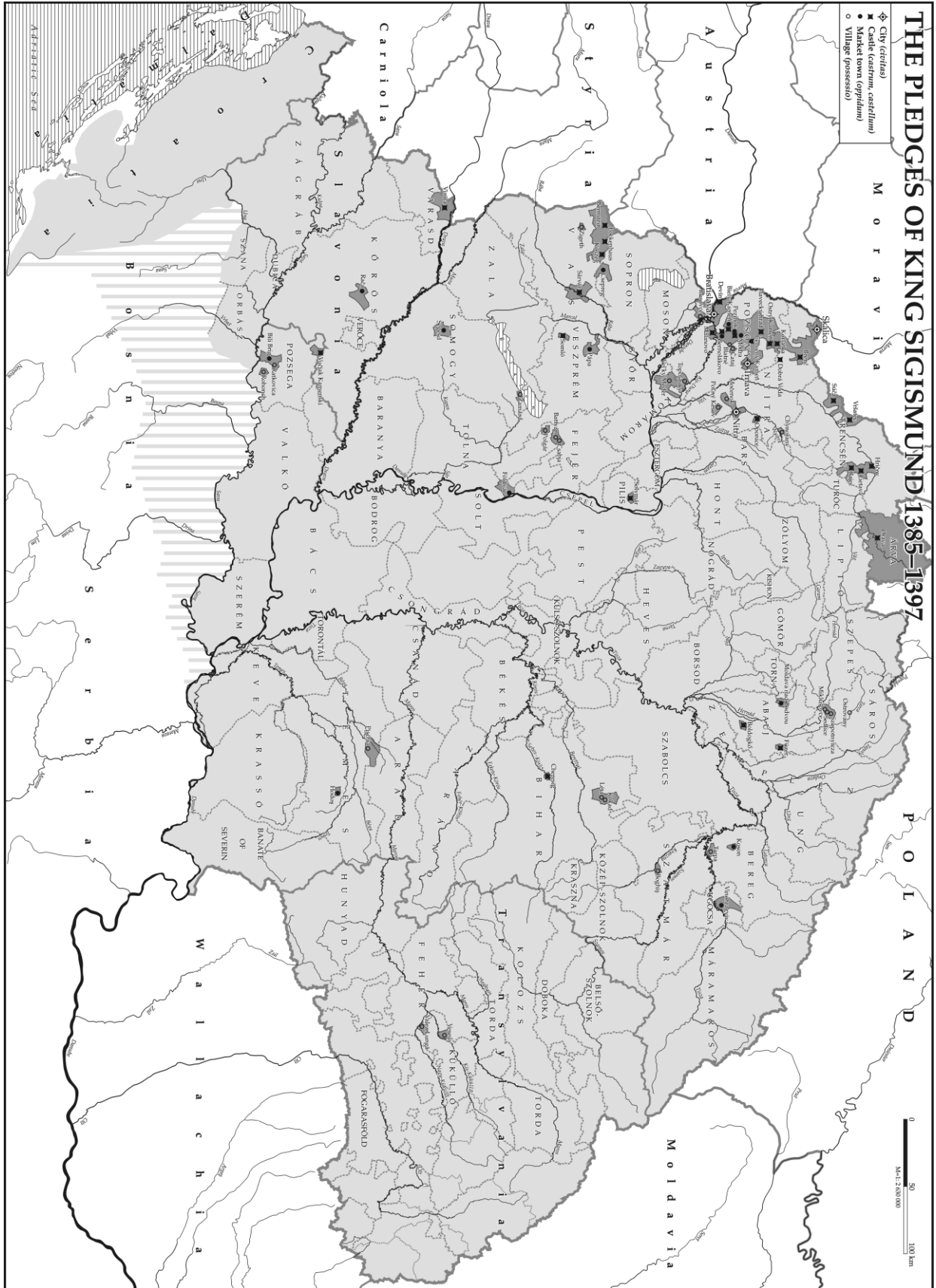
<sup>366</sup> For more, see page 155. Among the confiscated Kaplai castles was Rajec too, which, soon after its recovery, was demolished. Engel, *Archontológia*, 398.

<sup>367</sup> For more see: page 192.

<sup>368</sup> These were: Lab, Vrlika, Knin, Ostrovica, Čovka.

<sup>369</sup> These were: Súča, Vršatec, Solymár, Buják, Trenčín, Bystrica, Starhrad, Strečno, Slovenská Ľupča. Additionally, she had four pledged castles as well: Diósgyőr, Dédes, Cserép, Filakovo.

<sup>370</sup> Daniela Dvořáková, *Barbara von Cilli: die schwarze Königin (1392-1451). Die Lebensgeschichte einer ungarischen, römisch-deutschen und böhmischen Königin. Spectrum Slovakia vol. 11* (Bratislava: PL Academic Research, Imprint der Peter Lang, 2016), 226. Dvořáková, *The economic background*, 111. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 75.

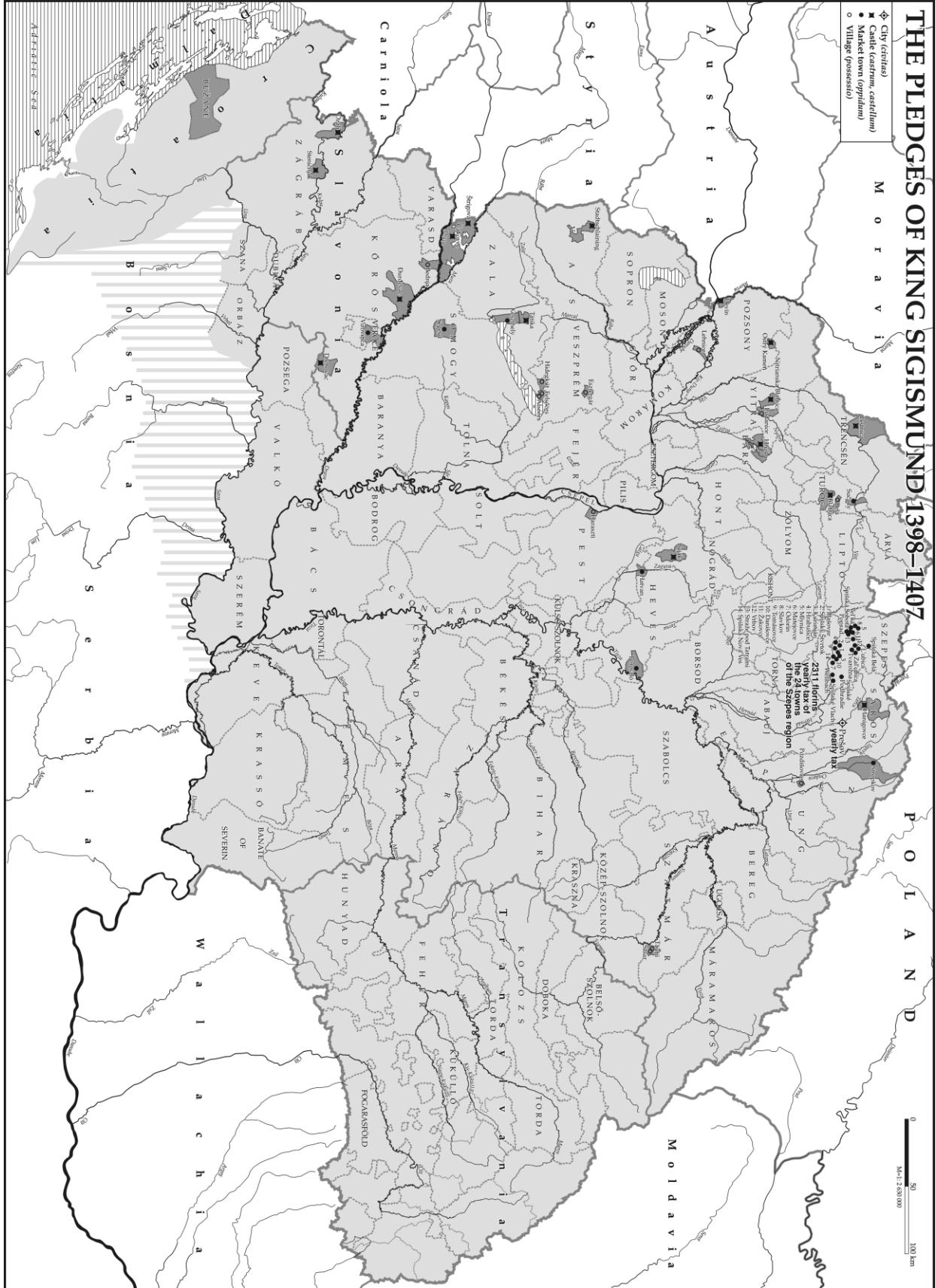


By taking a closer look at the territorial distribution of Sigismund's pledgings it becomes visible, that in the first period — comprising twelve years — the pledgings concentrated mostly to the north-western region of the kingdom. Especially the counties of Pozsony, Nyitra and Árva were the most affected by them. Concerning the first two, the high occurrence of the pledges can be chiefly explained with Sigismund's cousins' military undertaking and the pledging of the Váh-Danube interfluvium to them as a consequence.<sup>371</sup> Until the mid-fifteenth century the county of Árva mostly consisted of Orava castle and its district, which as the map shows covered an extensive territory.<sup>372</sup> Another region that had large parts pledged was border zone between the counties of Vas and Sopron, close to the kingdom's western frontier. Here mostly the Kanizsai family managed to get hold of pledged royal castles (Berstein, Lockenhaus and Sárvár).

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<sup>371</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>372</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 99.



In the next period the territorial emphasis of the pledging had visibly shifted from the north-west to the regions of Slavonia and of Međimurje (Muraköz). Sigismund had pledges in Slavonia already in his first decade of his reign, but these were not as numerous and extensive as in the second decade of his rule. Slavonia came in forefront as the territorial source for pledges mostly with the emergence of the Frankopan family as Sigismund's pledge holders. They started to conclude such deals with the king from 1389 onwards, and initially their interest primarily focused on Slavonia; while the enormous territory of Međimurje was given in pledge by a single transaction to the king's relative, to Hermann II of Celje, Sigismund's father in law.

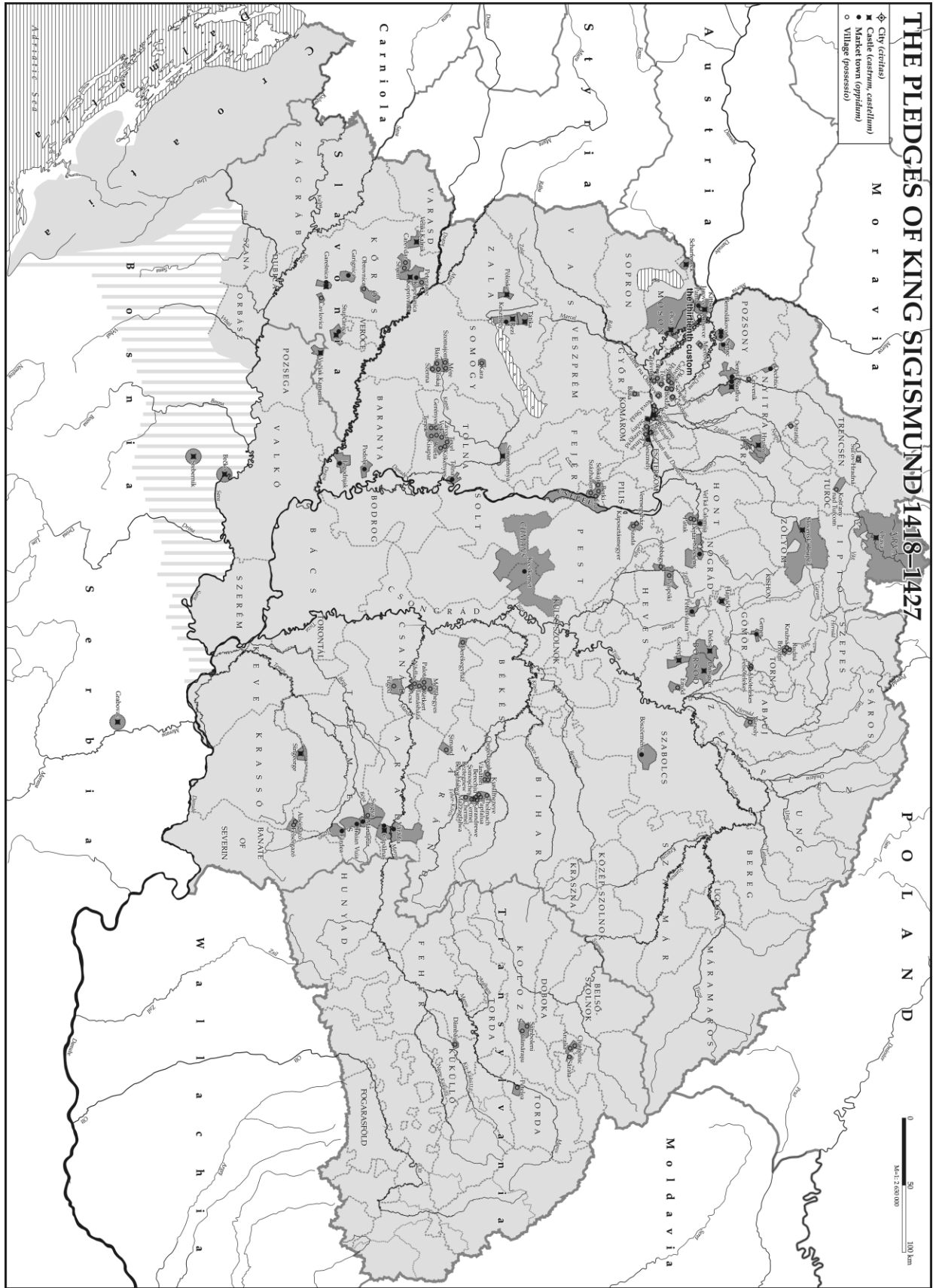


The kingdom's northern part remained throughout Sigismund's rule an almost inexhaustible source for his pledgings, where apparently, he not only had enough resources but also many people showing interest in such deals with him. Interestingly the area had an almost exclusive role in the period between 1408 and 1417 as the royal transactions of pledge primarily concentrated to this area to a much lesser extent in Moson County. In Moson, the pledged estates were situated close to each other, however, they were not held in a single hand, but instead the king chose to give them to different people.<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>373</sup> Castle Óvár to Ulrich Wolfurt, Kittsee to Henry Schlandensberger, Scharfeneck to Stephen Kanizsai.





In the penultimate decade of Sigismund's reign, his pledges show a larger territorial distribution than in the period before. After 1398-1407 he began to put in pledge domains of Slavonia again. In the earlier periods the central parts of the kingdom remained relatively intact and free from pledgings, but this was no longer the case between the years 1418-1427. This interval brought also changes for another region for which royal pledgings were not characteristic earlier. As the map showing the *honor* domains illustrates, already before Sigismund's rise to power in Hungary there were large territories in the region — known later as Banat — which he could use for the purpose of pledging. Nonetheless, he waited to put these lands in pledge until 1418.



The last period illustrates precisely that in the last ten years of Sigismund's life the number of his pledgings increased significantly. This timespan shows the most diverse territorial coverage of the pledges, however, there were certain regions, most notably, the northern parts of the country, Slavonia and Croatia, where they occurred in the highest numbers. Croatia and Slavonia had never filled such a prominent role in Sigismund's pledging as in this period when they emerged as a core area for these transactions.

If we look at the geographical position of the pledges throughout Sigismund's reign, then probably the most eye-catching phenomenon is that many of the transactions concentrated in the northern and northwestern part of the country. This area comprised those five northwestern counties (Pozsony, Trencsén, Nyitra, Hont, Bars) in which the Angevin rulers paid great attention to ensure the dominance of the royal castles over private ones.<sup>374</sup> For them, it had been important to have in royal hands those castles which were close to the borders, and especially those near to the western frontier.<sup>375</sup> Apparently, this was not a priority anymore for Sigismund, and during his reign this area became one of the most affected by royal pledgings. The numbers reflect precisely on how much the situation had changed. While in 1382, these counties comprised altogether 38 royal castles,<sup>376</sup> in Sigismund's time no less than 19 were put in pledge by the ruler.<sup>377</sup> The province of Transylvania can be brought up as an example for the opposite edge, where it is striking that only a few royal estates were given in pledge. There could be multiple reasons explaining this significant discrepancy.

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<sup>374</sup> Pál Engel, "Vár és hatalom. Az uralom területiális alapjai a középkori Magyarországon" [Castle and power. The territorial grounds of power in medieval Hungary] in *Honor, vár, ispánság* [Honor, castle, ispanate], ed. Enikő Csukovics (Budapest: Osiris, 2003), 176.

<sup>375</sup> Fügedi, *Castle and society*, 115.

<sup>376</sup> Engel, *Vár és hatalom*, 176.

<sup>377</sup> The castles conquered by the Moravian margraves are not included. These were: in Pozsony - Ostrý Kameň, Devín, Šintava, Bernolákovo, Beckov, in Trencsén - Lietava, Rajec, Hričov, Súča, Vršatec, Lednica, Trenčín, Považský hrad, Strečno, Starhrad, in Nyitra - Oponice, Ludanice, Branč, Šurany; in Bars – Hrušov, and no castles in Hont.



The *honor* domains (deep gray) and the queenly estates (light gray) in 1382<sup>378</sup>

First, if we look at the map representing the *honor* domains before Sigismund's ascension to the throne in 1382, then it can be noticed that exactly this northern, northwestern part of the kingdom was one of those regions which consisted of the most of such estates. Thus, in this area Sigismund had more resources which he could use for the purpose of the pledging. Another circumstance that should be considered is that many of Sigismund's pledgings — through which royal estates of large size were transferred to the pledgees — were also related to this region. Among these were the possessions of the Váh-Danube interfluvium, the region of Spiš, and the numerous royal lands put in pledge to the queen, after her estates in Slavonia were taken back by the king.<sup>379</sup> Additionally, a considerable part of the foreign pledge holders, Poles, Czechs and Austrians, favored the royal estates of this region over the others, when they were considering having royal

<sup>378</sup> The program with which the map was created does not cover medieval Croatia and Dalmatia, this is the reason why they are not represented on this map either. Besides the *honor* domains, the king occasionally pledged queenly estates too, of course with his spouse's consent. For example: Segesd or Virovitica. DL 100237, DF 286391.

<sup>379</sup> The king seized his spouse's estates in Slavonia in 1419 but granted her with new, even larger ones in the central and northern parts of the kingdom in 1424. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 74. Dvořáková, *Barbara von Cilli*, 111-113, 145. Dvořáková, *The Economic Background*, 114-117.

pledges in the country, due to the proximity of these to their homeland. Finally, the significant discrepancy could be the result of the uneven availability of the sources. Since for the history of certain regions more sources have been preserved than for others, and may have a distorting effect on the data of the pledges.

Another relevant issue related to the geographical distribution of the pledges is the question of the southern border. As already mentioned, on the lower Danube a chain of castles and fortifications was created due to the frequent Ottoman incursions. Before the Ottoman attacks started in 1390, only a few castles were protecting the borderline between Turnu Severin (Szörény) and Belgrade, but with the increase of the Ottoman threat, new castles were erected, and in 1430 the number of these had reached fourteen.<sup>380</sup> Understandably, the Ottoman danger prompted some of the landowners of the southern counties to seek for estates which were less exposed to incursions. Nicholas Garai for example, exchanged his estates situated in Valkó county with the rulers' in Veszprém, because the latter were safer and therefore more ideal to function as his center of lordship.<sup>381</sup> As well, allegedly, Sigismund took away Queen Barbara's domains in Slavonia and exchanged them with estates of Northern Hungary because of the continuous raids of the Ottoman troops.<sup>382</sup> In spite of all these, perhaps it is surprising to see that there were pledge holders interested in castles and estates which were situated in Serbia and Bosnia, thus beyond the protection provided by the chain of castles and the River Sava. Characteristically, these pledges had territorial authority in the nearby region as the king's representative, thus, in fact, these pledges even strengthened their power in the area.<sup>383</sup> The castle of Sokol was pledged first in 1410 to Paul Csupor, who at that time was the *ispán* of Zágráb county, then to Nicholas Frankopan before 1430, when he held the position of ban of Croatia and Dalmatia.<sup>384</sup> Srebrenik castle and Brčko *castellum* were given in pledge to the Talovac brothers in 1430, when they gradually took over Filippo Scolari's role in organizing and supervising the defense of the southern borders from Turnu

<sup>380</sup> Pál Engel, "Ozorai Pipo" [Pipo of Ozora], in *Honor, vár, ispánság. Válogatott tanulmányok* [Honor, castle, domain (ispánság)], ed. Enikő Csukovits (Budapest: Osiris, 2003), 267-278.

<sup>381</sup> Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 44-45.

<sup>382</sup> "...propter insultus Turcorum, Crucis Christi persecutorum et nostrorum notiorum emulorum ipsas partes continuo invadencium..." Gusztáv Wenzel, "Okmányi adalékok Borbála és Erzsébet Magyar királynék birtokáról" [Charter evidences on the domains of the Hungarian Queens Barbara and Elisabeth] *Magyar Történelmi Tár*, Series 1, vol. 12 (1862): 272. Besides this, there were rumors that the queen was unfaithful to her spouse. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 74.

<sup>383</sup> This policy was pursued by the donations of royal castles in the south east. Each of these were meant to increase the authority of the king's representative further in the area. Fügedi, *Castle and society*, 133.

<sup>384</sup> *Alsó-szlavóniai okmánytár*, 321, DF 258343, 287113.

Severin to the Adriatic.<sup>385</sup> Only one transaction does not fit into this logic, the one concluded with the brother of palatine Nicholas Garai, John, concerning the pledging of castle of Srebrenik and the *castella* of Brčko and Grabovac to him. This deal was in fact a domain swap, by which John Garai had to renounce to castle Tállya situated in the north-east of the country for Srebrenik and the *castella*. Presumably, John did not have a say in this, since Sigismund intended to give Tállya to the Serbian despot Stefan Lazarević (1402-1427).<sup>386</sup>

## The place of pledgings in the royal finances

Throughout his reign, Sigismund always managed to find a way to complement his ordinary revenues when these proved to be insufficient, and the pledging of royal properties should be definitively counted as one of the most important of these extraordinary fundraising methods. Although the amount of money was not as significant as the sums he could gain from extraordinary taxes or the levy charged on the church, pledging had certain advantages which these, especially the extraordinary taxes, did not. Namely, taxation required much more administration and organization, involving many people than concluding a simple contract of pledge. Furthermore, the collection of taxes could run into a set of difficulties, and therefore it is very much questionable whether they managed to collect all the sums each time successfully. Another issue was a temporal one, it was a long and time-consuming process from the moment of the decision until the tax was finally collected. It is enough to mention the last known extraordinary tax levied by Sigismund in 1434 took two years to collect, and meanwhile the initial reason for which it's imposition ceased to be a concern.<sup>387</sup> As in case of any ordinary but regular payments, also in case of extraordinary taxes as a rule there were almost always certain groups who turned to the ruler for tax exemptions. Finally, to include the nobility among the subjects of the taxation was always a source of tension.

By contrast, the king could conclude a transaction of pledge swiftly, with minimal administration, requiring only a few persons be involved. The money from the loan was also immediately available, from the time of the issuing the charter of pledging and could be spent right away. In terms of the yielded sums, pledging was presumably the third most important extraordinary revenue after the extraordinary tax and the levy paid by the church; although

<sup>385</sup> DL 43837, Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 78-80. Engel, *Ozorai Pipo*, 282.

<sup>386</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 438. DL 11225.

<sup>387</sup> See pages: 51-52.

sometimes also through pledging Sigismund obtained true fortunes. The almost 100.000 florins gained by the pledging of the Spiš region is a well-known example, beside this, the 60.000 florins can be mentioned too, for which three castles were put in pledge to Queen Barbara.<sup>388</sup> It was not even necessary to find a single creditor with so much money, but the king could obtain sums close to these figures by concluding many transactions of smaller value. As it was mentioned earlier, in 1435 Sigismund pledged royal possessions in a value reaching almost 70.000 florins, out of which more than a half was put in pledge in a single month. This sum was so high that it even exceeded the output of his third ordinary revenue, the one from mining and minting.<sup>389</sup>

Apart from the financial aspect, pledging had other features which carried additional importance for Sigismund. One of these was political gain. Pledging could function as a method for recruiting adherents, to secure their loyalty, and also to strengthen existing bonds.<sup>390</sup> No wonder that when the king gave authorization for sub-pledging, it was usually emphasized that the new pledge holder had to be one of his faithful subjects.<sup>391</sup> Many of Sigismund's pledges were meant to reward military and other services already performed or to be performed in the future. It was in the interest of the pledge holders to remain loyal to the king, because that is how they could keep the pledge with its revenues and make more profit from the transaction. In case the pledgees turned out to be disloyal or if their relationship with the ruler deteriorated, they could easily lose the pledge. For example, an Austrian knight, Hening Lessel, the pledge holder of two royal castles of Pozsony County had one of the two castles besieged by royal troops, because allegedly he and his men caused severe harm to the locals.<sup>392</sup>

A further significance of the pledgings was that they provided the king with prompt cash in a period when liquidity was a major concern for the country's economy.<sup>393</sup> The many transactions of lower amount of money involved might imply that the king tried to solve his

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<sup>388</sup> DL 9984, 12351.

<sup>389</sup> See page 47.

<sup>390</sup> Ludwig, *Besteuerung und Verpfändung*, 99-100. Isenmann, *Reichsfinanzen*, 12. Isenmann, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 254. Zmora, *State and Nobility*, 46. Bárta, *The Financial Dimension*, 82.

<sup>391</sup> For example, in the case of Boldgokő castle this was phrased in the following way: "...ac idem castrum aliis quibus maluerit nostris dumtaxat fidelibus ulterius impignorare ac cum eodem sicuti legitimo pignore disponere valeat atque possit ... DL 8170."

<sup>392</sup> After all, the castle was not recovered by force for the crown, but it was redeemed by paying back the owed sum. Also, the tense relationship between Sigismund and Duke Friedrich IV could be a further reason for taking up arms against the Austrian pledge holder in Hungary. Dvořáková, *A lovag és királya*, 285-286.

<sup>393</sup> Beatrix F. Romhányi, "The Ecclesiastic Economy in Medieval Hungary" in *The Economy of Medieval Hungary*, ed. József Laszlovszky, et al. (Leiden: Brill, expected year of publishing: 2018), 333.



momentary financial problems by them. In this way Sigismund could anticipate incomes from his regular revenues and expended the pledge sums for his urgent needs. The case of Kittsee castle proves how lucrative these financial dealings occasionally could be. The castle was donated in 1390 to the Scharfeneck family, and since the male line of the family dies out in 1416, it escheated to the king. Following this, Sigismund pledged it several times together with the thirtieth collected at Rusovce and with some appurtenances, to Henry Schlandensberger, Peter Kapler and finally to Kapler's widow. As a result, Sigismund managed to raise 17.500 florins, and a further 2.000 florins were promised to be expended on the refurbishment of the castle.<sup>394</sup> Considering that from time to time several royal castles and their appurtenances had been pledged for a few thousand florins, the transactions involving Kittsee were highly gainful. Additionally, a further advantage of the pledgings was that it was easier to find lenders for the crown, since the creditors received security for their payments in form of the pledge.

### **Sigismund's Hungarian pledgings in a Central European context**

Complementing the ordinary revenues with sums gained from transactions of pledge was not a peculiarity of Sigismund's reign in Hungary. After gaining the throne of this kingdom, the second one that he managed to get hold was that of the Holy Roman Empire. He began his rule as King of the Romans in 1411, and in 1433 he achieved the great prize of being crowned emperor in Rome. During these twenty-six years—which was more than half of his entire reign in Hungary—his possibilities to pledge imperial as opposed to Hungarian goods was limited, as was presented in Chapter 1. Nonetheless, his results in this field were still not negligible. In German scholarship Götz Landwehr has prepared the most comprehensive database about the pledges of the medieval emperors. According to his research, Sigismund pledged only one castle, (*Reichsschloss*) that of Rheinfelden, all the rest of his pledges were restricted to various taxes, offices and revenues.<sup>395</sup> All this had an overall value of 390.000 florins.<sup>396</sup> This was a large amount of money, but it was well behind the sums of his predecessors, especially of his father's and Louis IV's, who together excelled in pledging imperial goods, contracting 65% of all imperial pledgings between 1200 and

<sup>394</sup> ZsO IX. 777, ZsO VI.1269, ZsO IX. 777, DL 11755.

<sup>395</sup> Although, he could pledge only Rheinfelden, but he increased the value of the pledge three times. Landwehr, *Die Verpfändung*, 35.

<sup>396</sup> Adolf Nüglisch, "Das Finanzwesen des deutschen Reiches unter Kaiser Sigismund" *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik*, ser.3, vol. 21 (1901): 164. Isenmann, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 254.

1500.<sup>397</sup> In just three years' time Charles IV managed to pledge as much in value as Sigismund did in fifty years in Hungary,<sup>398</sup> and during his entire 32 years of reign in the Holy Roman Empire this sum surpassed 2.000.000 florins.<sup>399</sup> Furthermore, Sigismund's 390.000 florins drawn on Imperial pledges was much lower than the value of his Hungarian pledgings, however here he not only had a longer reign but also had at his disposal the immense royal demesne inherited from the Angevin rulers .

Sigismund's situation in the Czech lands where he ruled for the shortest period of all his kingdoms, was different. His rule began in 1419, but it took seventeen years until he managed to secure his position over Bohemia by obtaining the support of the Czech Estates. So far, there have been a number of smaller studies written about the topic, but Czech scholarship has yet to produce a detailed assessment of all of Sigismund's pledges in the Czech lands.<sup>400</sup> This makes it more difficult to draw an accurate comparison between his pledging practices in the polities which he governed. Recently however, his pledgings of the church estate in Bohemia have come into the center of researchers' attention, and thanks to this, it became the most meticulously studied question of Sigismund's pledgings in that country. According to Stanislav Bárta's calculations, Sigismund concluded 414 transactions between 1420 and 1437 in which only properties of the church were involved. Although no overall estimations have been made, it is certain that the sums he managed to raise through this method were considerable. One of the peaks of the pledgings was reached in the period between 1420-1422, when, only in 1420, he had pledges worth around 107.500 florins.<sup>401</sup> Another indicator that can reflect the proportions between the pledgings in the two countries is the number of transactions concluded in a short period of time. In Hungary, the highest number were contracted in June 1435, altogether eleven pledgings in a value of 45.821 florins. In Bohemia, nineteen transactions of pledging church estates were concluded on a single day, on 28 October 1421, which was worth around 30.000 florins.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>397</sup> See page 21.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid.

<sup>399</sup> Ferdinand Seibt, ed., *Kaiser Karl IV. Staatsmann und Mäzen* (Munich: Prestel, 1978), 142.

<sup>400</sup> The last such attempt was done by Milan Moravec, but his findings were not accepted unanimously by the scholarship. Milan Moravec, "Zástavy Zikmunda Lucemburského v českých zemích z let 1420-1437" [Sigismund of Luxemburg's pledges in the Bohemian territories between 1420-1437] *Folia historica Bohemica* 9 (1985): 89-175. Bárta, *The Financial Dimension*, 76.

<sup>401</sup> 43.000 Prague groschen converted to Hungarian florins at an exchange rate of 24 Prague groschen having the same value as one florin. Sejbal, *Dějiny peněz*, 173. Bárta, *Zástavní listiny*, 54.

<sup>402</sup> 12.000 schock Prague groschen exchanged at an exchange rate of 24 Prague groschen equivalent to one Hungarian florin. Sejbal, *Dějiny peněz*, 173. Bárta, *The Financial Dimension*, 79-80.

Even though Sigismund proved to be heavily reliant on this fundraising method, he was not the only Bohemian ruler who did so. It is enough to refer to Charles IV, who wrote in his biography that in 1333 he could hardly find a royal castle in the kingdom that was not in pledge.<sup>403</sup>

The situation in Poland was somewhat similar to Hungary. Here, after the death of the last king of the Piast dynasty, large crown domains were left behind to the successors. These remained relatively intact during King Louis' reign (1370-1382), and the dawn of the era of large-scale pledging began only under the Jagiellonian rulers.<sup>404</sup> The first member of the dynasty who sat on the Polish throne was Władysław II Jagiełło, a contemporary of Sigismund. He ruled over Poland almost as long as Sigismund in Hungary, for 48 years (1386-1434), during which he relied heavily on this fundraising method just as his Hungarian fellow ruler. It is believed that the number of transactions concluded by him was between 250-288 and their value could have exceeded 51,200 florins (32,000 marcs).<sup>405</sup> His son, Władysław III had a much shorter reign, lasting only ten years (1434- 1444), but in the scale of pledging he well surpassed his father.<sup>406</sup> It is telling that almost 60% of the approximately 800 charters issued by the chanceries during Władysław III's rule are related to pledgings.<sup>407</sup> According to the calculations, he had altogether around 473-480 transactions of pledge from which he accumulated around 195.200 florins (122.000 marcs). Casimir IV stood out as the medieval Polish ruler with probably the highest number of pledgings. During his 45 years of rule over Poland (1447-1492), he had around 610-648 pledgings whose value was at least 560.000 florins (350.000 marcs).<sup>408</sup>

The pledging of royal estates was a fundraising method known already in Angevin Hungary, nonetheless, with Sigismund of Luxembourg's rise to power, it grew to previously unknown proportions. Probably, it is not an exaggeration to claim that with his rule the era of mass pledging began in the county. The frequency by which he turned to pledging in case of need, the

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<sup>403</sup> See footnote 67.

<sup>404</sup> Matuszewski, *Die Verpfändung der Krongüter*, 47-48. Ludwig, *Besteuerung und Verpfändung*, 98-99.

<sup>405</sup> For the conversion of the marcs to florins I applied the exchange rate that Krzysztof Boroda and Piotr Guzowski use in their joint paper. They used the following calculation: first, the marc is changed to groschen at a rate of 48 groschen equaling 1 marc, and then it is converted to florin at a rate of 30 groschen being equivalent to 1 florin. Krzysztof Boroda, Piotr Guzowski "From King's Finance to Public Finance. Different Strategies of Fighting Financial Crisis in the Kingdom of Poland under Jagiellonian Rule (1386-1572)" in *Le crisi finanziarie. Gestione, implicazioni sociali e conseguenze nell'età preindustriale. The financial crises. Their management, their social implications and their consequences in pre-industrial times*, ed. Giampiero Nigro (Florence: Florence University Press, 2016), 458.

<sup>406</sup> Matuszewski, *Die Verpfändung der Krongüter*, 50.

<sup>407</sup> Ludwig, *Besteuerung und Verpfändung*, 106.

<sup>408</sup> Matuszewski, *Die Verpfändung der Krongüter*, 48,55. Boroda, Guzowski, *From King's Finance to Public Finance*, 458-459. Ludwig, *Besteuerung und Verpfändung*, 106.

sums he managed to obtain through these, and the extensive lands that were involved in such transactions show precisely the significance of pledgings for his rule. Provided with the right circumstances — the enormous royal demesne inherited from his predecessor, the half century long reign, and the nobility's desire for land — Sigismund was able to pledge so much that he could hold an illustrious position among the Central European rulers with the most pledges.

## Chapter 6. The Object of the Pledging

### The Pledging of Towns

Sigismund's long reign marks a defining period for the medieval urban history of Hungary for several reasons. From a quantitative point of view, more towns emerged during the half century of his rule than altogether in the one hundred fifty years preceding it.<sup>409</sup> Furthermore, the density of commercial networks grew in an unprecedented manner, and Sigismund donated privileges to hold annual fairs and weekly markets as no other Hungarian ruler. From an administrative point of view, the larger towns' self-government was established, and the framework for treating issues of local governance and jurisdiction on an institutional level was established. This period was fundamental for the growing complexity of social structures too, primarily because the process of the burgher's Estate emergence can be traced back to this period.<sup>410</sup> Moreover, it happened during Sigismund's reign that for the first time the representatives of the urban communities were invited to the meetings of the royal council (Ratssitzung) and their opinions were asked regarding certain urban issues. Another major change was the realignment of the urban network, a fact which also became visible in the terminology of the contemporary sources. At the end of this fifty-year long reign, the mixed terminology – calling urban settlements of various importance sometimes *civitas*, *oppidum*, *libera villa* – was abandoned in favor of a unified terminology so that only the walled towns, subordinated directly to the king and the episcopal towns, were called *civitates*, while the market towns not surrounded by walls were referred to as *oppida*.<sup>411</sup>

<sup>409</sup> It should be noted, that the important towns were founded in the Árpáadian period, these newly emerged towns were of lower importance, and predominantly they were under private ownership. The emergence of these settlements could have been the result of the nobility's aim to invest their residence with urban character.

<sup>410</sup> For more about this question see: András Kubinyi: "Középkori országgyűléseink és a városok (Válasz Gerics József professzor tanulmányaira) [Hungarian medieval diets and the towns" (Reply to professor József Gerics' studies)] *Századok* 141, nr. 2, (2007): 471-492.

<sup>411</sup> Prior to 1389 there were around one hundred royal settlements that were occasionally (some of them regularly) referred to as *civitas*. Szeged was an exception; it was unwalled and was not an episcopal seat but still it was called *civitas*. Engel, *The realm*, 253-254. András Kubinyi, "König Sigismund und das ungarische Städtewesen", in *Das Zeitalter König Sigmunds in Ungarn und im Deutschen Reich*, ed. Tilman Schmidt, Péter Gunst (Debrecen: Universität Debrecen Institut für Geschichtswissenschaften, 2000), 110-111, 114-116, 118-119. Szende, *Between hatred and affection*, 210. András Kubinyi, "A magyarországi városhálózat XIV-XV. századi fejlődésének néhány kérdése" [Several questions on the 14th-15th century Hungarian town network's development] *Tanulmányok Budapest múltjából* 19 (1972): 48. András Kubinyi, "Das ungarische Städtewesen in der Sigismund-Zeit", in *Sigismund von Luxemburg, Kaiser und König in Mitteleuropa, 1387-1437. Beiträge zur Herrschaft Kaiser Sigismunds und der*

However, these major results were not solely the direct consequence of royal urban policy. Although most of the scholars agree that Sigismund was one of the few Central-European rulers with a conscious urban policy,<sup>412</sup> traces of this are the most visible in the first part of his reign, when instead of granting certain privileges to individual towns, the same rights were donated to a number of royal towns by the same act.<sup>413</sup> This concept is reflected in the decrees of 1402 and 1405. The first one provided staple right to certain northern towns, while the second addressed the issues of taxation, commerce, jurisdiction uniformly throughout the country.<sup>414</sup> After this early phase, Sigismund's approach to the kingdom's urban matters can be generally characterized as contradictory, inconsequent, or pragmatic at best. Inconsistency and contradiction can be observed already in the case of the 1402 decree, which he withdrew in the same year.<sup>415</sup> This was not an exceptional case but was a general feature of his reign. To mention a well-known example, in 1429 he elevated a small town called Sárospatak to the rank of royal town, only for it to be donated away to a private landowner a month later. The case of Buda's staple right can be mentioned too, when he changed his resolution four times within the space of just a few years.<sup>416</sup>

Sigismund's pragmatism is reflected in the fact that predominantly the richest and the most powerful towns stood at the center of royal attention.<sup>417</sup> These settlements paid the highest annual tax, and they further exported or imported many commodities, for which they again had to pay tax. These towns were wealthy enough to lend money to the ruler in case of need, and they had the heaviest political weight among the towns.<sup>418</sup> That is why Sigismund took a series of measures

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europäischen Geschichte um 1400, ed. Josef Macek, Ernő Marosi, Ferdinand Seibt (Warendorf: Fahlbusch Verlag, 1994), 172, 178. András Kubinyi, "Zsigmond király és a városok" [King Sigismund and the towns], in *Művészet Zsigmond király korában I. Tanulmányok* [Art during King Sigismund's reign. Vol. I. Studies], ed. László Beke, Ernő Marosi, Tünde Wehli (Budapest: Budapesti Történeti Múzeum, 1987), 235. Friedrich Bernward Fahlbusch, *Städte und Königtum im frühen 15. Jahrhundert. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Sigmunds von Luxemburg*. Städteforschung A/17 (Köln/Wien: Böhlau, 1983), 49.

<sup>412</sup> Szende, *Between hatred and affection*, 199-200.

<sup>413</sup> Kubinyi, *Das ungarische Städtewesen*, 177.

<sup>414</sup> Kubinyi, *Zsigmond király*, 237-240. Szende, *Between hatred and affection*, 199-200. Elemér Mályusz suggested that Marcus of Nürnberg could be suspected behind the decree of 1405. Elemér Mályusz, "Zsigmond király központosító törekvései Magyarországon" [King Sigismund's centralizing attempts in Hungary] *Történelmi Szemle* 3, No. 2-3 (1960) 172-173.

<sup>415</sup> Zsuzsa Teke, "Adalékok Zsigmond várospolitikájához (1387–1405)" [On Sigismund's urban policy (1387–1405)], in *Változatok a történelemre. Tanulmányok Székely György tiszteletére* [Variations on history. Studies in honour of György Székely], ed. Gyöngyi Erdei, Balázs Nagy (Budapest: Budapesti Történeti Múzeum, ELTE BTK Középkori és Kora Újkori Magyar Történeti Tanszék, 2004), 228.

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.*, 230. Szende, *Between hatred and affection*, 202. Kubinyi, *Zsigmond király*, 237.

<sup>417</sup> Fahlbusch, *Städte und Königtum*, 229. Kubinyi, *Zsigmond király*, 241.

<sup>418</sup> Kubinyi, *Zsigmond király* 236.

which would reinforce the security of these settlements, and other steps that aimed at boosting their economic and demographic potential. He was a keen promoter of the idea of surrounding towns with walls and of repairing existing old fortifications for which he even provided financial aid from time to time. Furthermore, he donated a series of privileges that would improve their economic conditions, like the already mentioned urban decree of 1405. Similarly, the king was interested in increasing the population of the important towns, that is why, for instance, he gave concessions to Sopron which was hit by an epidemic in 1409.<sup>419</sup>

In this urban policy driven by fiscal interest, where the largest towns mattered the most, the issues of the smaller and less important ones became marginal,<sup>420</sup> and that could easily lead to terminating their subordination to the royal authority and passing them into private hands. Although, Sigismund's approach to urban matters was based on his predecessors' measures,<sup>421</sup> the large-scale alienation, and particularly the pledging of towns were undoubtedly new elements introduced by him. This had severe consequences mainly for the market towns. In the fourteenth century, the majority of the market towns were in royal possession, while at the end of the fifteenth century private owners held most of the *oppida*, to which phenomenon Sigismund's alienation practice significantly contributed.<sup>422</sup>

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<sup>419</sup> Fahlbusch, *Städte und Königtum*, 28-30, 38.

<sup>420</sup> Nonetheless, Sigismund did not neglect their interests entirely. As it was mentioned earlier, he granted many privileges of holding weekly and annual market, including for non-royal settlements too.

<sup>421</sup> Teke, *Adalékok Zsigmond városolitikájához*, 225-226, Kubinyi, *Das ungarische Städtewesen*, 174-175. Fahlbusch, *Städte und Königtum*, 20.

<sup>422</sup> According to Vera Bácskai's estimation, at the end of the fifteenth century more than 80% of the market towns were in private hands. Vera Bácskai, *Magyar mezővárosok a XV. században* [Hungarian market-towns in the fifteenth century] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1965), 18-19.

Scholarship on the topic has noted that only between 1387 and 1399 more than a dozen royal market towns were granted away or pledged.<sup>425</sup> András Kubinyi proposed that passing royal towns to private hands could have been the ruler's conscious strategy and could function as a selection process. In Kubinyi's understanding, presumably the ruler picked those settlements whose economic potential decreased substantially because of the changed trade routes, or chose to transfer those which turned out to be unviable.<sup>426</sup> Another opinion explains this phenomenon with the circumstances of Sigismund's ascension to the throne of Hungary. Namely, that he became king thanks to his wife, Queen Mary, the daughter of King Louis I, and therefore he could consolidate his rule only by appeasing the leading elite of the country with substantial donations. Indeed, in the period between 1387 and 1396 there was a great wave of alienating royal property: out of 150 royal castles 65 were transferred to private persons, some of them only temporarily by pledging.<sup>427</sup> Many towns could

have been granted away together with them, however it should be emphasized that especially pledging of the *oppida*<sup>428</sup> was not characteristic only to Sigismund's early years of reign, rather it

Pledged royal market towns after 1400 <sup>423</sup>		
Year <sup>424</sup>	Market town	Reference DL/DF
1401	Keszthely	200390
1403	Ludanice	ZsO VIII. 563
1404	Segesd Stropkov	200390 8944
1410	Debrecen	212742
1412	The thirteen town of the Spiš region, Podolínec and Hniezdne	9984
1414	Devín	10202
1422	Komárno Garignica	87960 11232
1424	Tolnavár, Kecskemét Szécsény, Velká Čalomija, Pétervására, Solymos, Debrő	13137
1426	Šintava, Sereď Bernolákovo, Senec	86789 11936
1427	Koprivnica	Fejér X/7 436
1429	Virovitica	33412
1430	Bihać, Skradin Vukovar	258343 287113 233441
1434	Papi	12574
1435	Modra Gyöngyös Jelšava Bzenica	12717 12725 12770 94472

<sup>423</sup> The term *oppidum* could equally denote a settlement with some urban characteristics and a simple village invested with the right of holding market. Engel, *The realm*, 263. Consequently, the settlements enlisted here could have great differences in their development.

<sup>424</sup> In cases the date of the transactions' conclusion is unknown, the year of mentioning is listed. For the precise dates see the list of pledgings in the appendix.

<sup>425</sup> These were: Starý Tekov (Óbars), Spišský Štvrtok (Csütörtökhely), Bátovce (Bát), Topoľčany (Tapolcsány), Csepreg, Sárvár, Sárospatak, Slovenské Nové Mesto (Újhely), Seňa (Szina), Kőszeg, Segesd, Körmend, (Kiskun)Halas, Velyki Berehy (Bereg), Vary (Vári), Vynohradiv (Szőlős), Vadu Crișului (Rév), Somogyvár, Gemer (Gömör), Širia? (Siri), Sajószentpéter. Bácskai, *Magyar mezővárosok*, 18-19. Kubinyi, *A magyarországi városhálózat*, 39. Szende, *Between hatred and affection*, 202.

<sup>426</sup> Kubinyi, *A magyarországi városhálózat*, 40.

<sup>427</sup> See page 150.

<sup>428</sup> Vera Bácskai published some data about the alienation of the market towns after 1400, still there are no detailed collections of data about this. That is why it is not known whether granting away *oppida* was as frequent as their pledging. Bácskai, *Magyar mezővárosok*, 19.



was a general trait of his rule. As the data of the spreadsheet above shows, dozens of market towns were put in pledge as appurtenances of castles, or together with other estates. For the towns this was not without consequences. It is well known from the historiography, that the burghers of the alienated towns often lost their status and their new lords considered them as of their tenant peasants. Besides, it could easily happen that without the direct subordination to the king, these towns fell into decay with time.<sup>429</sup> In the case of pledging, the pledgee held the settlements under its jurisdiction only temporarily. Still, major changes could happen during this period having great impact on the towns history. For example, the market town of Segesd was a queenly estate till 1389, when Sigismund put in pledge to Nicholas Zábó. The town was pledged entirely, with all of its appurtenances and rights. What kind of authority Zábó had in the town after the transaction, had major consequences for its residents. This is well illustrated in a royal charter issued from 1393 in which Sigismund, ordered the towns' magistrate and the burghers that, since he pledged the settlement to Zábó, they should obey him and his men in everything and help him to enforce his judgements. Furthermore, they were obliged to pay the taxes and the payments that Zábó might imposes on them without any kind of reluctance and complaint. Finally, the pledgee had even authorization to treat and to punish the citizens of the town as his own tenant peasants. In light of the fact that Segesd enjoyed certain privileges, this was a clear violation of the town's self-government. Thus, with the transaction, the pledge holder became the new overlord of the town, he enjoyed the usufructs and the revenues of the settlement, and had full judicial power over it.<sup>430</sup> Segesd's case was not out of ordinary, the market town of Modra (Modor) was pledged in 1437 with the authorization, that the pledgee could dispose of the town as he would disposes of his own estates and he could even levy extraordinary tax on the citizens as he liked.<sup>431</sup>

Following the ruler's logic of supporting mainly the larger towns, the scholarship has suggested that Sigismund was careful enough to keep the free royal towns under his authority, and pledged or alienated only those which had less importance.<sup>432</sup> A letter from 1441 written by the town of Bratislava is used to strengthen this argument. In this, the towns' magistrate was protesting against the alienation of Sopron by arguing that the seven most prestigious merchant towns could be alienated from the crown. These seven free royal towns were Buda, Bardejov, Prešov, Košice,

<sup>429</sup> Kubinyi, *Das ungarische Städtewesen*, 173. Kubinyi, *Das ungarische Städtewesen*, 41.

<sup>430</sup> János Incze, *My kingdom in pledge*, 38-41.

<sup>431</sup> Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 193.

<sup>432</sup> Kubinyi, *Zsigmond király*, 241. Kubinyi, *Das ungarische Städtewesen*, 173. Kubinyi, *König Sigismund*, 114.

Trnava, Bratislava, and Sopron. They represented the most illustrious group of urban settlements in the kingdom, having been surrounded by walls, enjoying the highest degree of autonomy and having the *magister tavernicorum*'s court as the court of appeal.<sup>433</sup>

András Kubinyi argued that this non-alienation concept regarding the seven free royal towns could not have emerged in the 1440s but that its origins go back to the beginning of the fifteenth century, and most likely it was the result of Sigismund's deliberate strategy of keeping these settlements under his direct jurisdiction.<sup>434</sup> Since Sigismund took a similar stance to deal with the urban issues in the Holy Roman Empire and in Hungary,<sup>435</sup> one could even find parallels to this non-alienation practice in the Empire, where he – contrary to his predecessors – did not pledge any *Reichsstädte*.<sup>436</sup> Even so, these most developed urban communities of Hungary were also occasionally involved in his transactions of pledge. This could happen generally in two ways: either the towns' annual tax was pledged, or the entire settlement itself. The major difference between the two forms consisted primarily of the degree of authority transferred to the pledgee. In the case of pledging the whole settlement, the pledgee became the new overlord of the town, he not only could dispose of the settlement's tax, but could even intervene in the urban community's internal affairs. While in the second case he did not have any other authority within the settlement apart from collecting the pledged tax.

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<sup>433</sup> The rest of the towns could appeal only to the noble court. Engel, *The realm*, 254. Kubinyi, *A magyarországi városhálózat*, 39. Pest joined the group of the most prestigious towns during the reign of King Matthias. András Kubinyi, "Der ungarische König und seine Städte im 14. Jahrhundert und am Beginn des 15. Jahrhunderts", in *Stadt und Stadtherr im 14. Jahrhundert. Entwicklung und Funktion*, ed. Wilhelm Rausch (Linz: Österreichischer Arbeitskreis für Stadtgeschichtsforschung, 1972). 208.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>435</sup> Fahlbusch, *Städte und Königtum*, 20, 49. Szende, *Between hatred and affection*, 201. Kubinyi, *Zsigmond király*, 241.

<sup>436</sup> Landwehr, *Die Verpfändung*, 34. Fahlbusch, *Städte und Königtum*, 201-202.

Among the seven free royal towns,<sup>437</sup> only Bratislava had to experience this unusual situation of having a different overlord than the king during Sigismund's reign,<sup>438</sup> and it has to be emphasized that the pledging happened under extraordinary circumstances. As it was presented in Chapter 2, Sigismund needed the Moravian margraves' military aid to assert his claim to the Hungarian throne. To cover the military expenses, he pledged the territory between the Váh and Danube rivers, together with the town of Bratislava. First, on 16 August 1385 he confirmed Bratislava's privileges,<sup>439</sup> then a day later he called upon the burghers to be faithful to the Moravian margraves.<sup>440</sup> Finally, on 22 August, he promised to the town that, although he had pledged it to the margraves, he would redeem it.<sup>441</sup> In spite of the fact that the town's magistrate and the burghers took an oath of allegiance to both margraves,<sup>442</sup> only Jobst was the new overlord of

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<sup>437</sup> The town of Gradec was not part of seven towns with the *magister tavernicorum*'s court as the court of appeal, still it was one of the most important free royal towns of the kingdom. In the testimony from 1432 of John Alben, Bishop of Zagreb can be read that "...*Civitatem de monte Grecz juxta Zagrabiam sitam, quam a Sigismundo titulo pignoris possidebat...*" Already in June 1405 Eberhard, Bishop of Zagreb (John of Alben's cousin) collected the annual tax that the town owed to pay to the king. Moreover, he had full jurisdiction in the town until 1406, when this was revoked. In lack of data it is not clear on what ground Bishop Eberhard had this jurisdiction. If, it was based on a pledging, then initially the whole settlement could have been pledged to him by the ruler until 1406, after which only the town's yearly tax. In this case John Albeni could have inherited Gradec as a pledge. Ivan Krstitelj Tkalčić, *Monumenta Historica Civitatis Zagrabiae. Povijesni Spomenici Grada Zagreba*, vol. II (Zagreb: C Albrecht, 1894) 11, 72. Fejér X/7, 436. Bruno Škrebliin, "Ethnic groups in Zagreb's Gradec in the late Middle Ages" *Review of Croatian History* 9 nr.1 (2014): 30.

Thus, at the beginning the whole settlement was put in pledge, but after 1406 only the town's yearly tax.

<sup>438</sup> From the seven free royal towns, Sopron was put in pledge in 1471 by King Matthias, with all of its appurtenances. József Csermelyi, "A soproni ispánság és városkapitányság késő középkori elzálogosításai" [The late medieval pledgings of the Sopron's ispanate and the town captaincy in the late Middle Ages] in *Pénz, posztó, piac. Gazdaságtörténeti tanulmányok a magyar középkorról* [Money, cloth, market. Economic historical studies about medieval Hungary] ed. Boglárka Weisz (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2016), 17-18.

<sup>439</sup> The charter was sealed by Jobst and Procop too. Fejér X/8, 178–179, DF 239051. Bratislava was the first town which obtained the confirmation of its privileges, followed by Sopron and Brassó. The important towns were keen on acquiring the confirmation early since this was considered a way of laying down the foundation of a good relationship with the ruler. Szende, *Between hatred and affection*, 202.

<sup>440</sup> Ortway, *Pozsony város története III*, 12.

<sup>441</sup> "...*licet nos civitatem nostram Posoniensem illustribus Iodoco et Procopio marchionibus Moravie, patruis nostris dilectis, pignoris titulo obligaverimus... fidelibus eisdem civibus nostris Posoniensibus promittimus... quod prefatam civitatem nostram Posoniensem absque omni dampno et gravamine eorundem fidelium civium nostrorum Posoniensium redimere volumus...*" Fejér X/8, 181-182. DF 239053. Daniela Dvořáková, "Jošt a Uhorské kráľovstvo" [Jobst and the Kingdom of Hungary] in *Morava v časech markraběte Jošta* [Moravia at the time of Margrave Jobst], ed. Jan Libor (Brno: Matice moravská pro Výzkumné středisko pro dějiny střední Evropy, 2012), 46.

<sup>442</sup> "...*vorgenanten richter, burgermeister, ratlewte und die gancze gemeyne... globt un globen... das wir den vrogenanten brudern marggraffen czu Merhern und iren erben gehorsam und untertenig sein sullen und wollen, an geverd und an alle argelist, alz unsern rechten erbherren...*" DF 239054, Süttő, *Anjou-Magyarország II*, 257.

Bratislava.<sup>443</sup> He himself seldom visited the town during the pledging period,<sup>444</sup> but it cannot be stated that he completely neglected the town's affairs. Jobst commissioned that the town's damaged houses be repaired, he gave order to the town's magistrate to offer protection to the Jewish inhabitants on the days before Pentecost, and he even granted away a house situated within the town walls.<sup>445</sup> The pledging lasted from August 1385 until January 1389 when Margrave Jobst absolved the burghers of the town from all obligations towards him.<sup>446</sup> During this period there was not much contact between Sigismund and the town; this was mainly limited to the town lending money to the ruler twice in April 1386.<sup>447</sup> Thus, Bratislava besides presumably paying the annual tax to Jobst, from time to time, had to cope with Sigismund's financial requests as well.

Bratislava thus came under the authority of a new overlord under unusual circumstances,<sup>448</sup> when neither the claimant to the throne nor the town had any other choice. For Sigismund, it was a necessity to somehow finance his cousins' military aid, even if he had to renounce to an urban settlement of high strategic importance.<sup>449</sup> For the town it was not a real option to attempt

<sup>443</sup> As it was discussed in Chapter 3, the brothers divided their Hungarian estates among themselves.

<sup>444</sup> Apart from August 1385, he dwelled in Bratislava only in May 1387 during the period of pledge. Štěpán, *Moravský markrabě Jošt*, 807-809 (Jobst' itinerary). When Jobst could not take care of the issues related to Bratislava personally, most likely he commissioned Smil of Kunštát with these. Dvořáková, *Jošt a Uhorské král'ovstvo*, 54.

Thus, Smil was not only in charge of Pozsony county's administration, but sometimes he had to represent his lord in the town's urban affairs.

<sup>445</sup> These charters were issued in Brno. In one of them, Jobst called the town's magistrate and the burghers *nostrī fideles*. Ármin Friss (ed.), *Magyar-zsidó oklevéltár vol. I.1092-1539* [Hungarian-Jewish chartulary vol.I 1092-1539] (Budapest: Izraeli Magyar Irodalmi Társulat, 1903), 104. DF 239069. ZsO I. 464, 520. Dvořáková, *Jošt a Uhorské král'ovstvo*, 54.

<sup>446</sup> "...*judex, jurati, cives et tota communitas civitatis Poseniensis tempore domini nostri apud nos laudabiliter fideliter et in omni obedientia se conservaverunt...praedictos cives fideles et dilectos ac eorum civitatem de omnibus huiusmodi iuribus a tempore nostri regiminis hucusque quittavimus, et tenore praesentium quittamus...*"DF 239075. Fejér X/8, 296. ZsO I. 860. Even after the burghers were absolved of further obligations, the town and his former lord's business were not entirely over. At the end of January, Jobst wrote a letter to Bratislava by which he wanted to make sure that a house of the town's certain burgher would be given back to this person. Dvořáková, *Jošt a Uhorské král'ovstvo*, 53.

<sup>447</sup> See footnote 208.

<sup>448</sup> Also, the transaction was out of ordinary. The town was not alone pledged for a certain amount of money, but most probably together with the other lands situated between the Váh-Danube interfluvium. Possibly that is why there was no proper charter of pledging issued about Bratislava, instead only there was another one issued by which the ruler assured the town that they would not remain in pledge for long.

<sup>449</sup> Bratislava was the kingdom's westernmost town, where due to its location Sigismund organized a number of diplomatic meetings. After he was elected king of the Romans, he even planned to move his residence here, and in 1429 he summoned even an imperial diet to Bratislava. Szende, *Between hatred and affection*, 206. Márta Kondor, *The Ginger fox's two crowns. Central Administration and government in Sigismund of Luxembourg's realms 1410-1419* (Phd diss., Central European University: 2017), 159-164.

withstanding a siege,<sup>450</sup> so instead they chose to cooperate and avoid bloodshed.<sup>451</sup> The pledging itself did not deteriorate the rapport between the town and his king, although it has to be noted that seemingly this three and a half years passed peacefully in Bratislava's history since there are no attested signs of a rift with Jobst or any of his adherents.

Shortly after the turn of the fifteenth century the possibility of putting Bratislava in pledge again loomed large. On 31 October 1402,<sup>452</sup> Sigismund bound the customs payment due after imported or exported goods of Bratislava, Sopron and Oroszvár as a security of a debt reaching 16.000 florins to Duke Albert IV of Austria. In case for some reason Sigismund had not been able to guarantee the repayment via the thirtieth revenues, the town and the demesne of Bratislava would have been given in pledge with all of their rights and appurtenances.<sup>453</sup> Then, the *ispán* of Pozsony County, Smil of Vötau (Lichtenburg and Bítov) would have had to cede the castle of Bratislava to Duke Albert, and if Smil had been released from duty, then the new *ispán* of the county would have been obliged to take an oath of allegiance to Duke Albert. Moreover, if Smil had died in service, then these obligations would have been transferred to his successor too.

In 1402 Bratislava was pledged only conditionally,<sup>454</sup> but eight years later it was drawn into another major royal financial transaction where this time transferring it into private hands was not connected to any condition. In 25 July 1410 Sigismund promised to allocate 20.000 florins to Burgrave Frederick VI of Nuremberg (later Frederick I, Elector of Brandenburg) from the royal treasury, and to make sure that Frederick received the money, he assigned him the town and the castle of Bratislava with the castles of Bratislava, Gesztes, Vitány, Komárno and other settlements as a security of the payment.<sup>455</sup> Most likely, the transaction was made as a result of Sigismund

<sup>450</sup> Bratislava itself reported to Queen Elisabeth the size of the Moravian Margrave's troops in June 1385. According to Szilárd Süttő the margraves' army was so large that only by mobilizing the majority of Hungary's armed forces could have been possible to defeat the Moravian troops. Süttő, *Anjou-Magyarország* I, 95-96.

<sup>451</sup> This was rewarded by the king by confirming the town's privileges.

<sup>452</sup> A month earlier Sigismund had chosen Duke Albert as the governor of Hungary in his absence and also his successor in case he would die without heirs. ZsO II 1833, 1895, 1900, 1901, 1917.

<sup>453</sup> "...so haben wir in zu einem rechten phand redlichen ingeben un vorschzt unser vesten stat und herschaft zu Prespurg vorsezen und antwürten in auch die wissentlich mit allen gewelten, rechten, nuczen, gulten, leuten vnd gutern vnd allen andern zugehörungen..." DF 287048, ZsO II. 2019.

<sup>454</sup> Apparently Sigismund could secure the revenues of the thirtieths for Duke Albert, since there is no sign of Albert having any kind of authority in Bratislava.

<sup>455</sup> "... et volentes eundem de rehibicione ipsorum viginti millium florenorum auri indubium reddere ac utique certificare, civitatem et castrum nostrum Poseniense...duximus obligandum immo auctoritate nostra regia obligamus..." Archiv Bamberg, A 20 L. 8 Nr. 218\_0002. Károly, *Fejér vármegye* IV, 493. ZsO II. 7734.

choosing Frederick to represent him later at the imperial election,<sup>456</sup> and it was not a mere promise made by the ruler but the charters' contents were put in practice. Yet the picture becomes blurry regarding precisely in the case of Bratislava. While in the case of the other estates and castles, there is data confirming that these were under the jurisdiction of Burgrave Frederick and his retainers,<sup>457</sup> there is no such information regarding the town of Bratislava.<sup>458</sup> In fact, Frederick is completely missing from the documentation of the town. There are no documents in which the burghers would take an oath of allegiance to Frederick, or in which Frederick would absolve them from their duties, nor such in which Burgrave Frederick would give orders to the town's magistrate. It is not known until when exactly the pledged estates and Bratislava were under Frederick's authority, because there is no information about the redemption.<sup>459</sup> Consequently, it is questionable whether he ever become the new overlord of the town like Margrave Jobst was a quarter century earlier. Presumably, only the town's annual tax could have been assigned to him. Nevertheless, these three transactions reflect Sigismund's different attitude towards Bratislava prior to becoming King of the Romans. While in the first part of his reign, he would have not

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<sup>456</sup> As phrased by the charter of the transaction Frederick received all these domains for his "...multiplicia laudabilia et meritoria virtutum gesta ...totius regni commodum, reipublice augmentum et regnicolarum utilitatem, temproum processu et qualitate requirentibus expensarum onera gravia sueque ac suorum personarum iuges labores supportando magnifice fecit..." Ibid. Already in July Frederick conducted negotiations with a joint delegation from Main and Cologne in Visegrád and soon after with the representatives of the County Palatine of the Rhine. Sigismund put his trust in Burgrave Frederick concerning the imperial election, where he acted in Sigismund's name. It reflects well how important Frederick's role was that he even co-sealed Sigismund's election promises. Kondor, *The Ginger fox's*, 21-27, 43. Oliver Daldrup, *Zwischen König und Reich: Träger, Formen und Funktionen von Gesandtschaften zur Zeit Sigmunds von Luxemburg (1410-1437)* (Verlag-Haus Monsenstein und Vannerdat: Münster, 2010), 74-76. Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 151-156. ZsO II. 7816-17, 7819, 7932.

<sup>457</sup> Frederick appointed the castellans of Gesztes (Erik Silstrang), Komárom (Wenceslaus of Dubá), Vitány (Eric Silstrang), and of Bratislava (*Sighardus*, and maybe Peter Kapler too). Engel, *Archontológia*, 317, 344, 395, 462. Holding Bratislava castle under one's authority and the position of *ispán* of the county were interconnected. Ibid., 166. Before this transaction was concluded, on 22 June 1410 Sigismund called Frederick in one of his documents "*et inter cetera comiti comitatus Posoniensis*" which would presuppose that already then Bratislava castle was under his jurisdiction. ZsO II. 7712. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 182.

<sup>458</sup> There are a few charters issued by Burgrave Frederick from Bratislava without specifying whether they refer to the town or to the castle. Since the castle was transferred to him, he could easily issue those charters from there. "*Geben zu Presspurg*" Traugott Märcker, Rudolf Freiherrn von Stillfried, *Monumenta Zollerana. Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte des Hauses Hohenzollern. vol. VII. Urkunden der fränkischen Linie: 1411 – 1417* (Berlin: Ernst & Korn, 1861), 11,22. ZsO. II. 792, 986. "*Geben...czu Presspurg*" Adolph Friedrich Riedel, *Codex diplomaticus Brandenburgensis. Sammlung der Urkunden, Chroniken und sonstigen Geschichtsquellen für die Geschichte der Mark Brandenburg und ihrer Regenten. Band X, Teil 1* (Berlin: F.H. Morin, 1856), 136. ZsO. II, 987.

<sup>459</sup> Nonetheless, it is telling that out of the four castles involved in the transaction, seemingly Sigismund could dispose with three (Bratislava, Komárom, Gesztes) from the years 1421-1422. Between 1418 and 1436 there is no data about the castellans of Vitány. Engel, *Archontológia*, 316, 344, 394-395, 462. Darina Lehotská, *Archív mesta Bratislavy: inventár stredovekých listín, listov a iných príbuzných písomností* [Archive of the town of Bratislava: inventory of medieval documents, letters and other related documents] (Prague: Archivna správa ministerstva vnútra, 1956), 115-139.

rejected the possibility of transferring Bratislava into private hands, even for short time, this changed after the imperial election and especially after the Council of Constance. Then the need for an administrative-governmental center emerged, and Bratislava's role had been reevaluated;<sup>460</sup> its separation from the royal authority was not possible anymore.

If pledging free royal towns entirely was somewhat out of the ordinary, putting in pledge or allocating their annual tax was certainly not. This was Sigismund's common method in the Holy Roman Empire, where he did not put in pledge an entire *Reichsstädte*, but only their annual tax.<sup>461</sup> In Hungary, first in 1410 he assigned a yearly sum of 968 florins from Košice's 2.000 florins<sup>462</sup> *census* to the widow of Vladislaus II of Opole, Euphemia of Masovia to clear off a debt of 9.668 florins.<sup>463</sup> Then, two years later he gave in pledge the annual tax of Bardejov (500 florins) with the New Year's gift to a Polish knight named Andrzej Balicki.<sup>464</sup> Finally, Sopron's annual *census* (400 florins) was given in pledge to the widow of Nicholas Gutgesel in 1436.<sup>465</sup> In these types of transactions, the pledge holders or the creditors did not get any kind of authority within the town, they were not entitled to intervene in the towns' internal affairs, nor to limit their self-governance. In some cases, this new situation — where the pledgee and the town had to cooperate — could have even led to a strengthening of the rapport between the two sides, particularly when the pledge holder was a nearby landowner having contacts already with the town.<sup>466</sup> Nevertheless, at the same time the pledging could occasionally also act as the starting point for conflict between the two. This happened with the town of Bardejov too. Interestingly, while putting in pledge the whole community of Bratislava did not generate tensions between the town and Margrave Jobst, whereas in Bardejov's case — where the members of the predege-holding Balicki family had no right to intervene into the town's internal affairs — this caused disagreement.<sup>467</sup> Here the dispute was

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<sup>460</sup> Concrete steps of turning Bratislava into primary royal residence were taken from the 1420s, however the idea had arisen a decade earlier, and initially Dévény castle (located nearby Bratislava) was chosen for this purpose. Although, Bratislava did not take Buda's role over as the capital of the country, the royal courts' presence and the influence of royal administration left its imprints on the town. Kondor, *The Ginger fox's*, 160-161. Papp, *Die neue Residenz*, 239-245.

<sup>461</sup> See page 22.

<sup>462</sup> Engel, *The realm*, 226.

<sup>463</sup> Thus, the widow collected this sum for a decade. HHStA Wien, Reichsregister E, fol. 186v. ZsO II. 7854, ZsO V. 875.

<sup>464</sup> DF 212748.

<sup>465</sup> Károly Ráth, "A soproni kapitányság és a királyi adóról szóló oklevelek" [Charters about the captaincy and the tax of Sopron] *Magyar Történelmi Tár* Series I, Vol. 1, (1855): 144.

<sup>466</sup> Fahlbusch, *Städte und Königtum*, 202.

<sup>467</sup> It should be noted that the pledging lasted much longer for Bardejov than Bratislava, almost for one hundred years (until 1505). Sroka, *A középkori Bártfa*, 40.

about the New Year's gift, usually a roll of fine cloth, which the burghers were not obliged to pay since Sigismund exempted them from doing it.<sup>468</sup> Still, the members of the Balicki family kept demanding it from the town's magistrate, and at one point one of the pledgees called the burghers of the town his subjects and even threatened them with taking hostages and arresting members of their community.<sup>469</sup>

There was another free royal town involved in pledging: Prešov, but its case is surrounded by uncertainty due to the lack of sources. Only a single piece of evidence has been preserved about the transaction, and even that is much more about the redemption than the initial conclusion of the deal. This charter from 17 January 1405 informs us that the king pledged Prešov earlier to Oswald Poháros Kapi because Sigismund owed him money. After the first failed attempt to redeem the town,<sup>470</sup> Sigismund commissioned Marc of Nuremberg, the *comes* of the mining dues (*urbura*) and of the thirtieth, to clear his debt and redeem the town. Furthermore, the ruler strictly prohibited Poháros to take advantage of the situation and attempt to force the urban community to any kind of payment or restrict the town magistrate's judicial autonomy.<sup>471</sup> The prohibition was necessary, the ruler argued, because Poháros strove to constrain the burghers to make various payments, intended to subdue them under his authority, and wanted to treat them as his own subjects or as people given in pledge.<sup>472</sup> Precisely, this prohibition proves that Poháros had no right to do any of these things, and the pledging authorized him to collect the town's annual tax only. However, a year earlier the king had given an exemption for twelve years to Prešov from paying the annual tax in order to repair the town's old walls and to finish the new ones.<sup>473</sup> Thus, as a consequence of

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<sup>468</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>469</sup> János Incze, "'Bound by Pledge.' Bártfa and King Sigismund's Policy of Pledging Towns." *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 19 (2013): 91-92.

<sup>470</sup> First Filippo Scolari was entrusted with the task of redemption.

<sup>471</sup> "... *unde ipsi vestre fidelitati vestre firmissime precipimus et mandamus, quatenus praefatos judicem, iuratos ac totam communitatem memorate civitatis nostre Eperies vocate, occasione et pretextu premissorum nullatenus impedire, aut vestre ex eo impignoraticie iurisdictioni subicere, ipsosque ad alicuius taxe, census et collectarum solucionem astringere presumatis...*" DL 42834, Fejér X/4, 283-284.

<sup>472</sup> "...*quoniam uti intelleximus ipsos et eorum quemlibet ratione non redemptionis premissae dicioni vestre subdere et tanquam vobis subditos et pro pignore traditos ad solucionem diversorum dacionum astringere niteremini et velletis...*" Ibid.

<sup>473</sup> ZsO II. 2984. Gulyás László Szabolcs, "Városfalépítés a középkori Eperjesen" [Building town walls in medieval Prešov], in *Falak és választóvonalak a történelemben*. Terminus könyvek 1. [Walls and demarcation lines in history], ed. Attila Buhály, Gábor Reszler, György Szoboszlai (Nyíregyháza: Nyíregyházi Főiskola Történettudományi és Filozófia Intézete, 2014), 133. András Vadas, "Városárok és vízgazdálkodás a késő-középkori Közép-Európa városaiban" [Town ditches and water management in Central European towns of the late Middle Ages] *Urbs. Magyar Várostörténeti Évkönyv X–XI* (2015): 338-339.



this exemption Poháros could not collect the tax from the town, but since the first attempt of redemption had failed Prešov was still in pledge. Therefore, Poháros, in order to extract some revenues which he was entitled to, seized a horse from the town.<sup>474</sup> As a response to this, the town's magistrate filed a complaint to the king who had to intervene in the debate.

Towns were important for a king for their military potential, for their residential services, for providing information from their intelligence networks, for organizing diplomatic meetings, and lastly for their financial potential.<sup>475</sup> Perhaps, it is not an exaggeration to claim that finances represented the cornerstone of the rapport between Sigismund and the towns. This is what András Kubinyi formulated in the way that in Sigismund's town policy "financial considerations prevailed."<sup>476</sup> No wonder that exactly finances could sometimes deteriorate the otherwise generally harmonious relationship between Sigismund and his towns.<sup>477</sup> In the case of a ruler who was known for using each and every resource for covering his expenses and solving his liquidity problems, towns represented just another source of capital. That is why pledging was an important alternative method besides loans, extraordinary tax,<sup>478</sup> etc. to extract money from these settlements. The major difference was that pledging could easily become a first step in the alienation of the royal towns, as presumably happened in the case of many pledged market towns. Moreover, since the decrees prohibiting the pledging of royal towns were passed at the diet more than half a century later than Sigismund's death, only in 1514, there was no protection even for the free royal towns.<sup>479</sup> Although Bratislava was put in pledge in 1385 under highly unusual circumstances, and it is also true that Sigismund tried to keep the richest and the most important towns under royal authority, as the example of the 31 October 1402 transaction shows, he did not rule out the possibility of pledging them entirely either.

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<sup>474</sup> DL 42834, Fejér X/4, 283-284.

<sup>475</sup> Szende, *Between hatred and affection*, 210.

<sup>476</sup> "...várospolitikájában fiskális szempontok érvényesültek..." Kubinyi, *Zsigmond király*, 242.

<sup>477</sup> By levying extraordinary taxes on towns, or by demanding additional financial contributions from them. Szende, *Between hatred and affection*, 205.

<sup>478</sup> See page 53. Concerning the extraordinary taxes see the chapter about Sigismund's revenues.

<sup>479</sup> Kubinyi, *A magyarországi városhálózat*, 50-51.

## The Pledging of Castles

Sigismund of Luxembourg's reign in Hungary was a decisive period not only for the development of market towns but for castles, too. The fifteenth century — including Sigismund's reign — is considered today as the second most significant era for the history of the country's medieval castles. Already from the 1370s, several new large private and royal castles were built, but the onset of the new era is marked by Sigismund's rise to power after which a great number of new royal, queenly, and private castles, were erected, which were outstanding regarding their construction quality and architecture.<sup>480</sup> Additionally, castles played a major role during Sigismund's reign in the crown's loss of influence in favor of the aristocracy's. During this period, the crown irreversibly lost its position as the largest holder of castles to the private owners, and as a consequence, the aristocracy's power grew so much in this regard that it not only equaled the crown's but even exceeded it. The alienation of crown castles occurred in a short period of time, not much longer than a decade. While in 1382, there were 150 royal and queenly castles in Hungary, in 1396 their number was only 65.<sup>481</sup> Most of them were alienated in the form of hereditary grants, but among them there were also pledges which were turned into donations later. Sigismund took a thrifty approach concerning donations after 1396, but this did not include his pledgings. That is why he continued to put royal properties in pledge, in even higher numbers than prior to 1396. The high number of castles involved in these transactions indicates that they played a key role in his pledging practice. Because of this prominent role, it is worth taking a closer look at what a contemporary castle was, and what exactly was transferred to the pledgees through these transactions.

The Latin term, *castrum* was used in the charters as a collective noun comprising different kinds of fortified and residential places. First, there were the so-called *refugium* type, which was usually a building designed to provide shelter in case of danger. Such were the forts of the Szeklerland or the so-called “peasant castles” of the Transylvanian Saxons.<sup>482</sup> Then, in certain cases, it could

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<sup>480</sup> István Feld, “A 15. századi *castrum* mint kutatási probléma” [The fifteenth century *castrum* as a research issue] *Castrum Bene* 2 (1990): 13-17.

<sup>481</sup> Engel, *Vár és hatalom*, 184-185. Engel, *The realm*, 200. Also, see page 150.

<sup>482</sup> Horváth, *Várak és uraik*, 64.

denote even a tower without a palace or other buildings,<sup>483</sup> just as when it was used as a synonym for a house or a manor house.<sup>484</sup> This applies likewise for the pledged castles. For example, the tiny castle of Stupčanica (Szaplunca) consisted of a donjon, walls and a few adjacent buildings of smaller size, but it was called *castrum* just like the large quadrangle shaped castle of Diósgyőr with its two stories and large courtyard.<sup>485</sup>

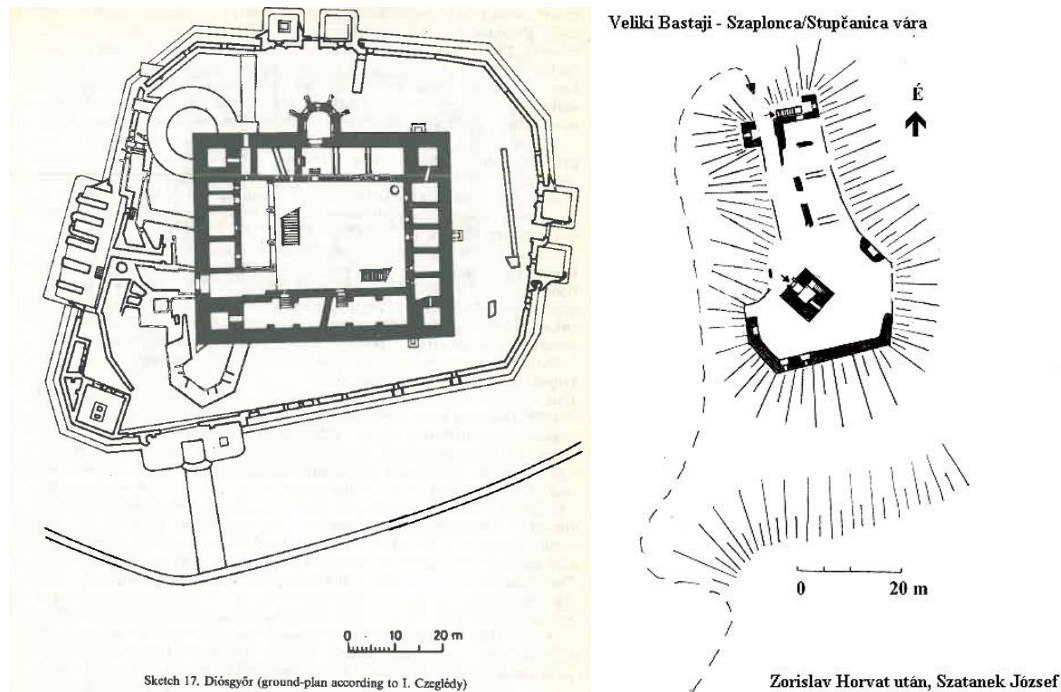


Fig. X. The ground plans of Diósgyőr and Stupčanica<sup>486</sup>

Similar problems could be observed in the case of the *castella* too, which also appear in the contracts of pledge, although not as frequently as the castles. The word was also a collective noun, the meaning of which covered residential palaces of the nobility, towers used during sieges, fortified churches and monasteries intended for military purposes.<sup>487</sup>

To complicate things further, there were differences between the castles and the *castella*, too. For a long period of time, scholars tried to trace these differences in the building characteristics, size,

<sup>483</sup> Erik Fügedi, *Vár és társadalom a 13-14. századi Magyarországon* [Castle and society in 13-14<sup>th</sup> century Hungary]. (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1977), 9-10.

<sup>484</sup> Horváth, *Várak és uraik*, 68-70.

<sup>485</sup> DL 3341, 12351. Fügedi, *Castle and society* 118. Erik Fügedi, *Vár és társadalom*, 196 (adattár).

<sup>486</sup> <http://www.varak.hu/latnivalo/index/1506-Veliki-Bastaji-Szaplunca-Stupcanica/> (accessed 05 April 2018); Fügedi, *Castle and society*, 177.

<sup>487</sup> Tibor Koppány, *A középkori Magyarország kastélyai* [The *castella* of medieval Hungary] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1999), 78.

outer appearance, but even if it seems that in the early phase the *castella* were mostly made of wood, a very clear distinction, purely based on building morphology however, cannot be made in the late Middle Ages.<sup>488</sup> That said, an important criterion of the *castella* was the existence of a rampart, ditch and palisade or stone wall. Also, it seems that the castles were mostly in the aristocracy's possession while the middling nobility could not possess such but only *castella*. Nonetheless, the issuer and the purpose of issuing the charter played a major role in whether the building was called *castrum* or *castellum*.<sup>489</sup> Additionally, the owner's political position and social status could be so important that sometimes a simple manor house could be overrated and become *castellum* in the sources.<sup>490</sup>

Castles could be differentiated further by the existence of the appurtenances. The majority of medieval Hungary's settlements pertained to a castle estate, or in other words, the castle was the center of the appurtenances, but there were also castles without associated settlements and domains.<sup>491</sup> Among these was the royal residential seat of Buda, the chain of castles at the southern border, and the earlier mentioned *refugium* type fortified places. Unsurprisingly, due to the lack of pertaining domains, castles without estates were rarely mentioned in the sources except for Buda.<sup>492</sup> The great majority of the country's castles were however, surrounded by pertaining domains, perhaps from the very beginning when the castle was built. Town, villages and plots formed together the estate whose primary role was to provide supplies for the castle, its inhabitants, and for the soldiers stationed there. The estate and the castle were so closely combined that they were almost inseparable, that is why the estate followed the castle when this changed hands.<sup>493</sup> Nonetheless, the number of pertaining lands and settlements could vary easily, since often some of them were sold, granted away, or in other cases the estate was enlarged with further lands.<sup>494</sup>

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<sup>488</sup> Feld, *A 15. századi castrum*, 18. Size cannot be used as an indicator to determine the differences; there are examples for a castle and a *castellum* having roughly the same size. Koppány, *A középkori Magyarország kastélyai*, 82-83.

<sup>489</sup> *Ibid.*, 80-83.

<sup>490</sup> Archaeological research proved that the *castellum* in question was in fact a manor house without fortifications. Horváth, *Várak és uraik*, 71-73.

<sup>491</sup> István Kenyeres, "The Economy of Castle Estates in the Late Medieval Kingdom of Hungary" in *The Economy of Medieval Hungary*, ed. József Laszlovszky, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 394. Engel, *Vár és hatalom*, 171-172.

<sup>492</sup> Engel, *Vár és hatalom*, 171. Horváth, *Várak és uraik*, 64.

<sup>493</sup> Engel, *Vár és hatalom*, 162-163.

<sup>494</sup> Erik Fügedi, "Középkori várak, középkori társadalom" [Medieval castles, medieval society] in *Várépítészetiünk* [Castle construction in Hungary], ed. László Gerő (Budapest: Műszaki Könyvkiadó, 1977), 72-73. Fügedi, *Vár és társadalom*, 14-15.

The castles put in pledge by Sigismund were also surrounded by estates of different size. For example, Boldogkő and Füzér castles with their six and eight villages had fewer pertaining settlements, while Đurđevac stands as one of the larger estates with its two market towns and seventy-two villages.<sup>495</sup> To castle Stupčanica two market towns and sixty-two villages or deserted settlements belonged, perhaps that is why the castle's pledging value was so high (10.000 florins) despite the small size of the castle itself.<sup>496</sup> However, ultimately not the quantity of the appurtenances but the revenues they produced determined the worth of the castle.<sup>497</sup>

While in general there is a general lack of source material which could highlight the composition and the amount of revenues produced by these estates before the battle of Mohács. One source that could fill this gap as an exemplar, reflecting what type of revenues the pledge holder could collect from an estate, is a document from 1372 related to the estate of Timișoara. According to this, the estate's lord had at his disposal the following types of revenues: the tax of the towns of Timișoara and Șemlacu Mare (Mezősomlyó) - this was the largest (400 florins) -, tax of other settlements, and various customs. These were the revenues collected in money; besides these there were incomes collected in kind. Unfortunately, the information provided by this document is incomplete and it remains unknown what other sources of revenues could possibly be, and also whether this data covers a whole year or only just a part of it.<sup>498</sup>

The best-preserved sources for the economy of the secular estates come from the years immediately prior to and soon after the battle of Mohács, like the ones about the estates of Hunedoara and Gyula. According to these, the annual income of the Hunedoara estate was around 3.000-4.000 florins between 1511-1522, while Gyula's was between 6.000-7.000 in the years from 1526 until 1529. The primary sources of wealth came from the extraordinary tax, the royal war dues, the exchange of gold, the incomes related to the mills, and the seigneurial tax (*census*). Concerning the expenses of the estates, the largest outlays were represented by the wages of the garrisons, the castellans, and the payments made to the lord of the estates, George of Brandenburg.<sup>499</sup> While it is

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<sup>495</sup> Mályusz, *The Four Tallóci*, 155. Pál Engel, „A magyarországi birtokszerkezet átalakulása a Zsigmond korban. Öt északkeleti megye példája” [The transformation of the Hungarian domain structure in the Sigismund period. The example of five north-eastern counties], in *Honor, vár, ispánság* [Honor, castle, ispanate], ed. Enikő Csukovics (Budapest: Osiris, 2003), 455-456.

<sup>496</sup> Dezső Csánki, *Körösmegye a XV-ik században* [Körös county in the fifteenth century] (Budapest: MTA, 1893), 49.

<sup>497</sup> Fügedi, *Középkori várak*, 73.

<sup>498</sup> Engel, *Honor, vár, ispánság*, 112-113. Engel, *The realm*, 151.

<sup>499</sup> Kenyeres, *The economy of castle estates*, 396, 399-410.

true that seventy or ninety years earlier during Sigismund's time, the structure of the estates' incomes could differ considerably,<sup>500</sup> and the amount of revenue produced could be significantly lower, however the largest category of the expenses were most probably the same in the case of the pledged estates by Sigismund as in Hunedoara's or Gyula's.

A key question related to the estates was their sustainability, whether they could produce enough income to cover all their outlays. It is not by mere coincidence that such question is in the focus of the research, since the examples of Gyula and Hunedoara also indicate that the years when the lords of the estates could not count on the war due or the seigneurial extraordinary tax, then the economy of the estates could run into serious financial difficulties and in the worst cases could face bankruptcy.<sup>501</sup> These were not exceptional cases; research has shown that often the revenues of the estates could barely cover their maintenance costs, and they were saved only by the royal war due and the extraordinary tax.<sup>502</sup> Nevertheless, landlords found enticing the prospect of owning multiple estates, because through enlarging their possessions their power grew, and with it they had better chance to obtain a profitable office in the royal administration.<sup>503</sup>

During Sigismund's reign there was no war due in this form, and the pledge holders of the royal estates received authorization for collecting extraordinary tax only from around 1426, but even this was not extended to everyone. In the face of a lack of sources, a conclusive answer cannot be given to the problem of sustainability, whether this was a problem also during Sigismund's time or only a later development. However, there are hints that the estates could sometimes experience financial difficulties earlier too, for example when refurbishment had to be carried out on the castle. Even the so far earliest known castle pledging in Hungary was related to its refurbishment. Castle Sirok was given in pledge to its castellan by King Louis I in August 1372, because the castellan lent money to the ruler, who intended to spend it “*ad opus et reformationem ipsius*

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<sup>500</sup> For example, holders of estate were entitled to take a share from the royal war due as a result of the military reform of the 1498 and 1500.

<sup>501</sup> Kenyeres, *The economy of castle estates*, 401.

<sup>502</sup> According to András Kubinyi, also the church estates were not lucrative and only the tithe and the church's share from the royal tax collection could save them from financial troubles. András Kubinyi, *Változások a középkor végi Magyarországon* [Changes in late medieval Hungary]. (Budapest: História/MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 1993), 14-15. Árpád Nógrády, “Taxa - extraordinaria? Széljegyzetek Kanizsai László kapuvári-sárvári számadáskönyvének margójára” [Taxa extraordinaria? Side notes on Ladislas Kanizsia's account book of Kapuvár and Sárvár] in *In memoriam Barta Gábor. Tanulmányok Barta Gábor emlékére* [In memoriam Barta Gábor, Studies in memoriam Gábor Barta], ed. István Lengvári (Pécs: Janus Pannonius Tudományegyetem, 1996), 132.

<sup>503</sup> Kubinyi, *Változások*, 15-16.

*castrum*.<sup>504</sup> This example was not without parallel, but was present among the pledged castles of Sigismund. Even his very first pledged castle Somló was refurbished by the pledge holder during the pledge period.<sup>505</sup> The degree of the necessary intervention on the edifices could vary from smaller renovation works to the full refurbishment of the buildings. For example, no more than a few months after Bernstein castle was given in pledge to the Kanizsais, the king authorized Nicholas Kanizsai to recondition the building and the structure of the castle,<sup>506</sup> because it needed heavy repairs.<sup>507</sup> It is not known how much all these works cost Kanizsai, but in other cases exactly the sums of the refurbishments can indicate to some extent the condition of the building. For example, renovation of a smaller magnitude appears to have been required for Ozalj castle, since Sigismund agreed to cover the costs of these until they reached 400 florins.<sup>508</sup> Higher were the refurbishment costs for Kittsee; here they amounted up to 2.000 florins, while on castle Gelnica, the pledge holder could spend a yearly 500 florins, for which Sigismund assigned a source of revenue independent from the pledge.<sup>509</sup> It needs to be emphasized that the bad conditions of the castles were not due to military operations, as no sieges were documented prior to the pledging of these castles. It was by rule that if a pledge holder effectuated such renovations on the pledge, then the costs of these had to be remunerated by the ruler.<sup>510</sup>

Historiographically, for a long time castles were primarily understood as military objects, and only later were their economic function brought to the forefront of research. However, modern scholarship has pointed out that the majority of Hungary's castles were not prepared for long sieges. They usually stationed only a smaller number of garrisons because their primary role was to stop a hostile attack only for a few days until a relief force would arrive.<sup>511</sup> Also, they were not just a mere source of wealth but military and economic units in the same time. Their importance went beyond even this, as castles embodied power itself. They represent the best the territorial

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<sup>504</sup> Fügedi, *Castle and society*, 105. DL 6047. It is interesting that the word *impignoratio* does not appear in any of its forms in the charter. By the document the king promised to the castellan that he and his offspring can keep Sirok until he or they would receive the lent money.

<sup>505</sup> DL 100237.

<sup>506</sup> "...*dictum castrum in necessariis reficiat et reparat edificiis ac structuris...*" DL 7472. ZsO I.888.

<sup>507</sup> "...*quod ipsum castrum in suis edificiis plurimum indigeat reformari...*" Ibid. The Kanizsais built even a new **storey** on the northern side of the castle, but they did this probably not during the period of pledge but after the castle was donated to them. Fügedi, *Vár és társadalom*, 112.

<sup>508</sup> DL 33980. Frangepán, 128.

<sup>509</sup> DL 11755, ZsO XIII. 105. DF 249918. Gusztáv Wenzel, *Magyarország bányászatának kritikai története* [A critical history of the mining of Hungary] (Budapest: MTA, 1880), 360-361.

<sup>510</sup> It was the same on the Holy Roman Empire. Landwehr, *Die Verpfändung*, 326.

<sup>511</sup> Horváth, *Várak és uraik*, 76-77.

principle of who owns the land has the power over it, since through them it was possible to secure territorial control over the land. Gaining power and extending it was possible through the holding of castles, therefore the rulers had to choose wisely to whom they entrusted the royal castles.<sup>512</sup> Loyalty had the utmost importance. In light of this, it becomes understandable why it was so much emphasized in Sigismund's pledging charters that pledging to a third party was possible only if that person was loyal to the king.<sup>513</sup> Disloyalty could quickly lead to the loss of the pledge. For this reason, the castle Sárvár was besieged by royal troops and seized from the Kanizsais by the ruler in 1403.<sup>514</sup> Archbishop John Kanizsai — as the intellectual leader of the rebellion against the crown — did more than enough to have his deeds considered as an indisputable proof of infidelity. Yet to lose one's castle pledge, it was not necessary to confront the royal power as openly as John Kanizsai did by to commit treachery, it was enough simply to refuse the ruler's admittance to a castle. This happened to the Transylvanian bishop also, who did not let King Louis enter one of his castles, therefore he became arrested, and all his properties were seized.<sup>515</sup> All this happened because building a castle in medieval Hungary required royal license which authorized its issuer and his successors to take control over the castles in certain cases.<sup>516</sup>

The exertion of this right — in the territory of the Holy Roman Empire known as *Öffnungsrecht* — began with the basic action of admitting the ruler in the premises of the castle. Interestingly, this question does not come up in Sigismund's charters of pledge issued in Hungary, but it is present in his Czech charters.<sup>517</sup> According to these, the pledge holder was obliged to open the castle gates to the king and his officials for defending the ruler's lands. The practice could not be much different in Hungary, as a charter of pledge issued by Queen Elizabeth (Sigismund's daughter) in March 1441 proves. By this, she put in pledge the castle Vígľaš (Végles) with the stipulation that at wartime, whenever she sends her retainers to the castle, these had to be

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<sup>512</sup> Fügedi, *Castle and society*, 115.

<sup>513</sup> This issue was discussed already, see footnotes: 292-293. Perhaps, this was partly the reason why the ruler's consent was needed for further pledging, because in this way he could avoid that his possession being held by someone to whom he did not want to entrust it.

<sup>514</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 405.

<sup>515</sup> Engel, *Vár és hatalom*, 171.

<sup>516</sup> Horváth, *Várak és uraik*, 90-91.

<sup>517</sup> For example: "...*debebit etiam predictum castrum Freyenberg quamdiu tempore in prefatus Henricus et sui heredes in sua habuerint potestate nobis fore apertum sic que nos et officiales nostri nostro nomine ad dictum castrum intrare et exire poterimus quocienscunque fuerit oportunitas pro nostris terris defendendis...*" Národní archive [National archives], České gubernium- listiny [Czech gubernium - charters], Inv. No. 187. I would like to thank Stanislav Bárta for the reference.



admitted.<sup>518</sup> Both instances refer to the pledge holders' obligation in wartime conditions, according to which during such periods they had to let the royal troops in the pledged castles. These documents do not clarify what the common practice was when no war was waged, but by looking at Sigismund's itinerary it becomes obvious that from time to time he visited the pledged settlements. Among these were estates as well, thus during such visits most probably the pledged castle gates were opened to the ruler and his retinue.<sup>519</sup>

The transfer of a castle invested the pledge holder with power. This was already expressed by the royal orders calling for obedience. In the charter pledging Appony castle, for instance, it was written that all the inhabitants living on the castle estate should obey in everything the pledge holder and his castellan, moreover they were to acknowledge his rights pertaining to the castle during the period of pledge.<sup>520</sup> This power authorized the pledgee to choose his personnel for administering the castle and the estate. The two of his most important office holders were the castellan and the steward. The castellan was named in the Appony charter as the second most important person in charge to whose authority the inhabitants had to submit. Although the castellan's and the steward's role cannot be always delimited clearly, it can be generally described in the following way: initially the castellan had duties relating to the economy of the estate, but from the late fourteenth century these tasks were gradually taken over by the steward. As a result, the castellan's primary role became military, that is, overseeing the castle's armed forces, but he also supervised the castle and the pertaining lands. The steward had a judicial function, but his tasks were more of economic and administrative character, for example, it was his job to collect the incomes.<sup>521</sup> Besides appointing his officials, the transaction of pledge invested the pledgee with

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<sup>518</sup> "...hoc specialiter adiecto quod quandocumque nos pro conservacione iurum nostrorum et dicti filii nostri antedictorum aut aliis quibuscunque rationabilibus de causis ingruenti temporis necessitate ad ipsum castrum nostrum Wygles quoscunque nostros fideles deputabimus et transmittemus recepta a nobis et ab eisdem idem Hening et Jost suficienți cautione illos omnes ad ipsum castrum nostrum Wygles intromittere teneantur et sunt obligati..." DL 63236.

<sup>519</sup> For example, in November 1412, he was in Bihać, in February 1423 in Kittsee. Engel, *Királyok és királynék itineráriumai*, 92, 113. Bihać was put in pledge first around 1410, while Kittsee was put in pledge to the Kapler family in 1422. Kittsee was kept in pledge even after Sigismund's death, and Bihać was recovered only in 1436. Engel, *Archontológia*, 280, 348.

<sup>520</sup> "...universis et singulis populis seu incolis nostris ad prefatum castrum nostrum spectantibus presentibus firmiter precipimus quatenus eidem magistro Desew et eius castellano tempus usque preafixum in omnibus obedire iuraque eiusdem castri nostri universa ipsis semper debitis in temporibus dare et administrare debeatis..." DL 7519. ZsO I. 1125.

<sup>521</sup> Kenyeres, *The economy of castle estates*, 397-399.

the jurisdiction over the tenant peasants of the castle estate, which primarily manifested itself in judicial authority.<sup>522</sup>

Castles were not only symbols of power but they were also mirrors of their owner's social status. Possessing a castle invested its possessor with prestige, so he was rightfully regarded as a lord. The fact that a castle was held only temporarily and not by hereditary right made no difference. Sklabiňa (Szklabinya) castle was held in pledge by the Balicki family, allowing one member to call himself “*dominus castri Szklabinya vocati tunc temporis existens*” in one of his charters.<sup>523</sup> This illustrates precisely how much holding of castles and *castella* could mean for the pledge holders, that some of them started to use the name of the pledged castle in their own names. This was especially characteristic to the foreign pledge holders, who either did not have any or only limited number of domains in the country. For instance, the castle of Šintava (Sempte) was among the very first domains of the Polish Mościc of Stęszew in Hungary. He held it in pledge already in 1410, and ten years later, when he still had it in pledge and wanted to transfer it to George Bazini, he entitled himself as “*Musticius de Pazna alias de Sempte*” in the charter of the transaction.<sup>524</sup> His compatriot, Donin of Skrzynno took in pledge the *castellum* of Nitrianska Streda (Szerdahely) around the same time when Mościc got Šintava. Donin made the *castellum* his primary seat of residence in Hungary and after it he was known mainly as *Donin de Zerdahel* in the country.<sup>525</sup>

The high number of the castles put in pledge by Sigismund indicates the active interest of the prospective pledge holders in having them. Their aspiration can be explained by the gains that the castles could offer and that other objects of pledge could not do. Most likely there could be sources of revenues whose pledging could possibly entice with higher profit than that of castle pledging, but no other object of pledge could invest its possessor with so much power and prestige as the castles did. As Pál Engel phrased it aptly, the possession of the castle did not make its owner richer but more powerful.<sup>526</sup> Although the pledgees held the castles only temporarily, during this period they had the authority over all the inhabitants of the large castle estates. Moreover, castles

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<sup>522</sup> Fügedi, *Vár és társadalom*, 15.

<sup>523</sup> DL 105169. Quoted by Dvořáková, *Lengyelek*, 406.

<sup>524</sup> DL 10970. ZsO VII. 2152. Dvořáková, *Lengyelek*, 403.

<sup>525</sup> *Ibid.*, 407. DL 50202. Also see: ZsO III. 1484.

<sup>526</sup> Engel, *Vár és hatalom*, 172.

could serve the pledge holders' self-representation and could help them to rise among the lords of the realm.

## The Pledging of *Comitatus*

One of the most interesting objects of pledge of Sigismund was the *comitatus*. The term had several meanings it had to be specified what it precisely denoted in these kinds of cases. The word often was used to mean county,<sup>527</sup> however, pledging an entire county was impossible even for a ruler as skillful in pledging as Sigismund was. Mainly because these administrative units incorporated not only royal domains, but many ecclesiastical and private ones too, and even among the royal properties there were settlements of special status. Pledging a county would have meant the violation of the property rights and privileges of the church, privileged groups and private persons.

In those cases of the *comitatus* pledging which were located in Croatia and Dalmatia the term denoted *župe*, which were administrative units different from the noble counties of Hungary due to historical reasons. After the late eleventh- and early twelfth-century conquests, Croatia remained a separate kingdom in union with Hungary, and it was part of its special status that it could preserve its custom and laws together with the small territorial units of the *župe*.<sup>528</sup> Among the pledging of *comitatus* the cases of Bužan, and of Lika and Poljica fit into this category. All these were pledged practically in their entirety. The *župa* of Bužan for example, was put in pledge “with all of its revenues, appurtenances, rights and jurisdiction,<sup>529</sup> while Lika and Poljica “together with all of their castles, towns, forts, and the districts, and with all those territories, possessions, villages, rights, incomes, taxes, services, revenues and offices anyhow pertaining to them and owe to belong to them by law and by practice.”<sup>530</sup>

<sup>527</sup> For all of its meanings see: Iván Boronkai ed., *Lexicon latinitatis medii aevi Hungariae*, vol. 2, fasc. 2 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1991), 197-198.

<sup>528</sup> Engel, *The realm*, 34.36. *KMTL*, 272.

<sup>529</sup> “...*comitatum Busaan vocatum simulcum suis utilitatibus pertinentiis iuribus et iurisdictionibus universis...*” DL 33933. The charter was issued in April 1401. *ZsO*. II. 995.

<sup>530</sup> “...*simulcum universis eorundem castrorum, civitatum, castellorum ac comitatuuum districtibus, territoriis, possessionibus, villis, iuribus, obventionibus, censibus serviciis, redditibus et honoribus qualitercumque ad eadem et easdem de iure et de facto spectantibus et pertinere debentibus...*” DF 258343. Frangepán I/231.

A third meaning of the word denoted the *ispán*'s<sup>531</sup> office, which was the most important position within the county. The Hungarian word originated from the Slavic *župan* meaning a “local lord,” similarly to its Latin equivalent *comes*, which was used to mean a person of higher rank. The *ispán*, appointed at the ruler’s discretion, was the representative of the king in the county. He was in charge of administering the county and except the hereditary *ispán* (*comes perpetuus*)<sup>532</sup> the ruler could remove him from office at any time. It was the *ispán*'s responsibility to guarantee that the privileges and the rights of the county’s nobility are respected, and it was also his duty to prevent lawlessness. He oversaw that the contents of the royal charters and mandates were fulfilled. Furthermore, he supervised the transport of salt in the county, the collection of revenues, and he also had to ensure the unrestricted circulation of money. Due to the legal concept of the period that defined the form of tenure as dual – meaning that the domains belonged to the ruler and to the officer at the same time<sup>533</sup> – the *ispánok* considered themselves and acted as the landlords of the estates under their jurisdiction.<sup>534</sup> The holder of this dignity had military obligations as well, since he had to lead the troops of the county’s nobility.<sup>535</sup> The *ispán* had at his disposal all the goods and domains of the county that pertained to the office and were entrusted to him by the king. This form of tenure of the royal domains was called an *honor* and served as the buttress for securing the loyalty and cooperation of the governing elite in the Angevin period.<sup>536</sup>

<sup>531</sup> In referring to the head of the county and his deputy I follow the terminology developed for the *Decreta regni mediaevalis hungariae 1301-1457*. The Latin term (*comes*) would presuppose a titular nobility which did not exist in the period, and the English terms (count, sheriff, etc.) does not cover the same meaning as the Hungarian word. Tamás Pálosfalvi, *The noble elite in the county of Körös (Križevci) 1400 - 1526* (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, Történettudományi Intézet, 2014), 7. János M. Bak et al. ed. *The laws of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary 1301-1457, Decreta regni mediaevalis Hungariae 1301-1457, Glossaries and select subject index, series I, volume I* (Salt Lake City: Charles Schlacks, Jr., 1992), 141, 146.

<sup>532</sup> The hereditary *ispán* was in charge of the office till his death. Norbert C. Tóth, “Hereditary countships in the age of Sigismund of Luxemburg” *Transylvanian Review* 19 Nr. 2, (2010): 1081-1082. Norbert C. Tóth, *Szabolcs megye működése a Zsigmond-korban* [The functioning of Szabolcs County in the Sigismund-era] (Nyíregyháza: Szabolcs Községért Kulturális Közhasznú Közalapítvány, 2008), 28-29.

<sup>533</sup> However, the officer’s tenure should be understood as administrative rather than as a real possession – usufruct as opposed to full ownership.

<sup>534</sup> Engel, *A honor*, 80-83. Most probable, the incomes from the royal estates were their most important source of revenue. Engel, *The realm*, 151. *KMTL*, 267 (entry: honor).

<sup>535</sup> C. Tóth, *Szabolcs megye*, 135.

<sup>536</sup> C. Tóth, *Hereditary countships*, 1081-1082. Norbert C. Tóth, *Szabolcs megye működése a Zsigmond-korban* [The functioning of Szabolcs County in the Sigismund-era] (Nyíregyháza: Szabolcs Községért Kulturális Közhasznú Közalapítvány, 2008), 28-29. István Tringli, “Megyék a középkori Magyarországon” [Counties in medieval Hungary] in *Honoris causa: tanulmányok Engel Pál tiszteletére* [Honoris causa: Studies in Honor of Pál Engel], ed. Tibor Neumann, György Rác (Budapest: MTA, Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem, 2009), 508. *Lexicon latinitatis*, 191 (entry: *comes*). Gyula Kristó, ed., *Korai magyar történelmi lexikon, 9-14. század* [Historical lexicon of early Hungary, 9-14 centuries] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1994), (hereafter *KMTL*), 450.

Already at the time of Sigismund's reign it was common that the *ispánok* would not reside permanently in their counties but preferred to stay at the royal court or to accompany the ruler on his journeys. This was so, because they often had other offices and with the emergence of their deputies these could take over their superior's tasks.<sup>537</sup> The *ispán* appointed his deputy (*alispán*) at his pleasure just as the ruler did with the *ispán* (*durante beneplacito*). At the time of the appointment the *alispán* and his superior concluded a contract of *familiaritas*. They had to reach common terms regarding the wages of the *alispán*, who also got his share from the fines paid to the *ispán*. In the absence of the *ispánok* their deputies had to do the brunt of the work. They were involved in the day-to-day activities of the county, for they presided over the county's court, and often they also acted as castellans of the county's most important castles. Besides the *alispán*, the castellans of the castles under the *ispán*'s authority were also appointed by the *ispán*. The castellans' duties were to ensure the castle's protection and to administer the domains pertaining to the castle, yet their authority did not go beyond the boundaries of the castle and its manor.<sup>538</sup> In all those case of *comitatus* pledging which were not related to Croatia or Dalmatia the *ispán*'s office was put in pledge, together with the castle which served as his residence. Because in fact, certain castles were connected with the *ispán*'s position of that county where the castle was

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<sup>537</sup> C. Tóth, *Szabolcs megye*, 27.

<sup>538</sup> Bak, *Glossaries and select subject index*, 141-142. Tringli, *Megyék a középkori Magyarországon*, 509, 511. Pál Engel, *Honor, vár, ispánság*, 123-124.

situated. This was in the cases for example with the castles<sup>539</sup> of Diósgyőr in Borsod,<sup>540</sup> Vrbaški (Orbász) in Orbász, Sklabiňa in Turóc, Veľký (Nagyvár) in Liptó, Spišský (Szepesvár) in Szepes and perhaps even the palace of Virovitica (Verőce) in Verőce County can be mentioned here.<sup>541</sup> All these castles (and palace) were the subject of pledgings, and holding them under one's authority meant that the pledgee could dispose of the *ispán*'s office in the county.

In Liptó, Veľký castle was the oldest in the county and the most important, and it functioned as the center of the county,<sup>542</sup> therefore it is no wonder that it was interconnected with the *ispán*'s office. The County of Liptó together with Turóc were initially constituents of the huge County of Zólyom. Originally, this was a royal forest with an *ispán* in charge, where the noble county emerged later than in other parts of the kingdom, and which was partitioned in 1339 into three independent counties: Zólyom, Turóc, and Liptó.<sup>543</sup> Despite the partition, they had a somewhat similar fate during the rule of Sigismund. Zólyom was donated to Queen Barbara, who received in pledge Liptó too, while Turóc was given in pledge to a Polish nobleman. In a transaction made on

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<sup>539</sup> Pál Engel suggested that Trencsén County (the *ispán*'s office) was given in pledge for three years by Sigismund to Louis II Duke of Brzeg and Legnica in 1418. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 163, 188-189. Engel, *Archontológia*, 213. The regesta of Wilhelm Altmann might be the source of confusion, since according to the charter itself only the castle with the town were given in pledge "...vor dem vorgehenden Ludwig versprochen und versprechen mit unsern kunlichen worten in craft diß briefs vierczigtusent gulden rheinischer zu eegelt und heimsteure zu der vorgehenden Elsbeten zugeben, und bewisen im auch dieselben vierczigtusent gulden uf unserm sloss und stat zu Trencsch..."DF 287090. In Wilhelm Altmann's excerpt of the charter this is phrased as: "Schloss Land u. St. Trencschin." Altmann, *Regesta Imperii* XI, 4510. If Trencsén castle was the seat of the *ispán* and the office was interconnected with the possessing of the castle, then it might be the case that Duke Louis indeed had disposal of the office. Pál Engel presumed that a certain Nicholas Czedlicz, who was attested as the *ispán* of Trencsén County in 1420, might have been Duke Louis' adherent. Engel, *Archontológia*, 213. In his testament from 1415, Ulrich Wolfurt mentions that he received Óvár castle and *toto comitatu* in pledge from the ruler. Óvár castle of Moson County was indeed combined with the *ispán*'s office but this interconnection ended exactly with transferring the castle to Wolfurt. The castle was under the Wolfurt family's authority until 1440, but neither them nor their adherents became *ispánok* of Moson. DL 10350. Béla Radvánszky, Levente Závodszy ed., *A Héderváry-család oklevéltára. I.* [The chartulary of the Héderváry family I] (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1909), 148. Engel, *Archontológia*, 155, 385-386. The county of Árva covered mainly the territory of the Árva castle and the pertaining estates until the mid-fifteenth century. The county was governed by the castellans of Árva, who rarely bore the title of *ispán*. Engel, *Archontológia*, 99. The castle was pledged twice by Sigismund (to Vladislaus II of Opole in 1397, and to Stibor of Stiboricz jr. in 1420), but none of the pledge holders entitled themselves as the *ispánok* of the county nor they appointed anyone to this function. CDS XXXI/ 22-23. DL 64749. In 1424 Stibor jr. pledged further the castle to the Balicki family, whose member Nicholas acted as the *ispán* of Árva County between 1435 and 1450. Engel, *Archontológia*, 99; Engel *Királyi hatalom*, 94; Dvořáková, *Lengyelek*, 406-407.

<sup>540</sup> Tringli, *Megyék*, 508.

<sup>541</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 162, 195, 215, 230. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 157, 175, 185, 189. Iván Borsa, "Turóc vármegye ispánjai és alispánjai 1526-ig" [The *ispánok* and *alispánok* of Turóc County till 1526] *Levéltári Közlemények* 60 (1989): 199.

<sup>542</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 150. Engel, *Királyi hatalom* 136.

<sup>543</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 244. Turóc. Elemér Mályusz, Turóc megye kialakulása [The emergence of Turóc County]. Budapest: Budavári Tudományos Társaság, 1922, 169. Borsa, *Turóc vármegye*, 199.

June 2nd 1410 Sigismund put in pledge the town of Debrecen and the castle of Sklabiňa together with the *comitatus* of Turóc<sup>544</sup> to Andrew Balicki.<sup>545</sup> Two years later, Sigismund swapped Debrecen with the tax of the free royal town of Bardejov. In both charters there is no elaboration on what was meant by *comitatus*,<sup>546</sup> but undoubtedly in this case it was used in the sense of *dignitas comitis* (the *ispán*'s office),<sup>547</sup> just as in other similar cases.

The other part of the former Zólyom County, Liptó had the same fate as Turóc, nonetheless this was sort of a “family business.” After a Hussite incursion into North-West Hungary in the spring of 1430, Sigismund intended to strengthen the defense of these territories exposed to the heretics' attacks and started to raise capital to put in some security measures.<sup>548</sup> His wife Barbara was one of the sources of funds; on June 24th she lent 4.100 florins to Sigismund. For her financial contribution, she was compensated with Nagyvár and the *comitatus* of Liptó. While in the case of Turóc there were no any additional information about the pledging of the *comitatus*, here is a brief remark that it was pledged together with its jurisdiction.<sup>549</sup> Throughout Sigismund's lifetime three castles belonged to the jurisdiction of the *ispán* of Liptó county (Veľký castle, Liptovský Hrádok, Likavka).<sup>550</sup> On the same day when Veľký castle was transferred to Barbara, Liptovský Hrádok (Újvár) was pledged too for 2.000 florins.<sup>551</sup> Four days later, Sigismund ordered the master of treasury to cede the castles to the queen's official because he pledged them to her.<sup>552</sup> There is no information about the third castle Likavka (Likava), in these documents, still it seems that it was also in the queen's possession since she called it *castrum nostrum* in 1431.<sup>553</sup>

It is a question that if the king took back the *ispán*'s office and the castles from palatine Nicholas Garai in 1407 on the ground of greater security at the country's borders, then why he

<sup>544</sup> “...castrum nostrum Sklabonya vocatum in comittatu de Turoch existens cum dicto comittatu” DF 212742.

<sup>545</sup> For further details about the transaction see: Incze, *Bound by pledge*, 86-89.

<sup>546</sup> “...castrum nostrum Sklabonya in comittatu de Turuch existens cum dicto comittatu” DF 212748.

<sup>547</sup> There are other examples of this meaning of the term: “dictum comitatum tamquam regni nostri honorem sibi cum omnibus iuribus suis conferendo” quoted by Pál Engel, in: Engel, Honor, vár, ispánság, 108. Or “ac comitatu in ipsa terra Lyptouiensi existentibus” DL 9317. The *comitatus*' meaning of the *ispán*'s office often blurred with that of the county. *Lexicon latinitatis*, 197.

<sup>548</sup> The Hussite raid of this year and the measures taken by Sigismund following the attack are elaborated later in the dissertation in the war financing subchapter.

<sup>549</sup> “...castrum nostrum Naghwar vocatum in comitatu Liptoviensi habitum simulcum eodem comitatu Lyptoviensi et omnimoda iurisdictione eiusdem...” DL 71678.

<sup>550</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 150. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 180.

<sup>551</sup> DF 287804.

<sup>552</sup> DL 83650.

<sup>553</sup> Fejér X/7 350. There are no data about Likava from 1430, this is the first mention of it after 1429. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 131.

pledged it to his wife in the middle of the Hussite incursions.<sup>554</sup> Of course money was vital for the defense of the area, but a few months after the conclusion of the transaction, the Hussite troops captured Likavka where they set up their headquarters in Hungary.<sup>555</sup> Veľký castle suffered an even worse fate; the Hussites destroyed it and it was not rebuilt,<sup>556</sup> thus, the queen lost two castles not long after they were pledged to her.

Diósgyőr castle was also pledged to Barbara around 1427, but since the charter of the transaction has not been preserved, it is unknown when it was concluded exactly.<sup>557</sup> The county of Verőce was related to the queen too, since it was a queenly domain from the thirteenth century until it was pledged by King Sigismund.<sup>558</sup> The *ispanate* of Verőce was involved in pledging twice; first around 1404, when Stephen Losonci became the pledgee, then around 1429, when Emeric Marcali filled this role.<sup>559</sup> Another pledged *comitatus* was that of Orbász, a county situated in Lower-Slavonia. In the fourteenth century, the county was mainly under the jurisdiction of the ban of Slavonia until it was incorporated into the territories of Duke Hrvoje Vukčić.<sup>560</sup> Sigismund managed to recover it, and in 1435 he pledged Vrbaški grad and Kozarac (Kozara) castles with the *comitatus* to John Blagai. Before the transaction, Blagai was the castellan of both castles, and he received them in pledge as arrears of his salary.<sup>561</sup> Lastly, Sigismund not only pledged the Spiš

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<sup>554</sup> Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 180. ZsO II. 5593. The castles and the *comitatus* of Liptó were pledged within the frame of granting extensive domains to the queen. In 1419 Sigismund took back the queen's Slavonian estates allegedly due to the intensifying Ottoman raids, but the queen's infidelity played a major role in it, just as Sigismund's intention to prevent too much power which would concentrate in the Cillis' hands in the region. Between 1423-1430 Barbara received huge domains, many of which were situated in the northern part of country, among these were the castles of Liptó County. Tamás Pálosfalvi, "Barbara und die Grafen von Cilli" in *Sigismundus rex et imperator. Art et culture au temps de Sigismond de Luxembourg, 1387-1437*, ed. Imre Takács et al. (Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2006), 296.

<sup>555</sup> Pál Tóth-Szabó, *A cseh-huszita mozgalmak és uralom története Magyarországon* [The history of the Czech-Hussite movements and rule] (Budapest: Hornyánszky Viktor, 1917), 108. Fejér X/7 350.

<sup>556</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 373. Nevertheless, it should be noted that it is uncertain whether it would have been possible to protect the castles if these would have remained under the king's control. Barbara did all what she could do for the security of the region; between 1430 and 1435 she was constantly in the area due to the Hussite threat. Pálosfalvi, *Barbara und die Grafen*, 296.

<sup>557</sup> DL 12351.

<sup>558</sup> The queenly ownership of Verőce was disrupted for a few years in the thirteenth century. Attila Zsoldos, *Az Árpádok és asszonyaik. A királynői intézmény az Árpádok korában* [The Árpáds and their women. Queenship at the time of the Árpádians] (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 2005), 151. *KMTL*, 725. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 191.

<sup>559</sup> DF 286391, DL 33412. Engel, *Archontológia*, 230-231.

<sup>560</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 162. *KMTL*, 507.

<sup>561</sup> DL 66578.



region but also the *ispanate* of Szepes County together with Spišský castle. However, the office and the castle were not pledged to the Polish king but to Peter Berzevici sometime before 1433.<sup>562</sup>

In all these cases, the office was transferred to the pledge holder, because the castle with which it was combined was given in pledge. The authority of appointing the *ispán* was conveyed to the pledgee through these transactions. This is reflected best by those instances where Queen Barbara was the pledge holder. In the counties of Borsod and Liptó she decided about who should hold the dignity throughout the period of pledging.<sup>563</sup> In the other cases, the pledge holders themselves bore the title. In Verőce there is no data confirming that after the first pledging Stephen Losonci's widow would have disposed of the *ispanate*, but it was not a coincidence that the second pledgee Emeric Marcali filled this function from 1427 onwards.<sup>564</sup> He is mentioned as the pledge holder of the palace and the town of Virovitica in 1429, when he lent a further sum to the ruler,<sup>565</sup> but presumably he became the pledgee of these around 1427. In Orbász, John Blagai took in pledge the castles of Vrbaški grad and Kozarac in 1435, and although due to the lack of sources the list of the *ispánok* is incomplete, in 1439 Blagai was indeed mentioned as the *ispán* of Orbász.<sup>566</sup> The case of Szepes is a bit complicated, because the only piece of evidence about the transaction is from 1434 when the king wanted to redeem Spišský hrad from Peter Berzevici's widow. Peter had died a year earlier and had been the *ispán* of Szepes from 1411 until his death;<sup>567</sup> presumably he filled this position partly because of the pledging. However, since it is unknown when the castle was given in pledge to him, it cannot be determined when he stopped bearing the office as an *honor* and when because of the pledging. Fortunately, there are no such question marks concerning Turóc. Andrew Balicki took in pledge Sklabiňa in 1410, and from 1411 he is regularly mentioned as the *ispán* of the county.<sup>568</sup>

By pledging these important castles, the pledge holders received not only properties but an entire office together with its authority and obligations.<sup>569</sup> Moreover, since the titleholders were usually less directly involved in the counties' administration, relying on deputies to perform these

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<sup>562</sup> DL 70875.

<sup>563</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 120, 151-152.

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*, 230-231.

<sup>565</sup> DL 33412.

<sup>566</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 347-348, 381.

<sup>567</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>568</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 215-216.

<sup>569</sup> Csermelyi, *A soproni ispánság*, 13.

tasks, they appointed the *alispánok* too.<sup>570</sup> Concerning the revenues, apparently no domanial income was sent to the royal treasury, but these were used to maintain the office.<sup>571</sup> The primary source of revenue originated from the estates of the castles, and therefore it was vital to have large enough possession generating considerable income in order to make the office function properly. How important this was can be well illustrated by the example of Szabolcs County. Here, there was no castle that could function as the seat of the *ispán*, neither were there enough revenues from the estates. That is why the castle of Adorian (Adorján) of the neighboring Bihar County was attached to the *ispanate* of Szabolcs to supply it with necessary income.<sup>572</sup> In the cases of the pledged *ispanates* there were some<sup>573</sup> to which more than one castle pertained as part of the dignity. The *ispán*'s office of Liptó, for example, was donated to palatine Nicholas Garai in 1406 together with all three castles.<sup>574</sup> While pledging the same position to Queen Barbara, Sigismund followed a different procedure but one with the same outcome. Instead of transferring all the castles pertaining to the *ispanate* of Liptó in a single act, he pledged all these presumably through three different transactions, one castle each.<sup>575</sup> Liptó's case was not out of ordinary; in Borsod, along with the castle of Diósgyőr, the castles of Cserép and Dédes belonged to the *honor* of the county's *ispanate*, and all three were pledged to Barbara.<sup>576</sup> The same happened to Orbász county;<sup>577</sup> only in Turóc was the situation slightly different. There, the authority of the *ispán* initially extended to Blatnica and Sklabiňa castles, but since in the 1390s Blatinca was regularly in private hands; the Balicki family received only Sklabiňa in pledge.<sup>578</sup>

The case of Turóc county illustrates the best, how long the pledgee could bear the office of the *ispán*. Just as in any ordinary pledge transaction, the period of office holding ended when the pledge was redeemed. Until then, the pledge holder could dispose of it, and in case he or she died,

<sup>570</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 120, 216, 198.

<sup>571</sup> On what could be these spent see the example of Benedict Himfi, *ispán* of Temes in footnote 191.

<sup>572</sup> C. Tóth, *Szabolcs megye*, 27.

<sup>573</sup> In Szepes only Spišský hrad pertained to the office, while in Verőce there was only a palace; a castle was erected only around the mid-fifteenth century. Engel, *Archontológia*, 195, 230.

<sup>574</sup> Garai was granted with:... "*Comitatum nostrum Lyptouiensem cum castris nostris Lykwa Nogwar et Wynar nuncnpatis, Item Opidis Rosumbergh Gybe et Lipche nominatis, ceterisque possessionibus et villis ad eadem pertinentibus, signanter patronatibus ecclesiarum Pedagys Tributis Dacys collectis et pertinenciarum eius...*" *Codex Diplomaticus Patrius Hungaricus. Hazai okmánytár*, ed. Imre Nagy et al. (Győr – Budapest: Kocsi Sándor, 1865–1891), VII, 444 (hereafter: CDPH).

<sup>575</sup> DL 71678, DF 287804. As it was indicated earlier, for lack of sources it is unknown on what grounds the queen held Likavka castle under her jurisdiction. Most likely, it was pledged to her similarly to the two other castles.

<sup>576</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 118. DL 12351.

<sup>577</sup> DL 66578. Engel, *Archontológia*, 162.

<sup>578</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

the dignity was inherited by members of the family. In Turóc, Andrew Balicki bore the title until his death, after which Nicholas — who was either his brother or his nephew — inherited it and filled the position until it was redeemed in 1470.<sup>579</sup> This was not different in the case of the *ispanate* of Borsod which was pledged to Barbara, and from her Queen Elisabeth inherited it.<sup>580</sup> This represented the main difference between holding this office as a *honor* or in pledge, that in case of pledging, the office holders were not appointed or withdrawn by the king at his will, but the pledgee could keep the dignity as long as the pledge would be redeemed. Until then, the pledge holder exerted authority in the *ispanate* and collected all the revenues pertaining to the office. These were not only spent on maintaining the dignity and covering the expenses related to it, but the office bearer could dispose freely of the remaining funds. Sometimes these could be significant sums, for example, from the *honor* of the Ban of Slavonia the Bánfi brothers Stephen and John, earned 2.000 florins in just four years' time (1381-1385).<sup>581</sup> Of course, to the ban's office a good number of castle pertained,<sup>582</sup> and the pledgees of the pledged *ispanates* presumably could not collect 500 florins profit annually (as the Bánfis), still the sums which they were entitled to dispose of most likely were considerable.

Granting away *ispanates*, sometimes even for the lifetime of the grantee (*comes perpetuus*) was a practice known already from the time of the Árpáds,<sup>583</sup> however, the act of putting them in pledge was a novelty introduced at the time of King Sigismund's reign. This change was extremely important because it meant that through these transactions the pledge holders could gain offices for their money or for the sums that the king owed to them.<sup>584</sup> In the Holy Roman Empire, it was common that various offices became objects of pledge; Sigismund himself put in pledge a number

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<sup>579</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 216. Borsa, *Turóc vármegye*, 209. On 24 April 1470, King Matthias redeemed Szklabinya castle most probably together with the *ispán*'s office. DF 214490. Incze, *Bound by Pledge*, 89.

<sup>580</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 120. For lack of data it is not clear what happened with the castle of Liptó's *ispanate* after Sigismund's death. As it was mentioned, Veľký castle was destroyed, and the earliest reports about the two castles after the kings' death are from 1440 when they were already in private hands. Engel, *Archontológia*, 360, 452.

<sup>581</sup> Engel, *A honor*, 83.

<sup>582</sup> For how many and which precisely see: Engel, *Archontológia*, 16.

<sup>583</sup> For example, the *ispanate* of Doboka was granted away around 1266. Attila Zsoldos, *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1000-1301* [The secular archontology of Hungary 1000-1301] (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 2011), 147. The first known *comes perpetuus* was the Archbishop of Esztergom in 1264. Imre Hajnik, *Az örökös főispánság a magyar alkotmánytörténetben* [The *comes perpetuus* in the Hungarian constitutional history] (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1888), 4. For the *comites perpetui* during the reign of Sigismund see: C. Tóth, *Hereditary countships*.

<sup>584</sup> This is not so surprising, in the light of the fact that even urban privileges could be obtained with money from Sigismund. Szende, *Between hatred and affection*, 205.

of these,<sup>585</sup> but in the Kingdom of Hungary this practice was established by the pledging of *comitatus*. This initiative proved to be long lasting since Sigismund's successors on the Hungarian throne continued this practice.<sup>586</sup>

### 360 years in pledge. The pledging of the Spiš region\*

One could hardly write about the pledgings of Sigismund of Luxembourg in Hungary without discussing his most infamous transaction, that of pledging the Spiš region. This was not only Sigismund's most renowned pledging but it is also undoubtedly one of the most famous financial transactions in medieval history of the Kingdom of Hungary. It owes its importance to a number of factors. First, that the transaction was of countrywide importance is well illustrated by the fact that regaining the Spiš region was among the Wladislav I's (1440-1444) Hungarian coronation conditions.<sup>587</sup> Secondly, the charter itself also indicates the significance of the transaction: Sigismund did not pledge the region alone as the King of Hungary but together with his barons and prelates.<sup>588</sup> Finally, the total sum involved was unusually high: 37.000 schock Prague groschen was equivalent to almost 100.000 Hungarian golden florins, a small fortune during the period.<sup>589</sup>

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<sup>585</sup> Landwehr, *Die Verpfändung*, 34-35.

<sup>586</sup> For example, the castles of Bratislava, Sopron and Timișoara with the *ispanates* of Pozsony, Sopron and Temes Counties were put in pledge in the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth century. Norbert C. Tóth, et al., ed., *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1458-1526*, I. Főpapok és bárók [The secular archontology of Hungary 1458-1526, I. Prelates and barons] (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2016), 125-126. Csermelyi, *A soproni ispánság*, 13-16.

\* I would like to thank Professor István Draskóczy and Přemysl Bar for their valuable suggestions and remarks on the present subchapter.

<sup>587</sup> The Hungarian coronation conditions of the Polish ruler, Wladislav of Varna stipulated that he would marry Queen Elisabeth, the widow of King Albert Habsburg, and also that he would return the Spiš region without any payment. Lajos Ilyefalvi, *A Lengyelországnak elzálogosított XIII szepesi város története* [The history of the thirteen towns of Spiš pledged to Poland] (Makó, 1906) 52-53.

<sup>588</sup> There are cases of Sigismund pledging a royal property *ex consilio prelatorum et baronum* but in such instances the king's advisors did not seal the document as they did with the charter of pledging the Spiš region. DL 9984. Some examples of pledgings *ex consilio*...: DL 7385, 7389, 7892, 42838.

<sup>589</sup> The Prague groschen initially was struck at 60 to the local mark weight of silver, later was still reckoned in sixties (or *schock/sexagena*) when it was no longer minted at 60. Peter Spufford, *Money and its Use in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), 412. During the late Middle Ages it was exchanged to different currencies. In 1380, eighteen Prague groschen was worth one Hungarian golden florin, while in 1434 this figure increased to twenty-eight. Sejbal, *Dějiny peněz*, 173. Historians often calculate the sum of the pledging of the Spiš region at an exchange rate of 25 Prague groschen equivalent to one florin, which makes 88 800 florins. For example:

In addition, the length of the pledging period was exceptional: the territory was initially put in pledge in 1412 and recovered only nearly 360 years later. The Spiš region remained unredeemed until 1772 when it was re-incorporated into Hungary on the occasion of the first partition of Poland.<sup>590</sup> This was possible because—contrary to some opinions—a time limit was seldom set for redeeming properties in Sigismund’s pledgings,<sup>591</sup> the possessions were redeemed when the debt was paid off.

The history of the region has been discussed in abundant Hungarian and international literature; as early as the nineteenth century seminal books were written about its past, and there are several works on Sigismund’s pledging specifically.<sup>592</sup> The present section deals with the transaction itself, more precisely it focuses on issues that have not been adequately addressed to date. These concern the international background of the pledging, the preliminary negotiations, the place of reaching the agreement, and the receipt and use of the money gained from the pledging.

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József Deér, *Zsigmond király*, 194. The basis of this calculation is probably the chronicle of Spišská Sobota and the earliest transcription of the charter of the pledging (1592). Kálmán Demkó, ed., *A szepes-szombati krónika* [The chronicle of Spišská Sobota] (Lőcse, 1891) 31. DL 9984. ZSO I. 2897. There is no data about the exchange rate from the year of the pledging (1412), the closest year with available data is 1409 when twenty-three Prague groschen was worth one Hungarian florin. Sejbal, *Dějiny peněz*, 173. Calculating with this figure, 37 000 groschen is equivalent to 96 521 florins. Pál Engel calculated the sum of the transaction at a twenty-two Prague groschen exchange rate, which makes 100 000 florins. Engel, *The Realm*, 228.

<sup>590</sup> There were a number of later attempts to redeem the region, but they were all without success. Of course, even Sigismund would not have thought at the time of concluding the contract that the Spiš region would remain in pledge for so long. He also tried to get it back during the *Council of Constance* but he failed, *probably because* he refused to pay for it. László Pószán, “Zsigmond és a Német Lovagrend” [Sigismund and the Teutonic Order], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 111 (1998): 648.

<sup>591</sup> It is understandable that Sigismund did not prefer fixed-term transactions since they jeopardized his property right over the pledged domain. See page 60.

<sup>592</sup> Just to mention some of the most important works: Ilyefalvi, *A Lengyelországnak elzálogosított*; Frigyes Sváby, *A Lengyelországnak elzálogosított XIII szepesi város története* [The history of the thirteen towns of Spiš pledged to Poland] (Lőcse, Reiss Ny, 1895). Antal Nagy Fekete, *A Szepesség területi és társadalmi kialakulása* [The territorial and social formation of the Spiš region], (Budapest, 1934). In Hungarian historiography the history of the region has not received as much attention as previously. More recent contributions are written by Slovak and Polish researchers: Ryszard Gładkiewicz and Homza Martin, *Terra Scepusiensis: stan badań nad dziejami Spiszu* [Terra Scepusiensis: The state of research on the history of Spiš] (Levoča– Wrocław, 2003); Zuzana Kollárová, *Spišské mestá v polskom zálohu (1412–1772)* [The towns of Spiš in the Polish pledge] (Ph.D. diss., Comenius University), (Bratislava, 2006); Martin Homza – Stanisław Sroka, *Historia Scepusii, vol. 1, Dejiny Spiša do roku 1526* [The history of the Spiš until 1526], (Bratislava, 2009).

## The Spiš region and international politics

The pledging of the Spiš region in 1412 was made in connection to contemporary international political events, primarily with the conflict between Poland-Lithuania and the Teutonic Order, and indirectly with the outcome of the Battle of Grunwald (Tannenberg, 15 July 1410). The battle was a key event of the “great war” (*magnus conflictus* 1409-1411)<sup>593</sup> fought between the above mentioned parties, in which the united forces of Poland-Lithuania achieved a crushing victory over the Teutonic knights. Following the battle, the troops of the Polish-Lithuanian union set about conquering the Teutonic Order’s territory step by step, even the order’s capital Marienburg was laid to siege, and the fate of Prussia and of the whole chivalric order depended on its defense. However, the siege which lasted several weeks was not successful, partly due to Henrich von Plauen’s competence. When the grandmaster of the order, Ulrich von Jungingen, died on the battlefield, Plauen organized the defense of the capital successfully—which contributed to gaining back territories later—and was elected as the new grandmaster.<sup>594</sup> At the beginning of the following year the First Peace of Toruń (Thorn) ended the war and prescribed territorial and financial obligations owed by the Teutonic knights to the victorious Polish King Wladislaw II. As part of their territorial obligation, the Teutonic knights had to return Samogitia (Žemaitija) to Lithuania (only for the lifetime of Wladislaw II and the Grand Duke Vytautas), and the Dobrin lands, occupied during the war, to Poland. The financial indemnity consisted of the huge sum of 100.000 schock Prague groschen (around 260.000 golden florins) indemnity, and paying ransom for releasing the captives and for conceding the occupied castles.<sup>595</sup> Later, the fate of the Spiš region became tied to settling the indemnity in four installments.

The Battle of Grunwald not only temporarily ended the conflict between the Polish-Lithuanian Union and the Teutonic Order but created a new international environment which transformed

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<sup>593</sup> About the causes of the war and the events leading up to it, see László Pószán, “A Német Lovagrend és lengyel-litván állam közötti ‘nagy háború’ (1409–1411),” [The “Great War” between the Teutonic Order and the Polish-Lithuanian Union (1409-1411)], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 124 (2011) 3–17; Sven Ekdahl, *Die Schlacht bei Tannenberg 1410: quellenkritische Untersuchungen* (Berlin, 1982); Rimvydas Petrauskas, Grischa Vercamer and Werner Paravicini, eds, *Tannenberg - Grunwald - Žalgiris 1410: Krieg und Frieden im späten Mittelalter* (Wiesbaden, 2012).

<sup>594</sup> Pószán, *A Német Lovagrend*, 23-24; William L. Urban, *Tannenberg and After: Lithuania, Poland, and the Teutonic Order in Search of Immortality* (Chicago, 1996) 160–70.

<sup>595</sup> Urban, *Tannenberg and After*, 171–72; Pószán, *A Német Lovagrend*, 26-27.; Pószán, *Zsigmond és a Német Lovagrend*, 642. The text of the peace treaty: Erich Weise, *Die Staatsverträge des Deutschen Ordens in Preußen im 15. Jahrhundert, vol. 1, 1398-1437* (Marienburg, 1970), 85–89. The Peace of Toruń is usually presented in Polish

Polish-Hungarian relations. Until the battle, relations between the two countries were burdened by a number of factors. Sigismund probably remembered both his failure to gain the Polish throne and the Polish troops conquering Red Ruthenia at the beginning of his reign in Hungary. As a result, the voivodes of Wallachia and Moldavia renounced Hungarian suzerainty and accepted the Polish King as their overlord. The conflict was deepened by the death of Queen Mary in 1395, which was followed by the incursion of Polish contingents in the Spiš region giving a greater impetus to the Polish Queen Jadviga's claim to the Hungarian throne.<sup>596</sup> In addition, the fact that the Luxembourgs traditionally had good relations with the Teutonic Order, and Sigismund was no exception, was another source of conflict. Sigismund regularly relied on the financial support of the Teutonic knights to achieve his political goals,<sup>597</sup> and expected the order's support to gain the title of the King of the Romans. No wonder then that he sided with the knights in the "great war," forging an alliance with them in 1409, and as a consequence Hungarian troops led by Stibor of Stiboricz attacked southern Poland.<sup>598</sup> Yet, after the settling of the Peace of Toruń in 1411, there were presumably a number of reasons why Sigismund was striving to normalize the relations with Wladislav II. First, war broke out with Venice and Hungarian armed forces attacked the province

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historiography as a compromise. Poland benefited financially from the peace treaty—they wanted to crush the Teutonic Order through the indemnity—but had no territorial gain. Zenon Hubert Nowak, "Internationale Schiedsprozesse als ein Werkzeug der Politik König Sigismunds in Ostmittel- und Nordeuropa. 1411–1425," *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 111 (1975) 176.

<sup>596</sup> There were attempts to harmonize the relationship between the two countries, for example, a meeting of the two rulers was organized which improved the rapport temporarily. However, it dramatically deteriorated again following the outbreak of the war with the Teutonic knights. Norbert C. Tóth, "Zsigmond magyar és II. Ulászló lengyel király személyes találkozási a lubói béke után (1412–1424)" [The personal meetings of Kings Wladislav II and Sigismund after the Peace of Stará Lubovňa (1412–1424)], *Történelmi Szemle* 56 (2014) 339–40; Pószán, *Zsigmond és a Német Lovagrend*, 634–36; Norbert C. Tóth, "Az 1395. évi lengyel betörés: a lengyel-magyar kapcsolatok egy epizódja" [The Polish incursion of 1395: an episode of Polish-Hungarian relations], in *Honoris causa": Tanulmányok Engel Pál emlékére* [Studies in the honor of Pál Engel], ed. T. Neumann – Gy. Rácz (Piliscsaba–Budapest, 2008) 447–85.

<sup>597</sup> The fact that the Teutonic Order could easily overbid Poland for Neumark, the Northern part of the Margraviate of Brandenburg, reflects the extent of their financial resources. Nowak, *Internationale Schiedsprozesse*, 175–76; Pószán, *Zsigmond és a Német Lovagrend*, 639. ZSO II. 1442, 1796–1797, 1942.

<sup>598</sup> As a response to the military campaign led by Stibor, there was a counter expedition of Polish forces. The Polish troops attacked Stará Lubovňa, the same town that Sigismund had pledged to Poland two years later. Dvořáková, *A lovag és királya*, 286–88. According to the existing agreement between Sigismund and the Teutonic knights, Sigismund would have had to offer military aid only in case there had been pagan and heretical contingents in the joint army of Poland-Lithuania. Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 104–105; Pószán, *Zsigmond és a Német Lovagrend*, 640–41.; Pószán, *A Német Lovagrend*, 24–25. According to the information of Sigismund's voluntary chronicler, Eberhard Windecke, before the battle of Grunwald the order had already sent 40 000 Florins to Sigismund for the expected military help. Eberhard Windecke emlékirata Zsigmond királyról és koráról [Eberhard Windecke's memoirs about King Sigismund and his age], trans. Renáta Skorcka (Budapest, 2008), 32.

of Friuli in the late autumn of 1411.<sup>599</sup> Venice was in alliance with Poland, and Sigismund managed to successfully distance Poland from Venice by improving his rapport with Wladislaw II.<sup>600</sup> Furthermore, settling his conflict with Poland Sigismund—elected as German king in the meantime—could turn his attention towards such burning issues as the fight against the Ottomans, finding a solution for the Great Schism, and creating the union between the Roman and the Greek Orthodox Church.<sup>601</sup>

After the ceasefire was brokered and the negotiations between the magnates of the two countries were over, the two rulers met in person in Stará Ľubovňa (Lubló) where they concluded peace in March 1412. The negotiations continued in Košice (Kassa), where, probably at Sigismund's suggestion, Wladislaw II invited Sigismund to be the adjudicator in the dispute between him and the Teutonic Order.<sup>602</sup> These hostilities were rekindled because the Knights had managed to pay only half of the 100.000 schock Prague groschen prescribed by the Peace of Toruń and failed to pay the third installment on time.<sup>603</sup> Sigismund tried to prevent further escalation of the dispute by this intervention.

## The preliminary negotiations

Initially, the newly elected grandmaster of the order, Heinrich van Plauen, did not want to accept the arbitration of Sigismund as he preferred Pope John XXIII (1410-1415). However, since at this

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<sup>599</sup> Péter E. Kovács, “Zsigmond isztriai hadjárata” [Sigismund's military campaign in Istria], in *A hadtáp volt maga a fegyver: Tanulmányok a középkori hadszervezet és katonai logisztika kérdéseiről* [The military supply was the weapon: Studies about the medieval military structure and logistic], ed. L. Pószán – L. Veszprémy (Budapest, 2013) 230–31. Péter E. Kovács, *Zsigmond király és Velence (1387-1437). Az oroszlán ugrani készül (1387-1411)* [King Sigismund and Venice (1387-1437). The lion prepares to jump (1387-1411)] (Budapest: Tarsoly, 2017), 174-177.

<sup>600</sup> Ottokar Israel, *Das Verhältnis des Hochmeisters des Deutschen Ordens zum Reich im 15. Jahrhundert*, (Marburg, 1952) 15.

<sup>601</sup> Pószán, *Zsigmond és a Német Lovagrend*, 643; Nowak, *Internationale Schiedsprozesse*, 176.

<sup>602</sup> The role of the adjudicator in an international conflict was not entirely new for Sigismund. He gave advice to his brother King Wenceslas IV on his decision of 8 February 1410 concerning another chapter of the conflict between the Teutonic Order and Poland-Lithuania. Adam Szweda, *Polish and Teutonic Diplomatic Activity in Europe during the Conflict of 1409–1411*, online document, accessed October 14, 2015, <http://www.history.pth.net.pl/article.1>; Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 106–107.

<sup>603</sup> Dieter Zimmerling, *Der Deutsche Ritterorden* (Düsseldorf – New York, 1988) 262–63. Zenon Hubert Nowak, *Międzynarodowe procesy polubowne jako narzędzie polityki Zygmunta Luksemburskiego w północnej i środkowowschodniej Europie, 1412-1424* [International arbitration as a political tool for Sigismund of Luxemburg in Northern and East-Central Europe 1412-1424] (Toruń, 1981) 25.



time there was no universally acknowledged pope, and because there was no assurance if John XXIII would make a decision more favorable for the Teutonic knights than the Peace of Toruń, Plauen in the end raised no objections against Sigismund taking on the role of arbitrator.<sup>604</sup> All sides were invited to a conference in Buda. While waiting for everyone to assemble, the Polish and Hungarian rulers took a tour around the country; King Wladislav II spent almost three and a half months in Hungary as a guest of Sigismund.<sup>605</sup> Once the delegates of both sides arrived, the negotiations began in Buda on July 5, 1412. The ruler of Hungary joined the negotiating sides, and on August 24th he made his decision public which was almost a reconfirmation of the Peace of Toruń.<sup>606</sup>

The issue of the Spiš region was probably discussed shortly after the decision was announced. On August 30th Sigismund made a promise to recover the promissory note of the Teutonic Order, which in fact meant that he would take over the order's debt.<sup>607</sup> Of course, typically for Sigismund, he demanded 62.000 in four installments for the 50.000 schock Prague groschen,<sup>608</sup> in other words, he estimated the value of his services at 12.000 schock groschen.<sup>609</sup> Further details of this plan were not included in the charter, but it is very likely that he intended to cover this debt by pledging the Spiš region. Some sketches of this plan have survived in one of Sigismund's books of letters (*Briefbuch*). Altogether three books of letters survive from Sigismund of Luxembourg's chancellery, which contain the ruler's political correspondence between the years 1411-1417. These preliminary letters are usually undated and in many cases the name of the recipients are missing, however, they can be dated to some extent on the basis of their content.<sup>610</sup>

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<sup>604</sup> Hartmut Boockmann, *Johannes Falkenberg, der Deutsche Orden und die polnische Politik: Untersuchungen zur politischen Theorie des späteren Mittelalters* (Göttingen, 1975) 96–99; Pószán, *Zsigmond és a Német Lovagrend*, 644.

<sup>605</sup> C. Tóth, *Zsigmond magyar és II. Ulászló lengyel király*, 343–47.

<sup>606</sup> The text of the Peace of Buda: Weise, *Die Staatsverträge*, 96–99.

<sup>607</sup> Ignacy Zakrzewski and Jadwiga Karwaslinska, *Lites ac res gestae inter Polonos Ordinemque Cruciferorum*, vol.2, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Poznań, 1892) 69-70; Altmann, *Regesta Imperii XI*, 307a; Pószán, *Zsigmond és a Német Lovagrend*, 644-645.

<sup>608</sup> 12.500 schock Prague groschen on 2 February 1413, the same amount on 2 April, 25 000 on 29 September, and finally the remaining 12 000 on 8 April 1414. Weise, *Die Staatsverträge*, 99.

<sup>609</sup> As stated by the initial plan of the transaction concerning the Spiš region, Sigismund would have taken over the debt of the Teutonic Order and cleared it off by pledging “*ad instanciam eorundem dominorum cruciferorum*” (according to the request of the knights), DF 287745, image 55, 293r. If this was really the case, it means that the Teutonic knights preferred to be indebted for a larger sum to Sigismund rather than to the Polish king. Michael Kűchmeister, the marshal of the order (*Ordensmarschall*) and the leader of the order's delegation at Buda, can be suspected to be behind the plan, because he was inclined to a peaceful resolution more than the grandmaster who protested heavily even against the indemnity.

<sup>610</sup> Hermann Heimpel, “Aus der Kanzlei Kaiser Sigismunds (Über den Cod. Pal. Lat. 701 der Vatikanischen Bibliothek),” *Archiv für Urkundenforschung* 12 (1932) 113–15.

According to the documents in one of the letter-books, during the negotiations<sup>611</sup> a different plan existed for pledging the Spiš region than the one that was put in practice. This preliminary plan envisaged the pledging of the whole region (24 privileged towns together with the castle of Spiš), significantly more than the thirteen towns plus Podolíneč, Hniezdne and the estate of Stará Lubovňa, agreed upon in the end.<sup>612</sup> Drawing up the plan was followed by phrasing trilateral contract drafts. First, a contract was made in Sigismund's name pledging the whole Spiš region together with Spiš castle to Wladislav II until he, his heirs, or the Teutonic knights redeemed it. Secondly, another draft in the name of the Polish king stipulated that the region be pledged to him for settling the debt of the Teutonic knights, which would be given back to Sigismund or his heirs once the debt was cleared. Otherwise, Sigismund and his heirs were authorized to take it back with force and to loot Poland to collect the interest of the transaction.<sup>613</sup> Finally, in the name of Grandmaster Heinrich von Plauen two documents were formulated, containing different scenarios.<sup>614</sup> One of these specified that Sigismund was going to pledge the region for the 50.000 schock Prague groschen debt of the order owed to Wladislav II and for the 5.000 groschen owed to the Lithuanian grand duke. This would have only bought time for settling the debt, because the Teutonic knights would have remained indebted, except this time to the Polish king and the grand duke and not to Sigismund. Nonetheless, it stipulates that the knights were obliged to pay the two installments of 27.500 schock Prague groschen before the deadlines (December 25, 1412 and July 25, 1413), otherwise they would have had to give Neumark (East Brandenburg) in pledge to Sigismund. Moreover, if they had failed to pay anything, then Wladislav II would have been entitled to conquer the territories of the Order and to keep them until the Teutonic knights recompensed Sigismund. In the other scenario, the Spiš region would have been pledged for an

<sup>611</sup> Based on their content Elemér Mályusz dated these draft charters to the period between 24 August and 17 September 1412. These two dates are the days of the proclamation of the adjudicatory decision and dispatching the Hungarian delegation to Poland. Since Sigismund promised to recover the promissory letter of the Order on 30 August, the dating of the documents suggested by Mályusz seems entirely justified. ZSO III. 2565–68.

<sup>612</sup> [...] *pro debitis dominorum cruciferorum de Prussia, utpote pro tot milibus florenorum auri quibus idem domini cruciferi serenissimo principi domino Wladislao regi Poloniae fratri nostro carissimo secundum formam pactorum et conventionum inter ipsos novissimo factarum obligari et teneri dinoscuntur, castrum nostrum regale Sepesvar nuncupatum cum villis et tributis ad idem castrum nostrum spectantibus, item XXIII civitates terre nostre Scepusiensis videlicet Lewtze, Kesmark... eidem domino Wladislao regi Polonie fratri nostro carissimo eiusque successori sive regno Polonie... pro pignore seu titulo pignoratitio posuimus tradidimus et assignavimus [...]*, DF 287745, image 55, 293r.; ZSO III. 2565; Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 107.

<sup>613</sup> No concrete figures were given in either case, *pro tot milibus florenorum auri* and *pro tot sexagenis grossorum* are written in the text, leaving the possibility of defining the exact sum later (50.000 or 55.000 schock Prague groschen). DF 287745, image 55-57, 293r, 293v.; ZSO III. 2565–2566.

<sup>614</sup> ZSO III 2567-68.

undisclosed sum,<sup>615</sup> and the order would have been indebted to Wladislaw II (there is no mention of Duke Vytautas) who was to receive the money in two parts by June 11, 1413. In the event of a total default, the knights would have been obliged to pledge Pomerelia to Sigismund.

Equipped with these draft charters, the Hungarian delegation and the legate representing the Teutonic Order at the negotiations at Buda travelled to Poland together to consult the Polish King about the transaction and the issue of the indemnity. As stated in one of Sigismund's unfinished charters, the unnamed members of the delegation were fully authorized by him to reach an agreement with Wladislaw II about the details of the pledging.<sup>616</sup> Polish chronicler Jan Długosz names only Archbishop John Kanizsai, the most prominent member and presumably leader of the delegation.<sup>617</sup> Archbishop Kanizsai was one of Sigismund's most trusted adherents and advisers until he led a plot against him in 1401 and lost his offices as a result. However, they settled their differences in 1407 and in 1412, during the Buda summit and Sigismund praised him as indispensable for the success of the negotiations.<sup>618</sup> The other two members of the delegation were Peter Perényi, former count of the Székelys, and secret chancellor Emeric Perényi.<sup>619</sup> The latter, thanks to his office, belonged to the inner circle of Sigismund's entourage. Moreover, having undertaken a number of diplomatic missions for Sigismund, he had ample experience in the field of diplomacy.<sup>620</sup> The two Perényis were also familiar with the Spiš region, Emeric held the castle

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<sup>615</sup> Probably for 50.000 schok Prague groschen, the amount the order owed to the Polish ruler. There is no mention of the debt to Grand Duke Vytautas in this document.

<sup>616</sup> [...] *plenam et liberam expressam ac omnimodam facultatem cum praefato domino Wladislao rege de et super circumstantiis et conditionibus impignoracionis et obligationis huiusmodi et earum occasione quoscumque tractatus placita contractus et convenciones tractandi iniendi acceptandi faciendi firmandi concludendi*. DF 287745, image 14, 283r.

<sup>617</sup> *Convencione supra fluvium Bug pro die sancti Michaelis tenta expedita Wladislaus Polonie rex in Medikam processit. Quo illic diebus quindecim comorante Sigismund Romanorum et Hungarie regis legati, videlicet Ioannes Strigoniensis archiepiscopus et Michael Kochmeister Nove Marchie advocatus in die sancte Hedvigis ad suam serenitatem perveniunt*. Jan Długosz, *Joannis Dlugossii Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae, liber decimus et undecimus 1406-1412*, ed. C. Baczkowski – F. Sikora – D. Turkowska, (Warszawa, 1997) 210. Długosz's information regarding John Kanizsai and the Hungarian legation is confirmed by charter evidence too. ZSO III. 2695, 3028.

<sup>618</sup> Sigismund was not in the country in 1414 when another summit was convoked to Buda to restore the peace between Poland-Lithuania and the Teutonic knights, so the two royal vicars, Archbishop Kanizsai and Palatine Garai, presided over the negotiations. C. Tóth, *Zsigmond Magyar és II. Ulászló lengyel király*, 346; Pál Engel, "Zsigmond bárói: Rövid életrajzok" [Sigismund's barons: Short biographies], in *Művészet Zsigmond király korában 1387–1437* [Art at the time of King Sigismund 1387-1437], ed. L. Beke – E. Marosi – T. Wehli (Budapest, 1987) 424–425.

<sup>619</sup> ZSO III. 2695.

<sup>620</sup> Presumably, he was first sent to the Turkish dukes of Asia Minor, then to Süleyman Çelebi, the son of Sultan Bayezid I. Engel, *Rövid életrajzok*, 438; Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 101-102.

of Stará Ľubovňa between 1408 and 1410,<sup>621</sup> while Peter had been the *ispán* of the County of Spiš (1402-1404).<sup>622</sup>

According to Długosz, the Hungarian legation and the representatives of the Teutonic knights met the Polish King on October 15th at Medyka,<sup>623</sup> where they finally agreed on the terms of the pledging. Once the agreement was concluded, the delegation led by Archbishop Kanizsai, travelled back to Hungary lavished with gifts from Wladislaw II.<sup>624</sup> Sigismund had not attended the conference as he was preparing to participate personally in the military campaign against Venice. The archbishop of Esztergom and his company met Sigismund at Zagreb,<sup>625</sup> where they informed him about the outcome of their mission and the king issued the charter pledging the Spiš region to Wladislaw II on November 8.<sup>626</sup>

### Collecting and spending the money of the pledging

There are two prevailing opinions in modern historiography regarding the expenditure of the money received.<sup>627</sup> The more widely accepted speculation is that Sigismund spent the money on the war against Venice—ultimately in vain, because the city state emerged victorious from the conflict.<sup>628</sup> The war was expensive, therefore it is entirely justified to correlate the money raised by the pledging with covering the costs of the war. Others suggest that the Saint Sigismund Provostry of Buda was erected from the money raised from the transaction. The provostry was

<sup>621</sup> Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 132–33.

<sup>622</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 197.

<sup>623</sup> See footnote 617. It is, therefore, more reasonable to believe that Medyka in Poland was the place where the Hungarian delegation reached common terms with the Polish king concerning the Spiš, contrary to earlier claims of historians suggesting that this happened in Stará Ľubovňa or Niedzica. For example, according to Frigyes Sváby, Sigismund convinced Wladislaw II about the pledging in Stará Ľubovňa where they met after the Poles had already handed over the money. Sváby, *A Lengyelországnak elzálogosított*, 65. Michal Suchý was of the same opinion. Michael Suchý, “Spisske mesta v polskom zalohu” [The towns of the Spiš region in the Polish pledge], in *Spisske mesta v stredoveku* [The towns of the Spiš region in the Middle Ages], ed. R. Marsina (Košice: Východoslovenské vydavateľstvo, 1974), 57. I would like to thank Stanislav Bárta for helping me interpret the text.

<sup>624</sup> *Ioannes itaque archiepiscopus Strigoniensis legacione sua votive perfunctus plurimisque et notabilibus donis per Wladislaum Polonie regem honoratus in Hungariam revertebatur. Joannis Dlugossii Annales*, 211.

<sup>625</sup> Kovács, *Zsigmond isztriai hadjárata*, 232; Engel, *Királyok és királynék itineráriumai*, 95.

<sup>626</sup> Several barons and prelates sealed the charter of the pledging, including the members of the delegation sent to Poland, Emeric and Peter Perényi, and John Kanizsai. DL 9984. The original document is preserved in Kraków, Muzeum Narodowe, Biblioteka Czartoryskich, Perg. nr. 294. I would like to thank to Přemysl Bar for this information.

<sup>627</sup> The charter of the pledging is silent about Sigismund’s plans for the money. DL 9984.

<sup>628</sup> Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 116; Ivan Chalupický, “Die Zipser Städte im 13–16. Jahrhundert,” *Historia urbana* 5 (1997) 86–87; E. Kovács, *Zsigmond isztriai hadjárata*, 245; Suchý, *Spisske mesta*, 57–58.

built for years after Pope John XXIII gave his consent to Sigismund's initiative to found a new church in 1410.<sup>629</sup> The notion that the money aided in the building continued to live on vividly in the memory of later generations, for example, sixteenth-century Hungarian lyricist and poet Sebestyén "Lantos" (Minstrel) Tinódi referred to it in one of his songs.<sup>630</sup> In my opinion however, while neither of these two explanations can be excluded definitively,<sup>631</sup> and there are convincing arguments for both, I think there was a possible third project on which Sigismund might have spent the capital of the pledging.

In Poland, the negotiating sides managed to reach an agreement not only concerning the pledging, but they also settled the issue of the Teutonic Order's debt.<sup>632</sup> This was the reason why the order's representatives accompanied the Hungarian legation to Wladislav II. The 50.000 schock Prague groschen debt of the Teutonic knights was raised to 69.400, probably because the order could not pay the third installment on time and were penalized. Of the 69.400 schock Prague groschen 39, 400 had to be paid to Wladislav II, 5.000 to Duke Vytautas and 25.000 to Sigismund.<sup>633</sup> The latter sum was given to him by the Polish king, almost certainly in return for the pledging of the Spiš region.<sup>634</sup> The deadline of paying Wladislav II's share was set for the beginning of the following year. Failing to clear the debt on time again would have meant the pledging of Neumark to the Polish ruler. Probably, the possibility of taking Neumark in pledge was the reason for not giving his consent to take the whole Spiš region in pledge. Wladislav II and

<sup>629</sup> György Székely, "A budai Szent Zsigmond templom kutatástörténetéhez" [Remarks on the historiography of the Saint Sigismund Church in Buda], *Budapest Régiségei* 33 (1999) 15.

<sup>630</sup> Sebestyén Tinódi, "Zsigmond király és császárnak krónikája (részlet)" [The chronicle of King and Emperor Sigismund (fragment)], in *Tar Lőrinc pokoljárása: Középkori magyar víziók* [Laurentius de Tar's descent to hell: Medieval Hungarian visions], ed. S. V. Kovács (Budapest, 1985) 251–52.

<sup>631</sup> Earlier, András Végh proposed that besides the war against Venice, Sigismund could have spent part of the sum of the pledging on building the provostry. András Végh, "Adatok a budai kisebb Szűz Mária, más néven Szt. Zsigmond templom alapításának történetéhez" [Data for the history of the foundation of the Church of Lesser Virgin Mary a.k.a. Church of St Sigismund], *Budapest Régiségei* 33 (1999) 25.

<sup>632</sup> As stated in a letter by Sigismund from December 1412, the agreement regarding the indemnity was one of the primary aims of the joint delegation to Poland. ZSO III. 3028. sz.

<sup>633</sup> ZSO III. 3007, 3038; Hartmut, *Johannes Falkenberg*, 100; Hans Koeppen, *Die Berichte der Generalprokuratoren des Deutschen Ordens an der Kurie*, vol. 2, *Peter von Wormditt* (1403–1419) (Köln, 1960) 146–47.

<sup>634</sup> Weise, *Die Staatsverträge*, 99; ZSO III. 3026. The final sum of the pledging of the Spiš was 37.000 schock Prague groschen, there is no information about the remaining 12 000 groschen. Presumably, this figure was paid by Wladislav II and not by the Teutonic knights. Besides the 25 000 groschen, at the beginning of the year the order promised to pay 25 000 golden florins to Sigismund, but they were not able to keep their promise during the course of the year, therefore Sigismund demanded this sum in addition to the 25 000 groschen. ZSO III. 1506, 3007, 3038, 3125; ZSO IV. 89, 114. Hartmut, *Johannes Falkenberg*, 100. Of course, it was previously suggested that the 37.000 groschen were conceded by Wladislav II to Sigismund from the 100 000 groschen indemnity that the Teutonic Order had to pay him. Suchý, *Spisske mesta*, 57.

his councilors were convinced that the Teutonic knights would not be able to collect so much money in such short time that they even composed a charter about taking the region of Neumark in pledge.<sup>635</sup>

Sigismund entrusted Florentine businessman Onofrio di Bardo, initially in the service of Filippo Scolari, with the collection of the 25.000 schock Prague groschen and the sorting out of the remaining issues regarding the payment.<sup>636</sup> The Teutonic knights had to pay the sum in two equal installments to di Bardo, but because of their many financial obligations they were not able to do so on schedule.<sup>637</sup> The deadlines were February 2nd and April 2, 1413;<sup>638</sup> Grandmaster Heinrich von Plauen was expecting the *Landmeister* of the Holy Roman Empire (the German country master of the order) to put up half of the sum, but even in March 1413 he wrote to him that this was impossible.<sup>639</sup> Seeing how difficult it was for the order to keep the first deadline, Sigismund agreed to a new deadline and sent di Bardo to negotiate the date with them.<sup>640</sup> As a result, the February deadline was extended to March 8th, however, the order was able to make the first payment only on April 5th.<sup>641</sup> There is no data regarding the exact date of the second payment.

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<sup>635</sup> Ernst Lampe, “Beiträge zur Geschichte Heinrichs von Plauen 1411 bis 1413,” *Zeitschrift des Westpreußischen Geschichtsvereins* 26 (1889) 36–37. The text of the charter: ZSO III. 3028; Weise, *Die Staatsverträge*, 102. The charter was phrased in vain because the order managed to clear the debt on time. ZSO IV. 114; Pószán, *A Német Lovagrend*, 27.

<sup>636</sup> Onofrio di Bardo later held the position of the *comes* of the chambers several times and he laid the foundation of his sons’ (the Noffry brothers of Bajmóc: Jacob, Leonard, John and Bardo) financial career in the country. Márton Gyöngyössy, “Magyar pénztörténet (1000–1526)” [Hungarian Monetary History (1000–1526)], in *Magyar középkori gazdaság- és pénztörténet* [Medieval Hungarian economic and monetary history], ed. M. Gyöngyössy (Budapest, 2006) 255. Arany, *Florentine Families*, 42, 48. Zsuzsa Teke, “Firenzei kereskedőtársaságok, kereskedők Magyarországon Zsigmond uralmának megszilárdulása után 1404–37” [Florentine business companies and merchants in Hungary after the consolidation of Sigismund’s rule 1404–37], *Századok* 129 (1995) 205–7.

<sup>637</sup> A letter of the grandmaster sent to the *Landmeister* of Livland at the end of 1412 aptly reflects the the order’s situation at the time. In this he writes that the chalices and reliquaries had already been sold or smelted down, but even this was not enough so he asks the *Landmeister* to send him more gold and silver because there was no precious metals left in his province. ZSO III. 3125.

<sup>638</sup> Weise, *Die Staatsverträge*, 99; ZSO III. 3026.

<sup>639</sup> ZSO III. 3007; ZSO IV. 262.

<sup>640</sup> ZSO IV. 61, 62.

<sup>641</sup> Similarly to the precomposed charter of pledging of Neumark, a series of acquittances were phrased in the name of Sigismund and Wladislav II about collecting the sums of 12.500-12.500 schock Prague groschen. Altmann, *Regesta Imperii* XI 382; ZSO III. 3059; ZSO IV. 113, 125, 131. Obviously, the existence of these acquittances does not mean that these payments really happened. Adding all the figures of these documents would yield a sum much higher than the amount of money the order was obliged to pay. Even though Sigismund demanded the entire sum of 25 000 groschen in February, he wrote in May that he still had not received half of the sum. ZSO IV. 243, 601. Erich Weise also discredits these documents. He believes that the date of the first payment was April 2, 1413. Weise, *Die Staatsverträge*, 100. Onofrio di Bardo issued an acquittance about 12 500 groschen on 5 April, according to which he collected the money in Sigismund’s name in two places, in Wrocław and Toruń. ZSO IV. 393.

Sigismund was still demanding it in September,<sup>642</sup> but received it only around the end of the year or at the beginning of the following year.<sup>643</sup> Although there is no direct information regarding the spending of the whole sum, there are some details about what half of it was spent on.<sup>644</sup> Namely, in his letter addressed to Heinrich von Plauen on May 17, 1413, Sigismund writes that he still had not received the 12.500 schock Prague groschen, which he intended to spend on his coronation. For this reason, Sigismund had to borrow this sum from Antonio Fronte and from that point on Heinrich von Plauen owed Fronte and not him.<sup>645</sup> Sigismund spent the rest of 1413 in Northern Italy and was crowned as King of the Romans in Aachen on November 8, 1414, over one year after sending this letter.<sup>646</sup> Sigismund must have been in great need of Fronte's loan lent him in Friuli, otherwise he would not have borrowed it under such unfavorable conditions. This indicates that he probably had already spent the money before leaving Italy. All these details raise the question how the sum contributed (or could have contributed) to his coronation later,<sup>647</sup> however, the available source material does not allow us to draw further conclusions.

## Conclusion

The pledging of the Spiš region was part of renegotiating Hungarian-Polish relations and it was closely related to the indemnity set out in the First Peace of Toruń. In the altered political environment after the Battle of Grunwald, Sigismund of Luxembourg—eager to become king of the Romans and involved in a serious conflict with Venice—reassessed his politics regarding

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<sup>642</sup> ZSO IV. 1032.

<sup>643</sup> ZSO IV. 1478. Weise, *Die Staatsverträge*, 100.

<sup>644</sup> Likewise, there is no indirect data about the spending of the 12.000 schock Prague groschen either.

<sup>645</sup> [...] *und unser sachen zu unser cronunge damit [12 1/2 tuasent schock Behemischer] bestalt haben wollten* [...] Wilhelm Altmann, "Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte Kaiser Sigmunds," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 18 (1897) 590. ZSO IV. 601. Just like many of his compatriots, Florentine merchant Antonio Fronte arrived in Hungary in 1406 with the help of Filippo Scolari. The son of a textile manufacturer, Pietro Fronte later became a burgher of Buda, a *familiaris* of the king and the creditor of Scolari and Sigismund. Teke, *Firenzei kereskedőtársaságok*, 195-96; Arany, *Florentine families*, 64-69, 87-88. As creditor, he is likely to have charged heavy interest on the sums he lent, otherwise Sigismund would not have complained in his same letter of May 17th that the transaction with Fronte was concluded [...] *nich mit kleinem unserm schaden gemacht* [...].

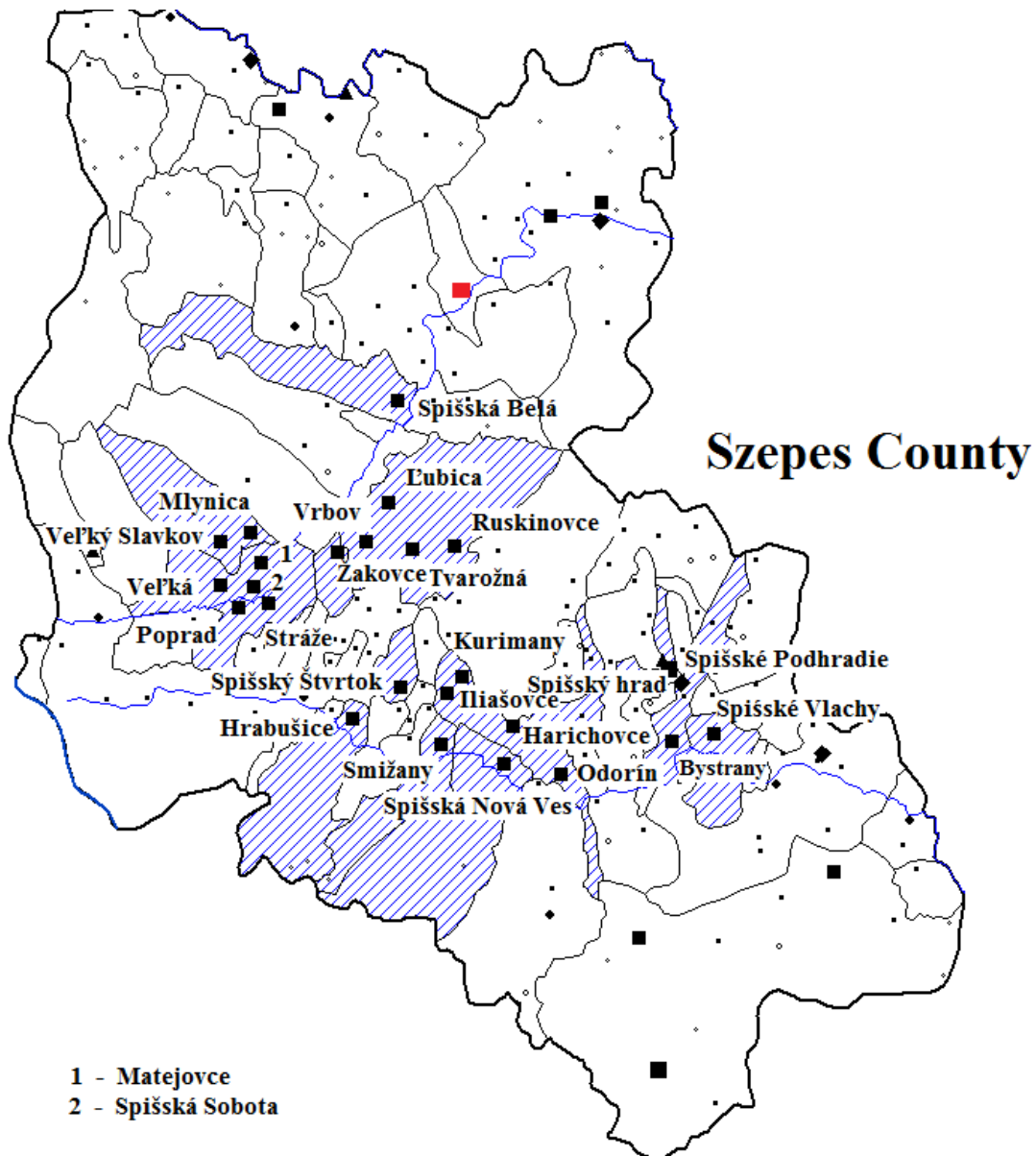
<sup>646</sup> Engel, *Királyok és királynék itineráriumai*, 96.

<sup>647</sup> If Sigismund really wanted to expend the money of the pledging on his coronation, then the 12.500 schock Prague groschen would covered only a fracture of his total expenses. The costs of his imperial coronation of 1433-34 was 15 000 golden florins. Isenmann, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 260-261. Obviously the coronation in Aachen was less expensive than one in Rome, which was among the many reasons why he did not have to travel to the Eternal City.

Poland and sought to improve it significantly. Therefore, first the magnates and then the two rulers met in person. At the latter meeting, Sigismund invited the Polish ruler to visit Hungary, and during that visit the Polish king invited him to be the adjudicator in the conflict between the Polish-Lithuanian Union and the Teutonic Order. The Order could not pay the indemnity stipulated in the Peace of Toruń, so the conflict was liable to flare up again any time. This debt stood at the heart of the conflict; Sigismund hoped that through his intervention he might get some of the money himself. Therefore, at the Buda summit, while seeking a resolution for the conflict, he also brought up the possibility of pledging the Spiš region even though, according to the preliminary plan, the whole Spiš region would have been pledged if the ruler of Hungary had taken over the debt of the Teutonic Order. The two cases were both resolved in Poland where the Hungarian delegation and the order's representatives had a chance to make an agreement with the Polish king Wladislaw II. The larger part of the funds raised by pledging the Spiš region was paid by the Order to Sigismund in the course of the year 1413, which—besides spending it on the war with Venice and building the Saint Sigismund Provostry in Buda—he intended to spend it on the preparations for his coronation in Aachen.

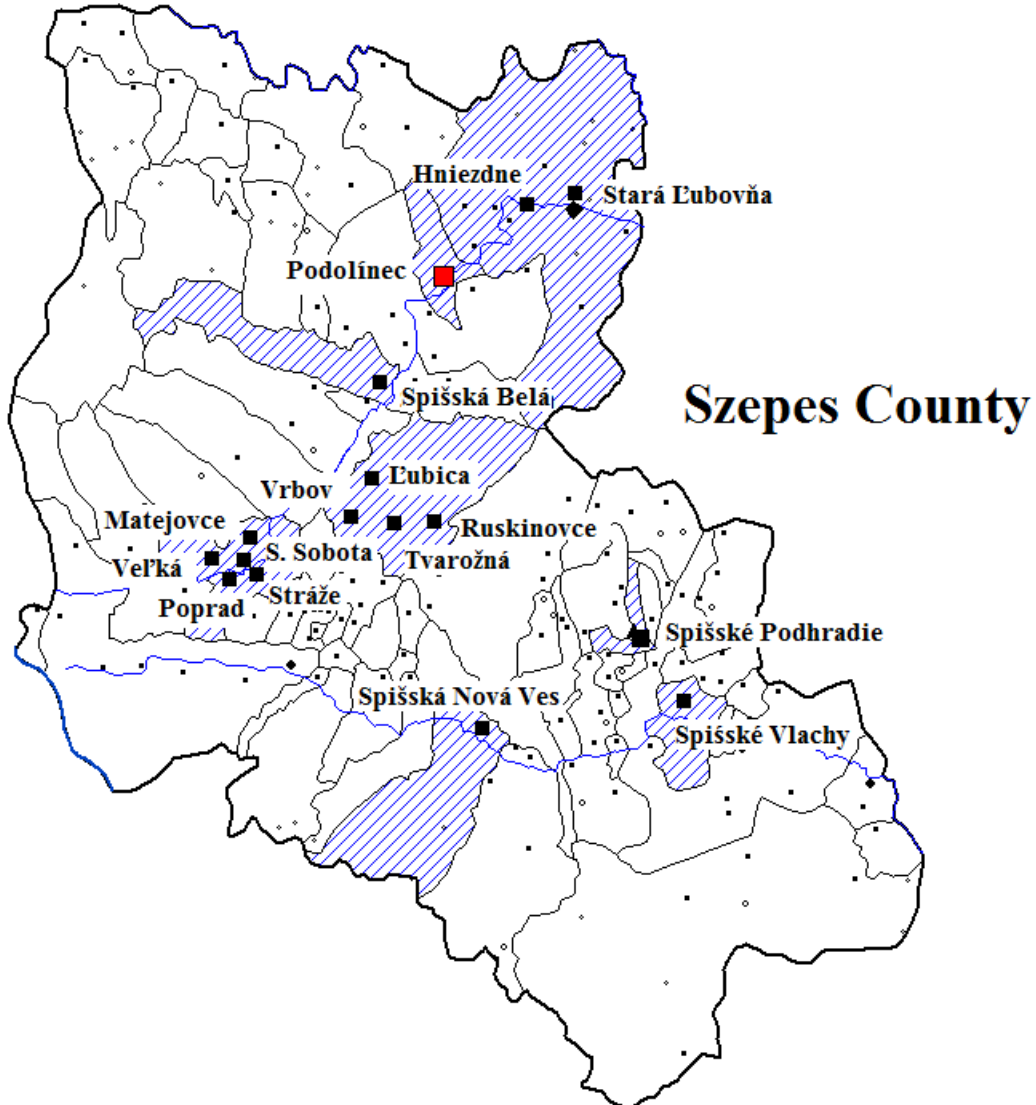
The pledging of the Spiš region is one of the most well-known financial transactions in medieval Hungary and as such it has received a great deal of attention. However, as demonstrated by this brief overview of the transaction and its circumstances, essential questions remain unanswered and further research is necessary regarding a number of important issues relating to the pledging and its long afterlife.





The pledged Spiš region according to the initial plan (cross-hatched): 24 privileged towns together with the castle of Spiš.<sup>648</sup>

<sup>648</sup> The maps have been created with the help of the computer program: Pál Engel, Magyarország a középkor végén: digitális térkép és adatbázis a középkori Magyar Királyság településeiről [Hungary in the late Middle Ages: Digital map and database about the settlements of the Hungarian Kingdom] (Budapest, 2001. CDROM).



The pledged Spiš region (cross-hatched): the thirteen town of Spiš, the towns of Podolínec, Hniezdne and the estate of Stará Ľubovňa.

## Chapter 7. The Pledge Holders

### Sigismund's early years and the members of the league as pledgees

The reign of King Sigismund in Hungary stands out as the starting point of a long process that led to the decline of the monarch's political dominance in the kingdom in favor of the high nobility. During his fifty-year reign, 80 castles were passed into private hands from the 150 which were under royal authority during the Angevin rulers. This process continued even after Sigismund's reign reaching its peak in the early sixteenth century by which time the sovereign had lost his position as the largest landowner in the country, and became only one of the richest.<sup>649</sup> The majority of these castles were alienated in Sigismund's early reigning years. He attributed this loss to his own immaturity and young age in one of his charters from 1406.<sup>650</sup> Yet, the sovereign's young age and lack of experience were obviously not the only factors that led to the shrinking of the royal possessions. The crucial role was played by a group of magnates who helped Sigismund to gain the throne.

The nineteen-year-old monarch's way to his coronation in March 1387 was troublesome enough.<sup>651</sup> However, probably the greatest challenge was awaiting him only after this event: to gain political independence from the grip of his barons and prelates. Already before he was crowned with the Holy Crown of Hungary at Székesfehérvár, he had had to accept the terms set out by a league of powerful magnates. Among many other things, Sigismund had to promise them that he would choose his councilors only from this circle of powerful barons and clergymen and from their heirs. Likewise, he had to ensure them that he would not abandon or exclude any member from the league or cause them any harm. Finally, the document stated, that if he did not keep these promises, the men sealing the charter would have been entitled to disobey him without legal consequences. Moreover, they would have legitimate cause to use force against him to keep

<sup>649</sup> Engel, *Zsigmond bárói*, 115. Engel, *Realm of St Stephen*, 200. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 30–31.

<sup>650</sup> “*ob iuvenilem tunc nostre maiestatis etatem*” quoted by Pál Engel in: *Ibid.*, 31–32.

<sup>651</sup> He was originally designated by his father as heir to the Polish throne and to rule together with Queen Mary over Hungary, too. However, not only the Polish crown was lost for him, but he was even about to fail to fulfill his claim to the throne of Hungary. Only with the military aid provided by his cousins, the Moravian Margraves Jobst and Prokop was he able to gain the throne. Bartl, *Political and Social Situation* 41–54. Süttő, *Anjou-Magyarország alkonya* 1., 94–101, 126–136.

these obligations.<sup>652</sup> The league was composed of around twenty barons and a few prelates, all belonging to the group of the wealthiest and the most powerful people in the kingdom. They represented the old aristocracy of King Louis and his daughter Mary and they filled the prominent offices during the first years of Sigismund's governance. Except for the cup-bearer, the master of the stewards, and the ban of Mačva (Macsó), all baronial offices were held by members of this league during Sigismund's early years of rule.<sup>653</sup> They considered it to have been through their intervention that Sigismund became sovereign and not merely a co-ruler at Queen Mary's side. Therefore, they expected him to share his royal authority with them.

The situation is well reflected by Stibor of Stiboricz's appointment to the office of the *ispán* of Pozsony, when he became a baron. His oath of allegiance was not taken to Sigismund and Mary but to the Holy Crown, the prelates, barons and to the community of the kingdom's nobility.<sup>654</sup> This obvious shift of power was noticed by an envoy of Mantua, who reported to his lord in 1395 that the King of Hungary's position was unstable, and he could not make any decision on his own, but he had to follow the opinion of his barons.<sup>655</sup>

Sigismund's early years of reign can be best characterized as a struggle to restrain the influence of the magnates in governing, which he finally achieved at the end of the civil war in 1403–1404, in which the members of the old aristocracy openly confronted him. Before that, he had appeased them with a good number of donations in order to gain their support. The members of the league took advantage of the dependency of their ruler to expand their power and wealth, and requested donations of royal possessions for themselves and their relatives. Due to their offices, the majority of the royal castles were under their authority. Consequently, they could easily choose which castle or domain they would like to own. Each of them were granted from one up to four castles, and as a result, more castles were alienated in the first three years of Sigismund's rule than in the remaining period of his whole reign.<sup>656</sup>

<sup>652</sup> The very existence of this document made Pál Engel claim that Sigismund was enthroned by election. Engel, *Zsigmond bárói*, 122. Engel, *The Realm*, 199. However, the record itself does not speak about an election; in 1447 is the first mention of electing the king of Hungary. Kondor, *Fejedelmi frigyek*, 284–286.

<sup>653</sup> Engel, *Zsigmond bárói*, 122–124. Engel, *The Realm*, 199–200. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 32.

<sup>654</sup> Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 35–36.

<sup>655</sup> This is how Paulus de Armaninis described the situation at the Hungarian royal court in 27 November 1395: “...sequi oportet voluntates suorum principum et baronum, tamquam homo non habens statum suum aliquatenus firmum propter varias opiniones et invidias magnas regnantes inter ipsos cum male contentantur, maxime barones Ungarie ipsum in suum regem habere, et ipse eis cotidie complacere conatur in omnibus, quibus potest.” Thallóczy, *Mantovai követjárás*, 99–100. Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 37.

<sup>656</sup> Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 32–33. Engel, *Zsigmond bárói*, 124.

In the light of these facts, it is not surprising that during this early period, the pledging of royal properties followed a similar pattern as the donation of royal possessions. The barons and the prelates – who formed the league – almost monopolized the royal pledgings since the great majority of the possessions were pledged to them. Even the very first property given in pledge by Sigismund in 1386 was pledged to a baron who was a member of the league: Nicholas Zámbo, master of treasury.<sup>657</sup> This transaction only pinpointed the trend dominating the first decade of Sigismund's pledging practice from 1386 onwards. From all together twenty-four pledgings of these first ten years (from 1386) at least sixteen can be linked directly to the members of the league, their relatives or their *familiares*.<sup>658</sup> Apparently, Archbishop John Kanizsai, his relatives, and the Rátót kindred profited the most from Sigismund's vulnerable position. John Kanizsai had been the bishop of Eger (1384–1387) prior to Sigismund's ascension to the Hungarian throne. Shortly after that he became supreme chancellor (May 1387) and later archbishop of Esztergom (September 1387). As such, he advanced into the position of the king's primary councilor, and remained a highly influential person on the king's side until the civil war at the turn of the century. Kanizsai often accompanied his ruler in the military campaigns together with his own *banderia*.<sup>659</sup> He also contributed twice to save the throne for Sigismund<sup>660</sup>. For all of these services he expected a proportionate remuneration. The archbishop – apparently the intellectual leader of the league – belonged to those members who benefited the most for he was granted with large royal estates. He was mainly interested in the estates situated in Transdanubia since his family's possessions were also located here. Besides, he took great care to include his brothers' name in the charters of the royal grants.<sup>661</sup> This practice was continued with the pledges as well, although the archbishop did

<sup>657</sup> From 1387 until the mid of 1387 it was common that both Queen Mary and Sigismund issued letters of donation for the same domain. Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 35. It seems that similar practice was characteristic for the early pledgings too, the castle of Somló was pledged to Zámbo *per nostram et reginalem maiestates* DL 100237.

<sup>658</sup> League members as pledgees between 1386 and 1395: Nicholas Zámbo DL 100237 (the same source for two transactions); Leusták Jolsvai DL 7417; John Kanizsai and his brothers DL 7385, 7389, 7633, 7938; Stephen Losonci DF 286391, *TEMES* I., 181 (the original charter is missing); Stephen Lackfi Engel, *Archontológia*, 459; John Kaplai Wenzel, *Diósgyőr*, 42; Mikcs Prodaviz DL 33776. Pledgees associated with the league: John and Ladislaus Pásztói (members of the Rátót kindred) DL 96613; Dezső Kaplai (member of the Rátót kindred) DL 7519, 7786; Peter Szeretvai (*familiaris* of Jolsvai) DL 7655. The remaining transactions: DL 7892, 7454, 8050, 70822, 71239, 7772, 7893, 71900. A *familiaris* was a noble retainer, a subject of a major landowner. The institution was similar to the West European vassalage. For more: *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom* 2, 255.

<sup>659</sup> A military unit of 50–400 soldiers serving under barons, king etc. *Ibid.*, 249.

<sup>660</sup> In 1388 he put down a baronial conspiracy against Sigismund, and in 1395 – when Sigismund was in a military campaign in Wallachia – Kanizsai organized the defense of the country against a Polish attack, triggered by Queen Jadwiga's claim to the Hungarian throne. Engel, *Rövid életrajzok*, 424.

<sup>661</sup> Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 31–34. Engel, *The Realm*, 199.

not always manage to secure the inheritability of the pledged properties this way.<sup>662</sup> However, he succeeded in the most important transactions when castles were given in pledge to them. First, on 19 April 1388 he and his brothers received the castle of Bernstein (Borostyánkő) in pledge. Ten days later they had to pay an additional fee for the same castle.<sup>663</sup> As it could be expected, Kanizsai had the support of the barons and fellow prelates in these transactions. The first one was formulated with their consent, while the charter of the second pledging was sealed by Palatine Stephen Lackfi and Eustache Jolsvai, master of the doorkeepers - both members of the league.<sup>664</sup> Two years later they gained additional castles in pledge, those of Sárvár and Lockenhaus (Léka).<sup>665</sup>

The archbishop's influence can be suspected behind the charges of fraudulent misuse of royal treasury funds of which Nicholas Zábó was accused. Their estimation had been of 1.200 florins for which Kanizsai seized and pledged his possessions located in Žitný Ostrov (Csallóköz).<sup>666</sup> Not only this pledging practice was suspicious, but also the fact that poor Zábó was followed by Nicholas Kanizsai (the archbishops' brother) in the office of the master of treasury.<sup>667</sup> John Kanizsai was influential enough to persuade the king to turn the pledged estates into donations, so that the timespan of pledging could be shortened significantly. The castle of Bernstein was donated to the Kanizsai family only four years after the pledging while it took seven years in the case of Lockenhaus.<sup>668</sup>

Beside the Kanizsai family the Rátót kindred – led by Eustache Jolsvai – benefited the most from the pledges of royal possessions during the early period of Sigismund's reign. The members of the kindred clan were already prominent aristocrats during the Árpadian period, and they did not lose their importance during the Angevin rule either. Two representatives of the kindred, Eustache Jolsvai and John Kaplai held baronial positions in Sigismund's first government, and were members of the league as well.<sup>669</sup> The head of the kindred, Jolsvai started his career serving

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<sup>662</sup> The confiscated domains of Nicholas Zábó were pledged only to the archbishop. DL 7938.

<sup>663</sup> DL 7385, 7389.

<sup>664</sup> "...*consilio prelatorum et baronum nostrorum ex consensuque et deliberatione unanimi eorundem...*" DL 7385. DL 7389. Engel, *Zsigmond bárói*, 122–123.

<sup>665</sup> DL 7633. Imre Nagy, *Sopron vármegye története. Oklevéltár első kötet 1156-1411* [The history of Sopron County – Chartulary, first volume 1156-1411] (Sopron: Sopron vármegye közönsége, 1889), 498.

<sup>666</sup> DL 7938.

<sup>667</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 38. Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 44–45.

<sup>668</sup> *Ibid.*, 27. There is no information about the possible donation of Sárvár to the Kanizsais despite Elemér Mályusz' claim. The family held it until 1403 when it was besieged and taken over by Sigismund's forces, until then they could have possessed it in pledge too. Engel, *Archontológia*, 405.

<sup>669</sup> Engel, *Zsigmond bárói*, 122–123.

the widow and the daughter of King Louis as *ispán* of Pozsony County. With the queen's imprisonment he joined Sigismund's retinue and became one of his important adherents. After Sigismund's coronation Jolsvai was appointed to the office of master of the doorkeepers, and a few years later, in 1392, he held the most important position in the kingdom by becoming its palatine. Jolsvai was present in most of the royal campaigns and ended his career in one of these. In the battle of Nicopolis he was captured by the Ottomans and died as their prisoner, because he was not able to collect the requested ransom.<sup>670</sup> Until then, he and his relatives sought to extend their own domains by purchasing royal ones. They did so in a highly efficient way, since the ruler granted them altogether nine castles.<sup>671</sup>

As for the pledgings, Jolsvai himself received only a single castle in pledge (Füzér) but only for a short period. He was way more successful in arranging pledgings of royal estates for his relatives.<sup>672</sup> In the years 1387–1392 he is mentioned as the referent (*relator*) in the majority of the royal charters.<sup>673</sup> Probably it was not by chance, that his name also appears on documents, by which his relatives and *familiares* received royal possessions in pledge.<sup>674</sup> These were the pledgings of the castles of Oponice (Appony) in 1389 and of Rajec, Litva (Lietava), Hričov (Hricsó) in 1392, which came into possession of the same Dezső Kaplai,<sup>675</sup> — a member of the Rátót kindred — whose brother John Kaplai was a baron and a member of the league.<sup>676</sup> As in this case, Jolsvai was also behind the pledging of the royal village of Ostrovany (Osztrópataka) to Peter Szeretvai in 1390. In 1396 Szeretvai is attested as the *alispán* of Turóc County meanwhile Jolsvai himself was acting as *ispán*. Most likely, he had already been a member of Jolsvai's *familia* prior to this term.<sup>677</sup> John and Ladislaus Pásztói belonged to the Rátót kindred as well and were also

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<sup>670</sup> Engel, *Rövid életrajzok*, 422.

<sup>671</sup> Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 32–33.

<sup>672</sup> DL 7417.

<sup>673</sup> Engel, *Rövid életrajzok*, 422.

<sup>674</sup> There is only fragmentary data available about *relatores* of the charters of pledge, due to the reason that such documents of pledgings are often missing, and only other types of sources (letters of institution, charter of domain swapping, etc.) can be used which do not contain information regarding the referent. This situation is generally true for Sigismund's entire reign, not only for the first years. Besides Jolsvai, John and Nicholas Kanizsai and Ladislaus Losonci feature once each as referents of pledgings between 1386 and 1396. DL 70822, 34040, 7454

<sup>675</sup> DL 7519.

<sup>676</sup> He was Ban of Severin (1388–1390) and judge royal (first in 1385, later in 1392–1395). Engel, *Archontológia*, 8, 32.

<sup>677</sup> *Ibid.*, 216. DL 7655.

involved in the royal pledge transactions. It is however questionable, how much Jolsvai contributed to these, because there is nothing that links them together besides their family ties.<sup>678</sup>

Jolsvai's immense importance for the kindred is accurately reflected by the aftermath of his captivity.<sup>679</sup> At the diet of Timisoara (Temesvár) in 1397, a decree was promulgated that authorized the ruler to take back all the royal possessions that had been sold or pledged without any compensation<sup>680</sup>. The decree had terrible consequences for the Kaplai family, as they remained without protector and were therefore at the king's mercy. They lost five castles out of six, only the castle of Širkovce (Kapla) – from which the family took its name – was not confiscated.<sup>681</sup> Among these five castles were the four that were pledged to them thanks to Jolsvai's contribution, moreover the market town of Moldava nad Bodvou (Szepesi) was seized. In the case of this *oppidum*, the decree of Timisoara was not only brought up to justify Sigismund's actions. The Kaplais were also charged with collecting revenues from the market town that were much higher than the original sum of the pledging.<sup>682</sup>

Elemér Mályusz used this case to prove that in the early years of Sigismund's reign royal possessions were pledged under their real value.<sup>683</sup> Although the case of Moldava nad Bodvou represents a somehow doubtful example, since it is not probable that the Kaplais gained more than 4.000 florins during the years between 1388 and 1397 when they held it in pledge.<sup>684</sup> Nonetheless,

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<sup>678</sup> The two Kaplais, John and Dezső took in pledge the market town of Moldava nad Bodvou (Szepesi) around June 1388, when the previous owners protested against taking it away from them. ZsO I. 619. On 10 April 1392 the Kaplai brothers gave back a village to Sigismund who in return confirmed that Szepesi was pledged to them earlier. Wenzel, *Diósgyőr*, 42. Because the charter survived only in the form of a transcription, it is unknown whether Leusták Jolsvai or someone else was the *relator* of it.

<sup>679</sup> In the light of Jolsvai's importance, it is strange that his relatives did not collect the money for redeeming him from the captivity.

<sup>680</sup> This decree of the diet is mentioned in the charters of pledgings, however those documents referred to it in order to provide exemption from its consequences. For example. "...*Hoc declarato et adiecto, quod decretum, constitutio seu dispositio baronum et nobilium regni nostri pridem in congregatione nostra generali in Themeswar inter alia super restitutione castrorum, civitatum, [p]ossessionum per nos cuiuspiam usque tunc per modum pignoris datorum et assignatarum iterum ad manus nostras fieri debendarum per nos celebrata factum et ordinate presenti inpignorationi et contractui obstare non valeant...*" Frangepán I., 128, DL 33980. A similar phrasing can be read in: Frangepán I., 130. DL 33285.

<sup>681</sup> Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 47-49. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 39.

<sup>682</sup> "*Cum vniuersi Barones, ac pociores regni nostri nobiles et proceres, in congregacione generali, hic in Temeswar... vnanimi inter ipsos prius maturo prehabito consilio et tractatu decreuerunt, vt vniuersi regnicolarum, quaslibet possessiones tenuta et Castra nostra quibuscumque ipsas impignorassemus, sine omni pecuniaria solucione, a manibus talium possessorum reciperemus et nostris regis manibus applicando....*" Regarding the *oppidum*, the charter claims that it was seized because: "*a tempore pmissae impignorationis, vsque nunc, multo plus quam ipsam sumpnam pecunie pro qua fuerat impignorata, de dicto nostro opido Scepsy, dinoscitur excepisse....*" Temes I., 277.

<sup>683</sup> Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 47-49.

<sup>684</sup> It is not probable that a market town would yield a yearly revenue of 400 florins when this sum was so high that reached the amount of the yearly tax of certain free royal towns. Engel, *The Realm*, 226.



Mályusz was right to claim that some estates were pledged for a very low sum. Sticking with the example of Moldava nad Bodvou, it is unlikely that a market town pledged for 4.000 florins would have been worth four times more than the castles of Appony or Kővár, which were given in pledge for only 1.000 florins each. It is also unlikely that its value exceeded the value of those three castles that were also pledged to them in a single transaction, as a result of Jolsvai's influence. Of course, there are great differences in what a *castrum* could be; the number and the extension of the pertaining domains highly influencing its value is just one example. Still, the practice to pledge royal castles for 1.000 or a thousand and a few hundred golden florins was mainly common during the first years of Sigismund's reign.<sup>685</sup>

Sigismund gradually managed to strengthen his position and to remove the powerful magnates from governance. But only after the civil war of 1403–1404 was he able to rule the country without restraint – which had also an impact on his pledging practice.

## Foreign pledge holders

The members of the baronial league lost their political ground in the mid-1390s, which can be explained by the decline of their political influence. After 1392, Sigismund strove to change the composition of the administration by putting loyal people in various offices of the country. Usually, these men were middle class nobles or officeholders of foreign origins whom Sigismund elevated to the highest ranks of the country.<sup>686</sup>

During the rule of Sigismund, the country witnessed a substantial increase of foreigners - in fact, there had never been that many officeholders of foreign origin in the Kingdom of Hungary as in those decades. No wonder that among the multiple reasons for the magnates' rebellion on the

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<sup>685</sup> These castles were: Oponice (Appony) Kamengrad (Kővár), Cheresig (Körösszeg) (pledged for 1333 florins), Litva, Rajec, Hričov (these three pledged together for 3.000 florins). DL 7519, 70822; DF 286391; DL 7786. Maybe the closest pledging of castle to this figure of 1.000 florins was that of Hrušov (Hrussó) castle in 1403 pledged to Peter Forgách for 1.500 florins (more precisely for the wages of 300 horsemen). The reason behind it was that Forgách conquered the castle back on his own expenses from the rebels for Sigismund. He was in command of it only for a short while, probably till his expenses of the siege were met. DL 58797. The castle of Čeklís (Cseklész) was pledged also well below its real value (1.500 florins) to the Rozgonyi brothers in 1427, however Sigismund took every opportunity to demand additional loans from them on the basis of the pledging. They paid two additional times, once even more money than the original sum of the pledging. DL 11936, 12410, 12412. The castle of Sáros was promised in pledge to the Nicholas Perényi (Richno) for only 900 florins, but this suspicious transaction did not materialize. DL 57677, Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 147. Lastly, Tátika castle can be mentioned, which was pledged for 1.100 florins but the pledge holders had to pay 2.000 florins additionally to redeem it from the previous pledgee. DF 200437.

<sup>686</sup> Ibid., 38–40.

turn of the fifteenth century was the growing presence of these foreigners in the country's political life. The rebelling magnates perceived the foreign influence as a threat to their position, since the non-Hungarians gained offices, domains and appointments not only for themselves but also for their relatives. Some of them even found a consort among the local nobles, so that the benefices, which they gained would be inherited and could no longer be acquired by the magnates. Sigismund could count on the loyalty of these newcomers for they did not have enough social contacts in the country that could result in a political threat to the monarch's position<sup>687</sup>.

One of the most renowned among the foreigners was Stibor of Stiboricz, a Polish nobleman. He started his career in the country during King Louis's reign. Soon after his death, Stibor joined Sigismund's side and became his trusted adherent, mainly by performing military and governmental tasks. Sigismund lavished his favorite with donations: he was granted with five castles on a single day and was the third wealthiest landowner of the kingdom at the time of his death (1414).<sup>688</sup> Until the outbreak of the 1403-1404 civil war only Stibor, Vladislaus II of Opole, Prokop Balicki, and an Austrian nobleman Lessel Hening, were the only foreign pledge holders.<sup>689</sup> After 1404 – when the old aristocracy lost its initial power and the remaining opposition was pushed aside – more Czechs and Poles appeared. Their presence in the country was so significant that they administered at least five counties (as *comites*, captains, castellans, etc.) during the first two decades after the civil war.<sup>690</sup> This influx is reflected in the pledgings as well,<sup>691</sup> where the numbers of Sigismund's foreign business partners were nominally increasing – especially the quantity of Polish pledge holders in the first two decades of the fifteenth century.

Stibor of Stiboricz spent more than half of his life in Hungary serving Louis I and Sigismund faithfully, even his private possessions were situated in Hungary. However, in contrast to some of his fellow barons of foreign origins (such as Filippo Scolari), he did not assimilate into the country's nobility but continued to live his life as a Polish lord, surrounded by Poles and office holders selected from his own countrymen. He had such an enormous influence on the Polish

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<sup>687</sup> Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 47–50. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 53. Engel, *The Realm*, 209, 211–213.

<sup>688</sup> (22 May 1394). Engel, *Rövid életrajzok*, 444–446. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 50–51. Dvořáková, *A Lovag és királya*, 50.

<sup>689</sup> Lessel Hening -Wenzel, *Stibor*, 145, DL 10202; Vladislaus II of Opole - CDS XXXI –22; Prokop Balicki - DL 8944; Stibor - DL 7892, 8158.

<sup>690</sup> Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 53. Engel, *The Realm*, 209.

<sup>691</sup> Though, already during the civil war Bělík of Kornice and Donin of Skrzywno took royal estates in pledge. DF 200389, ZsO VIII. 563.

diaspora in Hungary that almost every Pole coming to the country can be related to him in one way or another.<sup>692</sup> Unsurprisingly, apart from princes and dukes, all the Polish pledges were related to Stibor.<sup>693</sup> The closest were his family members, his son Stibor junior, his granddaughter Catherine and his nephew Nicholas (Nikolajko) of Stiborc.<sup>694</sup> Besides them, Stibor had familial ties with Skrzyni Donin from the Łabędź kindred. He stood also behind the pledging of the castle of Ludanice (Ludány) to Donin. Originally it belonged to the Ludányi family, but they joined the rebels' side in the civil war and as a consequence they lost it. Stibor of Stiboricz conquered it in the king's name and managed to transfer the castle to his relative and fellow countryman Donin.<sup>695</sup> An even closer relative of Stibor, Mościc (Mostic) of Stęszew — the son of Stibor's sister Sophia — took in pledge the castle of Šintava (Sempte), two market towns, and some villages.<sup>696</sup> Stibor's daughter Rachna married Andrzej Balicki, a member of another Polish family that gained offices in Hungary thanks to Stibor's support. Compared to Donin and Mościc, the Balickis already came into the country before the civil war. Prokop Balicki served as the castellan of a Transylvanian castle (Rodna, 1395–1401) when Stibor was the voivode of the province. Prokop was the first among his family members to receive a royal estate in pledge; around 1398, Sigismund pledged the castle of Hangovice (Újvár) to him. After his death the castle remained in the possession of his family. His cousin Andrzej (Stibor's son in law) and his brothers took it in pledge from the king.<sup>697</sup>

Many of the Polish noblemen, who were active in Hungary, lived and held domains in both countries, and served two lords. The Balickis are one of the best examples of this practice: Andrzej was a royal knight in Sigismund's curia, but he also performed diplomatic missions as the Polish ruler's envoy at the Hungarian court. Furthermore, the Balickis were probably the most involved Poles in the pledging business at Sigismund's court – for certain, they benefited the longest from it. Besides Hangovice, they also held in pledge the castle of Sklabiná (Szklabinya), a village in

<sup>692</sup> Engel, *Rövid életrajzok*, 446. Dvořáková, *Lengyelek*, 391. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 57.

<sup>693</sup> Vladislaus II of Opole; Duke Louis II of Brzeg and Legnica; Siemowit V Duke of Masovia; and King Władysław II. CDS XXXI–22, DF 287090, 288581, Temes I., 636, DL 9984.

<sup>694</sup> The younger Stibor received Orava Castle and all the estates granted to him by Sigismund for the time of his pleasure. DL 10596, 64749. After his death a fight began for the family inheritance which hardly could be won by the widow and the daughter of Stibor jr. Under such circumstances Catherine (Stibor jr's daughter) received the family's primary residence, castle of Beckov (Bolondóc) in pledge. DL 13137, Engel, *Archontológia*, 284. Nicholas Stiboricz also fought for the inheritance, but his right were denied on the ground of treason. Probably, not long before this event he managed to take in pledge a village in Nyitra County. Dvořáková, *A Lovag és király*, 387–390, 402–406. DL 13137.

<sup>695</sup> Dvořáková, *Lengyelek*, 407. Engel, *Archontológia*, 363. ZsO VIII. 563.

<sup>696</sup> DL 11300, 71976, 13137. Dvořáková, *Lengyelek*, 401–404. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 56. DL 71976.

<sup>697</sup> DL 8944.

Turóc County,<sup>698</sup> and for a short time even the market town of Debrecen. Moreover, they managed to get the office of *ispán* in the Turóc County for five decades and earn the yearly tax incomes of Bardejov (Bártfa) for almost a century.<sup>699</sup> Not every Polish pledgee related to Stibor was connected to him through familial ties, Conrad Schellendorf was only his *familiaris*.<sup>700</sup>

Besides the Poles, the Czechs also showed interest in the royal transactions of pledge but visibly much lower than the Polish pledgees since only about a few can be claimed with certainty that they were pledge holders of royal estates.<sup>701</sup> The Czechs arrival and activity in the country cannot be connected to the efforts of a single person, as in the case of the Poles. Some of them probably followed Sigismund as part of his entourage, but they came in higher numbers to the country after 1400 and especially after the end of the civil war, when Sigismund gave estates to his sister Margaret in the northern part of the country. Margaret hired almost exclusively foreigners for the administration of her possessions; many of them originated from Bohemia and Moravia. After her death (1410), the majority of her Hungarian estates were passed to her brother-in-law, Frederick VI Burgrave of Nuremberg.<sup>702</sup> The Bohemian nobleman, Peter Kapler of Sulevice (Sulewitz) was probably Burgrave Frederick's retainer. He held the office of *ispán* of Pozsony County – between (1411–1421)<sup>703</sup> – and by it he belonged to the barons of the kingdom. He took the royal castle of Kittsee (Köpcsény) and the thirtieth of Rusovce (Oroszvár) in pledge when his days as *ispán* were over in 1422. The Kapler family had to pay a high price for doing business with Sigismund. Already the 9.000 florins sum of the pledging of Kittsee (Köpcsény) and the thirtieth was high enough, but after Kapler's death, his widow paid 17.500 florins additionally for keeping the castle with its appurtenances.<sup>704</sup> Just as Peter Kapler, Smil of Lichtenburg and Bítov (Vötteau), also served for a while as the *ispán* of Pozsony County. Besides this, he acted as the

<sup>698</sup> DL 63255.

<sup>699</sup> DF 212742, 212748. Incze, “*Bound by Pledge*”, 87–90. Dvořáková, *Lengyelek*, 404–407. Engel, *Királyi hatalom* 56. Sroka, *A középkori Bártfa*, 40.

<sup>700</sup> He took in pledge the castle of Šurany (Surány). DL 13137. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 57. Engel, *Archontológia*, 417.

<sup>701</sup> Besides him, maybe Bělík of Kornice and John of Reichenau could have been Czechs. Concerning Bělík, there are two Kornice settlements, one in Silesia and the other in Bohemia and is not clear which was his settlement of origin. He took the castle of Lednica (Lednic) in pledge around 1403 and his family held it even in 1475. DL 103008. Engel, *Archontológia*, 356–357. John of Reichenau is mentioned by the sources as *magister bombardarum* and at the time of the pledging he was dwelling in Bratislava. He either originated from the Czech Rychnov nad Kněžnou (Reichenau an der Knieschna) or from Reichenau island of Lake Constance. John took a manor house and a village in pledge. DL 12759.

<sup>702</sup> Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 53–54.

<sup>703</sup> He was also the castellan of Bratislava (Pozsony/Pressburg) castle from 1413 again until 1421. Engel, *Archontológia*, 169, 395.

<sup>704</sup> ZSO. IX. 777, DL 11755. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 125.

captain of Sopron and the castellan of Bratislava castle. Around 1421 he received Ľupča castle (Zólyomlipcse) in pledge from the king.<sup>705</sup>

The groups of the German and the Austrian pledge holders are the most difficult to grasp, because they are the least studied and therefore it is difficult to identify them. An Austrian knight, Hening Lessel held the castles of Ostrý Kameň (Éleskő) and Devín (Dévény) in pledge before 1401. Recovering them did not go smoothly, since during the tense relationship between Sigismund and the Austrian duke Frederick IV, there was a moment when the king of Hungary ordered the Devín castle to be conquered from Lessel.<sup>706</sup> Sigismund was doing business with his son-in-law Duke Albert V of Austria too, who of course was interested in estates situated close to the Hungarian-Austrian border.<sup>707</sup> Among the German pledgees one can find burgher, clergyman and even prince elector of the Holy-Roman Empire. Eberhard Cliber was a burgher of Bamberg, he became the pledge holder of a Castle Gelnica (Gölnic) and certain mining revenues pertaining to the chamber of Košice (Kassa).<sup>708</sup> John Albeni was the nephew of Eberhard (originating probably from the Rhine region), who was a highly influential cleric serving Sigismund from his youth and who filled prominent ecclesiastical and secular positions in the kingdom. John was bishop of Veszprém, later Pécs and finally Zagreb.<sup>709</sup> He took the castles of Rezi, Koprivnica (Kővár) and the town of Gradec (Zagreb) in pledge.<sup>710</sup> The prince elector was Louis III, Count Palatine of the Rhine who received Castle Čeklís in pledge in 1424.<sup>711</sup>

Sigismund often turned to Florentine businessmen and bankers when he was short of money. They kept helping him to solve his financial difficulties despite his reputation of bad debtor<sup>712</sup>. However, these Italian entrepreneurs – as all businessmen operating in a foreign country

<sup>705</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 168, 395, 416. I would like to thank Petr Elbel for the reference. August Sedláček, *Zbytky register králův římských a českých z let 1361–1480*. Historický archiv 39 [The remnants of the former Czech royal registers from the years 1361–1480] (Prague: Nákl. České akademie císaře Františka Josefa pro vědy, slovesnost a umění, 1914), 130.

<sup>706</sup> DL 10202, Wenzel, *Stibor*, 145. Engel, *Archontológia*, 300, 308. In the end Nicholas Garai redeemed it by paying. Dvořáková, *A Lovag és királya*, 285-286.

<sup>707</sup> DF 287126.

<sup>708</sup> In the charter of pledging Cliber is called: *Eberhardus Cliber ciuis de Bamberga nostre maiestatis familiaris*. Wenzel, *Magyarország bányászatának*, 359. DF 249918 Cliber also lent money to Sigismund when he visited Nuremberg in 1431. Áldásy, *Zsigmond koronázása*, 306.

<sup>709</sup> Engel, *Rövid életrajzok*, 412-414. Engel, *The Realm*, 205.

<sup>710</sup> DL 92575, Fejér X/7 436.

<sup>711</sup> DF 225518.

<sup>712</sup> In the Florentine catasto of 1427 Giovanni di Bartolomeo Panciatichi, a creditor of Sigismund, characterized him with the following words "...he is a very bad debtor, on this you can get information from anyone having business in

– were not interested in gaining domains as a security for their credit, since they were not attracted by the nobles' way of life.<sup>713</sup> Filippo Scolari had the most memorable career in Hungary among the Florentines, and he was the only exception.<sup>714</sup> Scolari managed to rise from the office of count of the chambers in Kremnica (Körmöcbánya) to one of the most esteemed governors in Sigismund's kingdom. Since his early years in the country he strove consciously to assimilate the Hungarian customs: he married the daughter of a local noble, his retinue consisted mainly of Hungarians, and he became even Hungarian by appearance.<sup>715</sup> In contrast to his countrymen, Scolari had nothing against the possession of domains in the kingdom. It is therefore not surprising, that he showed some interest in the royal pledging business.<sup>716</sup>

No matter from what country they originated, the king's foreign business partners in pledging mostly preferred royal estates situated in the northern, north-western or western part of the kingdom, usually close to the border.<sup>717</sup> The reason for their choice was a simple one; the possessions located in these areas were closer to their countries of origin and therefore to their own estates. Consequently, it required less expensive travelling and the management of these domains was easier too. There are some exceptions, but their numbers are limited. It can be presumed that the proximity of the private estates might have been the determining factor for choosing them. Some of the foreigners did not live in two countries, but settled permanently in Hungary, like Filippo Scolari. They preferred to have the pledged possessions in the proximity of their private estates than to be located in the border zone.<sup>718</sup>

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the country...” (quoted by Krisztina Arany). Besides Panciatichi there were also others complaining because they did not receive their money. Arany, *Florentine families*, 82–84.

<sup>713</sup> This was true for Hungary too, not only for England and France. *The Cambridge Economic History*, 438. Engel, *The Realm*, 213.

<sup>714</sup> Scolari was Sigismund's important financial advisor and his name often appeared on the chancellery notes of the charters of pledge. DL 101943, 63121, 71794, 92575.

<sup>715</sup> Engel, *Rövid életrajzok*, 432–434.

<sup>716</sup> Among others Scolari took in pledge the market town of Szád (Căpâlnaş). Koppány, *Magyarország kastélyai*, 211.

<sup>717</sup> The counties where the foreigners held royal pledged domains: Trencsén (DF 288581/ page 473, 287090, DL 103008), Pozsony (DL 11300, 12759, DF 287048, Fejér IV, 493, Wenzel, *Stibor*, 145), Komárom (Fejér IV, 493), Nyitra (ZsO VIII. 563), Moson (ZsO. IX. 777, DF 287126), Árva ( CDS XXXI, 22), Turóc (DF 212742, CDS XXXI, 22), Torna (DF 249918), Sáros (DF 212748, DL 8944), Zemplén (DL 8944), Zágráb (DL 12785, 33687, Fejér X/7, 436), Körös (Fejér X/7, 436), Zala (DL 92575), Bihar (DF 212742). Borsod (DL 71976), Abaúj (DL 71976).

<sup>718</sup> John Albeni for example, chose estates of Zagreb and Krisevic County for taking in pledge because he was the bishop of Zagreb. Fejér X/7, 436. The reason behind taking in pledge the castles of Rezi and Pölöske might have been that their relative Archchancellor Eberhard owed them, and after his death the Albenis did not want to slip through their fingers. DL 92575. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 142, 145.

## Sigismund's new political elite

During the fifty years of Sigismund's reign in Hungary a new political elite emerged from the middle nobility. The phenomenon was noticed by John Thuróczy, who described it in the following way:

“He [Sigismund] raised not only nobles from humble families to exalted positions but also a great number of men with a plebeian background and made them powerful in his kingdom. [...] It is, however, not easy for me to count the nobles of middle rank whom the king elevated either from the countryside nobles or some other obscure noble family.”<sup>719</sup>

As Thuróczy remarked, they were generally families of modest origins, whose ancestors had had free access to the royal aula as knights, castellans, or *alispánok* in the Angevin age. But they were never in charge of prominent offices. Because of the talents and loyalty of some of their family members, Sigismund gave them higher offices in the country, and even elevated some of them to governmental key positions. Often the king granted an appropriate amount of wealth together with these offices. Besides the foreigners, these noblemen were Sigismund's primary allies in the struggle for power with the league of magnates during the early years of his reign. After the league was defeated, their role in the country's government increased significantly.<sup>720</sup>

Besides a few exceptions,<sup>721</sup> the new elite began to have an important role in the royal pledge transactions generally from the 1420s. The social rank of the families remained heterogeneous because not all of their members rose to high positions; the biggest group among them was formed by the barons, followed by the knights of the court and smaller officeholders, who used to lend money to the ruler.<sup>722</sup> As expected, barons and prelates concluded the highest number of transactions: they were able to lend greater sums to the king (or to perform services of higher value) and therefore received more valuable estates in pledge.<sup>723</sup> In this social group of the pledgees, the Rozgonyi family was the most important business partner of the ruler, for the family

<sup>719</sup> Thuróczy, *Chronicle of the Hungarians*, 84, 86.

<sup>720</sup> Engel, *The Realm*, 211–213. Engel, *Zsigmond bárói*, 125–126. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 46–47.

<sup>721</sup> Castle of Tátika and the market town of Segesd to the Marcalies DF 200389, 200390. A village of Pozsony County to Ders Martin Szerdahelyi, DL 8956.

<sup>722</sup> Knights of the court were: John and Stephen Perényi DL 11694, junior John Maróti DF 265865. *Ispánok*: Peter and Ladislaus Pető Gersei of the Counties Vas and Zala DL 200437; Stephen Aranyi was *ispán* of Hont, Nógrád and Gemer Counties at the time of pledging Fejér X/7, 852.

<sup>723</sup> For example, Emeric Marcali and his relatives lent almost 8.000 (7.875) florins for the town of Virovitica (Verőce), the Rozgonyis 7.000 for Šintava (Sempte) castle and John Maróti together with his son 15.000 for domains of Peter Bodolai. DL 33412, 24522, 11211.

members managed to close more than ten pledge contracts with the king in the period between 1426 and 1437.<sup>724</sup> Thanks to the merits of the judge royal Simon, Sigismund became so fond of the family that he entrusted the Rozgonyis with the administration of the western part of the country in the last decade of his rule.<sup>725</sup> From 1421 until his death in 1443, Simon's son Stephen was *ispán* of the County of Pozsony along with his brother George. Besides, they supervised the reconstruction of Pozsony castle too.<sup>726</sup> Additionally, they were active in the repulsion of the Hussite incursions in the area. A significant part of the transactions was related to these kind of services: when the supplies for the reconstruction were depleted, the Rozgonyi brothers bore its costs from time to time. The ruler, lacking liquid assets, covered these expenses with pledgings.<sup>727</sup> George contributed to the fight against the Hussites in two ways: by lending money to Sigismund and by sending his own troops.<sup>728</sup>

Besides the Rozgonyis, several members of the Marcali, Talovac, Maróti, Perényi, and the Pálóci families were also involved in pledgings of greater values.<sup>729</sup> John Maróti, and the brothers Denis and Nicholas Marcali were among Sigismund's protégées and rose to high ranks before the end of the civil war. The Marcali brothers laid the foundation for the bright careers of numerous family members. During the internal disturbance at the turn of the fifteenth century, Nicholas was appointed voivode of Transylvania while his brother served with him as count of the Székelys.<sup>730</sup> After the suppression of the rebellion, they received the castle of Tátika in pledge. Shortly after, they traded it with the former queenly estate of Segesd. But the family did not want to give up the castle so easily; more than two decades later, in 1429, Denis' sons George and Stephen took it

<sup>724</sup> DL 24522, 12299, 12725, 13100, 13124, 11936, 12410, 12412, 12919, 12259, 13898, 13137, 24530. There is one another transaction in which Stephen Rozgonyi took in pledge the castle of Döbrököz together with his *familiaris* Stephen Bátfai. DL 24530.

<sup>725</sup> Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 71–73, 440–444.

<sup>726</sup> From 1426 Sigismund preferred to reside more in Bratislava than in Buda when he visited the country. Here he received the various delegations, convoked diet in his last decade. He planned to move his residence here from Buda, therefore he commissioned large-scale constructions on the castle. The fortification of the castle needed to be upgraded due to the Hussite incursions in the region as well. Szűcs, *Középkori építészet*, 337. Kondor, *The Ginger fox's*, 159–164.

<sup>727</sup> “*ad labores nostros Posonienses*” DL 24522, “*ad labores castris nostri Posoniensis*” DL 12410. Szűcs, *Középkori építészet*, 322.

<sup>728</sup> They had protected the town of Trnava from the Hussites attack. DL 13124. 1400 florins were lent to the ruler for “*harum partium nostrarum superiorum tutelam et defensionem*”. DL 12725.

<sup>729</sup> Besides these families the other creditors belonging to this category of pledge holders are: Ders Martin Szerdahelyi, DL 8956, Bálint Vince Szentgyörgyi, DL 200420, Peter and Ladislaus Pető Gersei DL 200437, 13103, Stephen Aranyi, Fejér X/7 852, Peter Cseh Lévai, DL 88127.

<sup>730</sup> Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 41. Engel, *Zsigmond bárói*, 125.



again in pledge from the king.<sup>731</sup> Nicholas' son Emeric followed in his father's footsteps, he was also engaged in financial dealings with the ruler. Being the *ispán* of the County of Virovitica (Verőce) his attention focused on the domains situated within the county. Along with his brothers and his wife, he took in pledge the town of Virovitica and its appurtenances before 1429.<sup>732</sup>

From the members of the Maróti family, John — ban of Mačva — and his son Ladislaus concluded pledge transactions with the ruler. Initially John started to take royal estates in pledge and he always made sure his son's name is also included in the charters of these transactions.<sup>733</sup> John Maróti, showed some special interest in the domains of the families which either died out in male line (Vadászi, Orbonai) or, were confiscated due to disloyalty towards the crown (Bodolai). Even the higher price that he had to pay sometimes did not discourage him to do so.<sup>734</sup> After his death, his son continued to do business with the ruler, but he was less successful in it since he managed to get only some villages in pledge.<sup>735</sup>

Thanks to the faithful service of the secret chancellor Emeric and the royal judge Peter, the Perényi family became part of the aristocracy during Sigismund's rule. Peter and Emeric were lavished with donations by the king but received no estates in pledge.<sup>736</sup> Emeric's son John and Stephen are the only family members lending money to the king in hope for pledged royal domains. They lent their money only twice to the monarch: in 1425 as royal knights for which they received some villages in Borsod County, and ten years later when they were barons a larger sum for the castles of Jelšava and Fiľakovo.<sup>737</sup>

The four Talovac brothers were not middle-class nobles; their father was a burgher of Ragusa (Dubrovnik). They began to serve Sigismund only in 1428, but swiftly obtained chief positions and had remarkable careers in the country till 1445, when they lost the majority of their possessions and offices.<sup>738</sup> Their political importance is well reflected by the fact, that at the time of Sigismund's death, the brothers held forty-seven castles, out of which only three were pledged

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<sup>731</sup> DF 200389, 200390, 200424.

<sup>732</sup> DL 33412, 91021.

<sup>733</sup> DL 11155, 11211, 34113, DF 265865.

<sup>734</sup> For the domains of Peter Bodolai and some of Ladislaus Orbonai, Maróti paid 15.000 golden florins. DL 11211.

<sup>735</sup> Donja Motičina (Matucsina) and Jagodnjak (Csemény) DL 13137.

<sup>736</sup> Engel, *Rövid életrajzok*, 437–439.

<sup>737</sup> DL 11694, 12770. Despite the money paid, they did not manage to take Castle Fiľakovo under their authority till 1438. Engel, *Archontológia*, 313.

<sup>738</sup> Pálosfalvi, *Cilleiek*, 84–85.

to them. The rest was linked to their offices.<sup>739</sup> The three castles were Đurđevac, Srebrenik, and Brčko (in 1430 only a *castellum*). They redeemed the latter ones from John Garai's widow, which happened with the ruler's authorization. Đurđevac was pledged to them in 1435, mainly to cover the expanses of their military campaign in southern Bosnia the year before.<sup>740</sup> It was nothing special that the expenditures of the military services performed in the king's interest were reimbursed in that way. Seemingly, covering military expenses was one of the primary goals for which Sigismund needed the money from this group of pledgees.<sup>741</sup>

### The ecclesiastical pledge holders and the burghers

Archbishop John Kanizsai's active involvement in the early royal pledge transactions would create the presumption that the clergy had a big influence in these financial dealings. In fact, it is striking to see that not many clergymen were interested in these financial dealings. Characteristically, at the time of the pledgings the majority of them belonged to the highest strata of the country's clergy.<sup>742</sup> Holding such prominent positions within the country's ecclesiastic hierarchy meant that they had a sound financial background.<sup>743</sup> In consequence, they also had the means of lending

<sup>739</sup> Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 79–81, 201. Engel, *Rövid életrajzok*, 448–451. Mályusz, *The four Tallóci*, 143.

<sup>740</sup> *Ibid.*, 154–155, 164. Engel, *Archontológia*, 435. Mályusz, *The four Tallóci*, 153–155.

<sup>741</sup> As the already mentioned instances of the Rozgonyis and the Talovacs show the two ways in which the pledgees contributed in bearing the military costs. Money lent for the defense of the kingdom: Stephen and John Perényi, DL 12770, John Maróti, DL 265865, Stephen and Ladislaus Gersei Pető DL 200437, George and Stephen Marcali 200424. Royal domain pledged for military service: Emeric Marcali for fighting against Hussites, DL 91021, Peter Lévai Cseh for defending Transylvania DL 88127. Pledging for covering military outlays was common in Sigismund's case, he often turned to this method when he commissioned his royal knights with recruiting soldiers for various military campaigns. Since these knights were part of the royal entourage, Sigismund could easily turn to them for borrowing sums for military and other expenses as well. In fact, Sigismund had royal knights and young courtiers (*iuvenis aulae*) as creditors throughout his reign in Hungary. Some examples from various years: around 1401 DF 200390, from 1410 Fejér X/V 81, from 1419 DL 63121, from 1424 DF 253490, and around 1437 DL 80626.

<sup>742</sup> John Kanizsai was Archbishop of Esztergom (1387–1418), just as George Pálóci (1423–1439). Nicholas Alcsebi was Bishop of Vác (1419–1430) while John Albeni was Bishop of Zagreb (1420–1433). Peter Rozgonyi was of Bishop of Eger (1425–1438), and his relative Simon first provost of Dömös (from 1417) and later the Bishop of Veszprém (1428–1439). DL 7385, 7389, 7633, 7938 (Kanizsai's transactions); DL 86789, DF 248255 (Pálóci's); DL 11859 (Alcsebi's); DL 92575, Fejér X/7, 436 (Albeni's); DL 12259, 12725, 13137 (Peter Rozgonyi's); DL 11936, 12919 (Simon's). Simon Rozgonyi and Gregory Nempti were not filling high ecclesiastical offices at the time of a pledging. In 1426 Simon took in pledge Castle Bernolákovo together with his brothers Stephen and George, while he was the provost of Dömös. DL 11936. Engel, *Rövid életrajzok*, 441. Gregory Nempti was guardian (*custos*) of Pécs in 1437 when he received an estate in pledge. Fejér X/7 852.

<sup>743</sup> The Archbishop of Esztergom's office yielded the highest incomes, 23.000 florins a year, this was followed by the bishop of Zagreb's with 10.000 florins, Veszprém 4.500, then Eger 4.000 and finally, the bishop of Vác could expect for a yearly income around 2.500 florins. C.Tóth, *A főpapi székek*, 117.

larger sums to the ruler – if not regularly then at least often. However, this was not the case at all: none of them concluded more than four transactions with the ruler. Typically, the prelates with the highest income provided the highest amount of money to the king. John Albeni as Bishop of Zagreb and George Pálóci as Archbishop of Esztergom held one of the wealthiest church functions. Thanks to it, they could lend sums reaching or even exceeding 10.000 florins, and in exchange they got castles with their entire estates in pledge.<sup>744</sup> John Kanizsai's case is an exception. As earlier stated, he got hold of royal pledged possessions under highly favorable conditions in the early years of Sigismund's rule. However, Sigismund excluded him from the group of pledgees, and refused to pledge him anything after 1394.<sup>745</sup>

Most clerical lenders dealt with the inheritability of pledged possessions in a careful way. Generally, they favored two ways to get into possession of a pledge: either they tried to get hold of it with other family members, or they obtain the right of bequeathing pledges. It has already been shown how successfully Archbishop Kanizsai included his relatives' name in the charters of pledging.<sup>746</sup> His example was no exception, other ecclesiastical pledgees also resorted to this method.<sup>747</sup> George Pálóci and John Albeni were granted with the right to bequeath their possessions, Pálóci took in pledge the villages of Patak and Dejtár with the authorization to bequeath them to anyone he favored – not only to people but to the church as well.<sup>748</sup> John Albeni's testament is the proof that he also obtained this right over the pledged royal properties. He bestowed the town of Gradec (the civic town of Zagreb) to Sigismund himself (who had earlier pledged it to him) and the castle of Koprivnica – also held in pledge – to his brothers.<sup>749</sup>

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<sup>744</sup> Pálóci lent 10.600 florins together with his relatives for taking in pledge Castle Šintava (Sempte), while John Albeni 10.000 florins for the castles of Rezi and half of Pölöske. DL 86789, 92575.

<sup>745</sup> For a few years the revenues of the archbishopric were taken away from him for his leading role in the rebellion against the king. During this period the archbishop could hardly lend considerable sums to Sigismund. Later, the king pardoned Kanizsai for turning against him and even entrusted him with the administration of the imperial chancery. Engel, *Rövid életrajzok*, 424–425. Engel, *The Realm*, 211.

<sup>746</sup> He was the pledgee alone only once, when he received the estates of Nicholas Zámbo situated in Žitný Ostrov. DL 7938.

<sup>747</sup> George Pálóci took in pledge the castle of Šintava together with his brothers Matthew and Emeric; Nicholas Alcebi together with his sisters' son Stephen the villages of Szada and Veresegyház (Pest County), and John Albeni together with his brother Rudolf the castle of Rezi and its appurtenances (half of Pölöske castle included). DL 86789, 11859, 92575. Simon and Peter Rozgonyi's name regularly pops up together with their relatives', though there are two transactions in which Peter alone is the pledgee, but the details of them are unknown. DL 12259, 12725, 11936, 12919, 13137.

<sup>748</sup> *...de eisdem possessionibus infra tempus redemptionis ipsarum, cuicumque seu quibuscunque hominum personis, aut ecclesiis in vita pariter et morte, maluerit, liberam, tutam, et absolutam disponendi, seu legandi habeat facultatem, et omnimodam potestatem...* Fejér X/7, 751.

<sup>749</sup> See page 69.

Sigismund relied heavily on the economic resources of the towns, and when he was in need, then he frequently turned to these settlements for loans.<sup>750</sup> Besides the communities, individual townsmen provided him money occasionally. This group of urban pledgees was one of the smallest of Sigismund's pledge holders, and mostly consisted of burghers and inhabitants of towns from the northern parts of kingdom (today Slovakia), though there were a few foreigners among them.<sup>751</sup> Characteristically, the money of the transactions were usually loans and not services rendered to the ruler, despite several burghers being the king's *familiaris* or his officeholders.<sup>752</sup>

### The most important pledge holders

There were a few business partners of the king who stood out from the group of pledge holders as they managed to hold estates in pledge for a value exceeding 70.000 golden florins.<sup>753</sup> They were the Polish King Władysław II, Queen Barbara and two families, the Garai and the Frankopan.<sup>754</sup> King Władysław II became involved in a financial deal on the grounds of the Spiš region. It was a transaction that later became Sigismund's most infamous pledging and one of the most renowned financial transactions in the history of medieval Hungary. The Polish King lent in a single transaction 37.000 schock Prague groschen – the equivalent of almost 96.521 Hungarian golden florins (c.a. one third of Sigismund's regular annual income<sup>755</sup>). For this amount of money, Sigismund put in pledge 13 privileged towns of the Spiš region plus Podolin and Gnezda as well as the estate of Stará Ľubovňa (Lubló) on 8 November 1412. Besides the great sum, the financial

<sup>750</sup> See footnote 207, 209.

<sup>751</sup> Nicholas Károli was a burgher of Banská Bystrica (DL 11703), Conradus de Insula that of Levoča (DL 11703), Thomas Frank of Bratislava (DL 59151, 59153), and Michael Kisfaludi was an inhabitant (*inhabitor*) of Trnava (DF 254604). Likely Günther Stoss was not from this region, but from Buda. His later relative was a burgher of the town, perhaps just as Günther was. *Héderváry* I., 323. Eberhard Cliber was a foreigner, a burgher of Bamberg. DF 249918.

<sup>752</sup> Conradus de Insula was count of the royal mining dues (*comes urburarum nostrarum regalium*) ZsO. XII. 964. Günther Stoss and Eberhard Cliber were royal *familiares*. DF 249918, *Héderváry* I., 323. Loans: DL 11703, 59151, DF 249918. Insufficient data on this: DF 254604, *Héderváry* I., 323.

<sup>753</sup> The other pledgees could hardly reach the figure of 30.000 florins lent to the king. For example, the Rozgonyies lent nine times to him but the final figure was only 19.475. Another larger lender were the Talovac brothers; the castle of Đurđevac was pledged to them for 20.000 florins, but they also lent money for other royal domains whose sum are unknown. DL 43837, DF 233441.

<sup>754</sup> Here the name of Hermann II of Celje could be mentioned as well, since he bought the region of Međimurje (Muraköz, the land between Drava and Mura rivers) with several castles for 100.000 florins in two transactions. The transactions had a buy-back clause, and therefore these deals appear as pledgings in a register of royal estates from the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century. DF 288300, DL 10330. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 202.

<sup>755</sup> Engel, *The Realm*, 226.

deal owes its fame to the long pledging period. The region pledged to Władysław II in 1412 returned to Hungary only 360 years later, in 1772 by the occasion of the First Partition of Poland.<sup>756</sup>

Date	Domain	Sum	Pledgee	Reference DL/DF
01-11-1398	Ozalj castle	17.000	Nicholas Frankopan and his mother	33980
29-01-1399	Ozalj castle	24.000	Widow and daughter of senior Stephen Frankopan	33285
16-04-1401	Steničnjak castle	8.500	Widow and daughter of senior Stephen Frankopan	34052
05-10-1405	Steničnjak castle	2.000	Widow and daughter of senior Stephen Frankopan	FRANGEPÁN I./140
01-11-1412	Ozalj castle	3.000	Nicholas Frankopan	33982
Before 1428	Bužan comitatus, Potorjan and Ostrovica castles		Nicholas Frankopan	FRANGEPÁN I. 220, 256, 285
1428/1430	Bihać, Sokolac, Ripač, Čovka, Rmanj, Knin, Lab, Vrlika, Ostrovica castles, town of Scardona, the comitatus of Lika and Poljica	28.000	Nicholas Frankopan	258343, 287113
06-04-1431	Bihać, Sokolac, Ripač, ....	14.000	Nicholas Frankopan	88057
16-01-1434	Bihać, Sokolac, Ripač, ....	3.000	Stephen Frankopan and his brothers	33314
23-08-1437	Rmanj castle, districtus Lapacz	5.000	Widow of John Frankopan	88445

The Frankopan family lent Sigismund more than 104.500 florins in ten transactions. The family was already a creditor of King Louis the Great.<sup>757</sup> When Sigismund relied on their financial capital for the first time, then he actually turned to an already existing source. The Frankopans were one of the most prominent Croatian families, who had intense economic relations with Venice. They often borrowed money from the Republic and used it to expand their domains.<sup>758</sup> Furthermore, the family had great success in arranging advantageous marriages that were another source of their wealth.<sup>759</sup> The Frankopans were in possession of such financial resources that they could lend sums exceeding 20.000 florins. Moreover, characteristically the royal estates were pledged to them for loans and not for services performed. Nicholas Frankopan became through the

<sup>756</sup> See page 135-136.

<sup>757</sup> Stephen Frankopan lent 10.000 florins to his ruler in 1382. Teke, *Egy délvidéki főúr*, 97.

<sup>758</sup> *Ibid.*, 98–101.

<sup>759</sup> Senior Stephen Frankopan (1359–388) married to Catherine (Caterina) of Carrara, the daughter of Francesco I da Carrara who was the Lord of Padua (1350–1388). After Stephen's death his widow lent considerable amount of money to Sigismund for the castles of Ozalj and Steničnjak. Stephen arranged a valuable marriage for his daughter too, he wed her to Frederick II Count of Cellje. Senior Stephen's brother succeeded in concluding also a highly desired marriage with Anne, daughter of Meinhard VI, imperial prince and the count of Gorizia. Similarly to Catherine of Carrara, Anne was also providing capital to Sigismund in return for pledging. Nonetheless, her son Nicholas was the most interested Frankopan in these financial dealings with Sigismund. Engel, *Geneológia*, Frangepán (Frankopan) family.

decades such an important business partner of the king that Sigismund forgave him even his disloyalty.<sup>760</sup>

The Frankopans started to provide credit to Sigismund from 1398 on and kept supporting him financially to his death. They began to get hold of castles and estates that previously had been under the authority of the ban of Croatia or of Slavonia already at the end of King Louis the Great's reign.<sup>761</sup> They could easily continue this policy during Sigismund's reign, who was willing to give them the desired estates for an appropriate sum. Almost all the properties that they took in pledge from Sigismund were domains pertaining to the office of the bans of Croatia or Slavonia.<sup>762</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that family members filled this office several times.

Date	Domain	Sum	Pledgee	Reference DL/DF
19-04-1395	The villages of Bili Brig, Ratkovica , Rohoncz and Šarad	4.000	Nicholas Garai and John	8050
1410	Castle of Tállya, and Tokaj castellum	12.000	John Garai and his wife	11225
13-05-1414	The castle and the market town of Devín and the village of Rača	8.000	Nicholas Garai	10202
18-10-1415	Castle of Devín and the village of Rača	12.000	Nicholas Garai and his wife	10390
06-06-1422	Castle and market town of Komárno and market town of Neszmély	6.840	Nicholas Garai	87960
29-06-1422	Castle of Srebrenik, <i>castella</i> of Grabovac and Brčko		John Garai and his wife	11225
03-07-1422	Castle and market town of Komárno and market town of Neszmély	6.160	Nicholas Garai	11231
14-08-1424	Castel of Stupčanica	10.000	Nicholas Garai	33411
11-11-1427	The villages of Traian Vuia , Leucușești (Suggya), Mănăștur, Birchiș , and Vărădia	15.400	John Garai and his wife	11942
before 1428	The castle of Veliki Kalnik	12.600	John Garai and his wife Hedwig of Masovia	Temes I. 636
08-06-1435	Castle of Voćin and the domains of Michael Mikolai situated in Valkó County	17.000	Ladislaus Garai and Nicholas III	33941, 33788
08-06-1436	Castle of Voćin and the castellum of Mikola	3.333	Ladislaus Garai	37598
1437	The village of Pecica (Marján)		Ladislaus Garai	13137

The Garais held royal estates in pledge for a value of at least 103.333 florins, which exceeded even the Frankopans'.<sup>763</sup> The Garai of the Dorozsma kindred was already a relatively significant family

<sup>760</sup> Teke, *Egy délvidéki főúr*, 105.

<sup>761</sup> For instance, Steničnjak castle was under the authority of the ban of Slavonia, but King Louis pledged it to the family for the 10.000 florins lent to him. Later Sigismund, on the basis of this transaction, demanded additional payments from them.

<sup>762</sup> Former domains of the Banate of Slavonia: Ozalj, Steničnjak and Sokol castles; and the Banate of Dalmatia–Croatia: castles of Ostrovica, Rmanj, Ripač, Knin, Lab, Vrlika, Čovka; Engel, *Archontológia*, 22, 387, 412, 436.

<sup>763</sup> There are transactions in the case of both families about which value there are no data preserved, therefore it is unknown which family was the more important pledgee for the ruler.

in the Árpád period and became even more important under the Angevin rulers; they held prominent offices in the kingdom and Nicholas I Garai became even the country's palatine. His son Nicholas II became one of the pillars of Sigismund's reign in Hungary and – most likely – a close friend of him. First, he started to serve Sigismund as a military commander and later he became his number one advisor and a diplomat. By choosing wives from the Cilli family the king and his favored baron became even relatives. Sigismund probably always remained indebted to Nicholas II Garai for saving his throne during the revolt against his reign at the turn of the 15th century.<sup>764</sup>

Despite the great austerity period regarding the donation of royal domains that he introduced after stabilizing his reign – Sigismund always found a way to reward Garai's services with donations of royal domains.<sup>765</sup> This close relationship between the ruler and his most trusted advisor is somewhat visible in the pledge transactions concluded between the two parties. The king usually donated the pledged properties to Nicholas shortly after the pledging. In the worst case, he did not take these back as long as Nicholas was alive.<sup>766</sup> Being such a close companion of the ruler had other advantages for Garai too, he did not only know which castle Sigismund was willing to put in pledge, but he could even influence the ruler's decision regarding to whom it should be given. In May 1424 Sigismund promised the castle of Stupčanica (Szaplónca) in pledge to George Bazini. The charter's chancery note names Palatine Garai as the relator of the document.<sup>767</sup> Three months later Nicholas II received the same castle in pledge: and even the sum of the pledging was lowered with 500 florins.<sup>768</sup> Palatine Garai probably could convince the ruler to give in pledge estates to his family members as well. In 1410, on the occasion of Nicholas' brother John's marriage with Hedwig of Masovia, Sigismund pledged them the castle of Tállya — which was under Nicholas II's authority earlier — as dowry.<sup>769</sup> On another occasion, Nicholas Garai gained

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<sup>764</sup> Engel, *Rövid életrajzok*, 416–418. Engel, *The Realm*, 211.

<sup>765</sup> *Ibid.*, 418. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 37–38, 47–49.

<sup>766</sup> Pledges donated to Nicholas: castles of Devín and Stupčanica, and the village of Garanpataka (probably together with the other villages). The castle of Komárno remained in Nicholas's possession throughout his lifetime. Engel, *Rövid életrajzok*, 418.

<sup>767</sup> DL 11514.

<sup>768</sup> The castle was promised in pledge to Bazini for 10.500 florins and put in pledge to Garai for 10.000 florins. DL 33411.

<sup>769</sup> DL 11225.

the right of taking in pledge a castle (Voćin) whose owner was still alive. After the death of this person, Nicholas or his successors could be instituted in its possession.<sup>770</sup>

Sigismund gave a great amount of royal estates as a dowry to his second wife Barbara.

Never before that had a queen of Hungary a comparable wealth. Especially the donations in 1424 made her extremely rich. In this year Sigismund gave her domains in the northern part of the kingdom in return for the ones located in Slavonia taken away from her earlier.<sup>771</sup> It is no wonder, that she began lending money to her husband beginning with this year. The queen, having excellent skills in finances, used the revenues collected from her demesne to gain new domains. Lending money to her husband was a great possibility to do that.<sup>772</sup> Sigismund was also interested to do business with her because he

Date	Domain	Sum	Reference DL/DF
1424	The island of Csepel with its appurtenances		13137
1424	The market towns of Tolnavár and Kecskemét with the cumans		13137
before 11-11-1425	Castle of Hajnáčka		68977
1427	Diósgyőr, Dédes and Cserép castles	60.000	12383, 12351
1431?	Castle and market town of Filakovo and Jelšava	5.707	71469
25-01-1430	The estate of Kaza pertaining to the castle of Jelšava		89907
24-06-1430	Liptovský Hrádok	2.000	287804
24-06-1430	Veľký castle and the comitatus of Liptov	4.100	71678

knew that all the royal properties given in pledge to his wife would become properties of the crown after her death. In the charter of these pledgings they included that all these possessions were given in pledge only for the lifetime of the queen.<sup>773</sup> It is remarkable, that Barbara was able to provide 60.000 florins<sup>774</sup> to her spouse in a single transaction, which was the second largest loan after the sum of pledging of the Spiš region.<sup>775</sup> From 1424 onward she had 28.000 florins annual income from the *marturina* alone<sup>776</sup> and the thirtieth custom, not to mention the revenues yielded by her

<sup>770</sup> DL 33411.

<sup>771</sup> Dvořáková, *The Economic background*, 111–117.

<sup>772</sup> Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 75–76.

<sup>773</sup> “...cunctis diebus rite sue tenere gubernare regereque valeat et possit...”DF 287804. “...cunctis diebus vite sue tenere gubernare regere [...]valeat et possidere quoque nullius baronum aut successorum nostrorum regem regni Hungarie idem castrum cum pertinenciis proventibus utilitatibus sui supratactis ac comitatum preascriptum usque eiusdem domine regine vite exterminu redimere valeat...” DL 71678. Probably such sentences were formulated in the cases of those pledgings whose charters of pledge have not been preserved.

<sup>774</sup> DL 12383, 12351.

<sup>775</sup> Dvořáková, *The Economic background*, 117.

<sup>776</sup> It was a special Slavonian tax, paid to the ruler initially in marten fur, later changed to money tax. Engel, *The Realm*, 34.



domains; consequently she had plenty of financial resources which made it possible for her to lend such high sums.

## Conclusion

Sigismund of Luxembourg had limited resources at his disposal concerning pledging in the Holy Roman Empire, that is why for example he did not pledge imperial towns (*Reichsstädte*), but only offices, advocacies (Vogtei), revenues, and taxes. The situation was highly different in Hungary where the extensive royal domain could be used for such purposes. This difference is visible in the case of the pledge holders, too. It is somewhat striking that among Sigismund's imperial pledge holders there were no imperial princes (*Reichsfürste*),<sup>777</sup> but the pledgees mainly consisted of officials, towns, and adherents of the ruler.<sup>778</sup>

In Hungary, similarly to the abundant resources that could be used for pledging also the pledge holders' group was larger and more diverse. The circle broadened considerably after the rebellion at the turn of the fifteenth century, because in the early years of Sigismund's reign his power was restricted by the league of barons and prelates who strove to benefit the most from the royal pledgings. The changing political constellation opened new possibilities for doing business with the ruler for courtiers, burghers, knights, prelates, foreigners and for Sigismund's new political elite alike. In a period when due to the extensive alienation of the royal domain Sigismund was keen to implement a royal policy of conserving the royal demesne; pledging could be used as an ideal substitute for donations by which services of retainers could be rewarded, and loans secured. Despite the abundance of the king's business partners in these deals, only a handful of pledgees stood out from the rest: the queen, the Frankopan, the Garai and maybe the Rozgonyi families featured more often in these transactions.

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<sup>777</sup> But interestingly there was among his Hungarian pledge holders: Louis III, Count Palatine of the Rhine.

<sup>778</sup> Landwehr, *Die Verpfändung*, 34, 75.

## Chapter 8. The Spending of the Money

### War financing and military expenditures

#### Introduction

In the late Middle Ages, because of the increasing cost of warfare, rulers were forced to seek alternative source of incomes to their regular. Mercenary troops started to be employed more often and played a greater role in waging war. Furthermore, by building more elaborate and larger castles the duration of siege increased and in this way it became even more expensive. In exceptional circumstances as wartime the royal treasury needed more money than regularly. In case of such emergency it was vital to find means by which large sums could be swiftly risen at the lowest risk of social turmoil. Solution to such acute financial problem was found in regular borrowings starting already from the thirteenth century.<sup>779</sup>

In the history of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary Sigismund of Luxembourg had the bad reputation of having constantly financial difficulties which he tried to ease by systematic pledging of royal domains. However, despite the early critical voices of the Hungarian historiography,<sup>780</sup> today his pledging practice has a somewhat positive assessment. It is believed that he mainly used the money gained from the pledgings for the defense of the kingdom. This theory was elaborated by József Deér and expressed in his work entitled *Zsigmond király honvédelmi politikája* [King Sigismund's defense policy] published in 1936.<sup>781</sup>

Deér tried to collect all the data of Sigismund's pledges and he wanted to know the spending of the capital gained through these transactions. Therefore, he classified the data in four different categories: money needed for military and defense purposes, pledges without clear indication about their spending, pledges for personal needs, and pledges for the country's needs. He classified the data on the basis of the information in the charters of pledge. Pledges in which

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<sup>779</sup> *The Cambridge Economic History*, 432, 445. Edmund Boleslav Fryde, "The financial policies of the royal governments and popular resistance to them in France and England c. 1270-c. 1420" in *Studies in medieval trade and finance*. (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), I, 831.

<sup>780</sup> See the introduction of the present dissertation.

<sup>781</sup> Deér, *Zsigmond király*, 1-57, 169-202.

charter war, defense of various parts of the kingdom, hiring mercenaries, fortifying castles, services of soldiers are mentioned were listed in the first category. Cases when the costs of Sigismund's travels were covered by pledges and when in the charter of pledging the ruler's need is mentioned were classified in the personal needs category. In Deér's interpretation if in the documents of pledges the benefit and the advantage of the kingdom are emphasized the money of these transactions was spent on the kingdom's needs. If he could not classify a pledging into any of these categories he simply labeled it as a pledging without clear indication about the spending of the capital.<sup>782</sup>

Deér managed to collect 74 cases of pledging of King Sigismund<sup>783</sup> of 514.836 florins sum total, from which - according to his calculation- the king spent 325.000 on military outlays. However, he believed that this should be expanded with the sums needed for the kingdom's needs because as he argued: "besides certain external expenditures the medieval public finances could not be burdened by any other significant *necessitas* than maintaining the army".<sup>784</sup> Consequently, from almost 515.000 florins at least 450.000 were used by Sigismund for the defense of the kingdom. This calculation of Deér soon became widely accepted among medievalists and still appears everywhere in the secondary literature dealing with King Sigismund's pledges.<sup>785</sup>

Already the above quoted opinion of József Deér - saying that the medieval public finances could not be burdened significantly besides the upkeep of the army - might arouse some suspicion among specialists, but if one takes a closer look on his methodology and the precision how he dealt with the data, the suspicion will be even greater.<sup>786</sup> Regarding the methodology I do not think that such a clear distinction can be made between Sigismund's personal and the country's needs as he suggested. King Sigismund's travel to France in 1417 and to Italy in 1434 was without doubt a state affair, therefore the pledges covering the expenses of these journeys could be hardly considered as something spent on the ruler's personal needs.<sup>787</sup> Even the phraseology of the

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<sup>782</sup> Ibid., 193-198.

<sup>783</sup> He relied on the database of Emma Lederer. Lederer, *A középkori pénzüzletek*, 187-188. Today we know about much more transactions than 74.

<sup>784</sup> "...bizonyos külügyi kiadásokon kívül, a középkori államháztartást más számottevő országos "necessitas" mint a hadsereg fenntartása nemigen terhelte" Deér, *Zsigmond király*, 199.

<sup>785</sup> Engel, *The Realm*, 227.

<sup>786</sup> However, merit should be given to Deér for compiling his database of Sigismund's pledges, it was a major step forward in the endeavor of collecting the sources about the ruler's pledges.

<sup>787</sup> Still, Deér considered these to be so. Deér, *Zsigmond király*, 198.

charters of pledge usually does not make such a distinction, generally in the sources this is phrased as a royal property pledged for *nostris et regni nostri arduis agendis*, or *pro arduis nostris et regni nostri negotiis*, so without clear distinction between the two.<sup>788</sup>

In most of the cases the charters of pledge are silent about how Sigismund spent the money involved, or for what needs he had to give in pledge royal domains. Generally, the king's and the kingdom's great need and the kingdom's progress and advantage<sup>789</sup> or similar arguments with such general and vague meaning<sup>790</sup> is the only information provided by the sources. The problem is aggravated by the fact that the sources of the contract of pledges are often lost, and we know about certain pledges of Sigismund only from indirect evidences, as being mentioned in other sources without giving details about it. Furthermore, Deér's data contain many imprecisions, as the transactions present in his database in some cases cannot be linked to any military expenditure,<sup>791</sup> in other cases the information of the sources is misinterpreted,<sup>792</sup> or the information provided is not correct.<sup>793</sup> Also, Gyula Rázsó in 1962 managed to bring new sources about Sigismund's pledges into discussion,<sup>794</sup> and almost eight decades have past since the publication of *King*

<sup>788</sup> I am referring to the examples that József Deér also used. Deér, *Zsigmond király*, 196.

<sup>789</sup> Just some random examples to mention: ... *propter nostris vanas et validas expeditiones*.. DL 7519 (Hungarian National Archives, Archives of Diplomats, hereafter: DL). ... *pro certorum negotiorum comodum utilitatem et profectum praetacti regni nostri Hungariae concernens expeditione indigemus*... DL 33412.

<sup>790</sup> *pro nostri et sacri nostri diadematis honoris exaltatione*... Frangepán, 247. DL 33314.

<sup>791</sup> The 48.000 florins that Sigismund gained from the members of the Cilly family in 1405 does not seem to have too much to do with the war against the Ottoman Empire as Deér states. There is neither any hint about the conflict with the Ottomans in the charter of the transaction, nor does the historical context allow to draw such a conclusion. Deér, *Zsigmond király*, 194. DF 288300. ZsO II.3903. Deér was imprecise in his using of the Latin noun *expeditio*. The term was generally used in the charters with two meanings, that of *exercitialis expeditio* – a military campaign, and of *effectio* – arrangement, accomplishment. Unfortunately, sometimes he confused these two meanings, and took the meaning of *exercitialis expeditio* when he should not have, this way putting pledges under the military expenses category when there were no any hint about military actions or outlays. *Lexicon latinitatis* vol.3, 432. Deér, *Zsigmond király*, 194.

<sup>792</sup> The alleged pledging of the castle of Slatinski Drenovac (Darnóc) to Dezső Garai never happened, in fact the property was sold. The pledging of it had happened earlier for a different sum and to another pledgee. ZsO. VIII. 355. Deér, *Zsigmond király*, 197. There is a similar misinterpretation of the source in the case of 500 florins given by John Garai to the king for a supposed pledging. With this sum Garai did not take in pledge certain domains but he actually bought them. ZsO. X. 445. Deér 197.p. Putting in pledge the castle of Devín (Dévény) to Nicholas Garai was in 1414-1415, not in 1419. Moreover, the 20.000 florins was not spent on fortifying the castle because, Garai recovered it first for 8.000 florins from Hening Lessel, and in order to have it in pledge he paid 12.000 in addition to the ruler. Indeed he was authorized to refurbish and fortify the castle, but the sum he could spend on this is unknown. Deér, *Zsigmond király*, 194. ZsO. IV. 1944, and V. 1136.

<sup>793</sup> The precise sum of the pledging to Paul Wolfurt in 1435 is 3.060 florins not 3.600, also a similar typographical error is related to the pledging to Ladislaus Garai in 1436 where the correct sum is 3.333 golden florins. Likewise in 1396 the widow of Peter Zudar lent to the ruler 10.838 florins and not 12.838 as Deér states. ZsO I 4472, Deér, *Zsigmond király*, 197-198.

<sup>794</sup> Rázsó, *A zsoldosság*, 167-169.

*Sigismund's defense policy*, resulting in a good number of important publications that reshaped our understanding of King Sigismund's reign in Hungary.

Concerning all the above mentioned matters, I think it is justified enough to bring up this topic again and to discuss it thoroughly in the light of the recent publications and sources about the subject unknown before. The questions intended to be addressed are more specific and closer to the subject than that of Deér, since the problem of pledging in the context of war financing was only a side issue for him, as the main goal of his work was to provide a broad picture about the king's defense policy. This chapter does not only propose a recalculation of the money lent to the ruler for royal properties and possibly spent on military outlays, but it aims to provide a deeper insight in the implication of pledges on these affairs. Thus, the role of the creditors in the military operations - to which the money they lent can be related – will be highlighted, just as the way in which the sums of these transactions contributed to bearing these costs. Furthermore, it is also the goal of the present study to show which pledges can be related to one of Sigismund's armed conflicts.

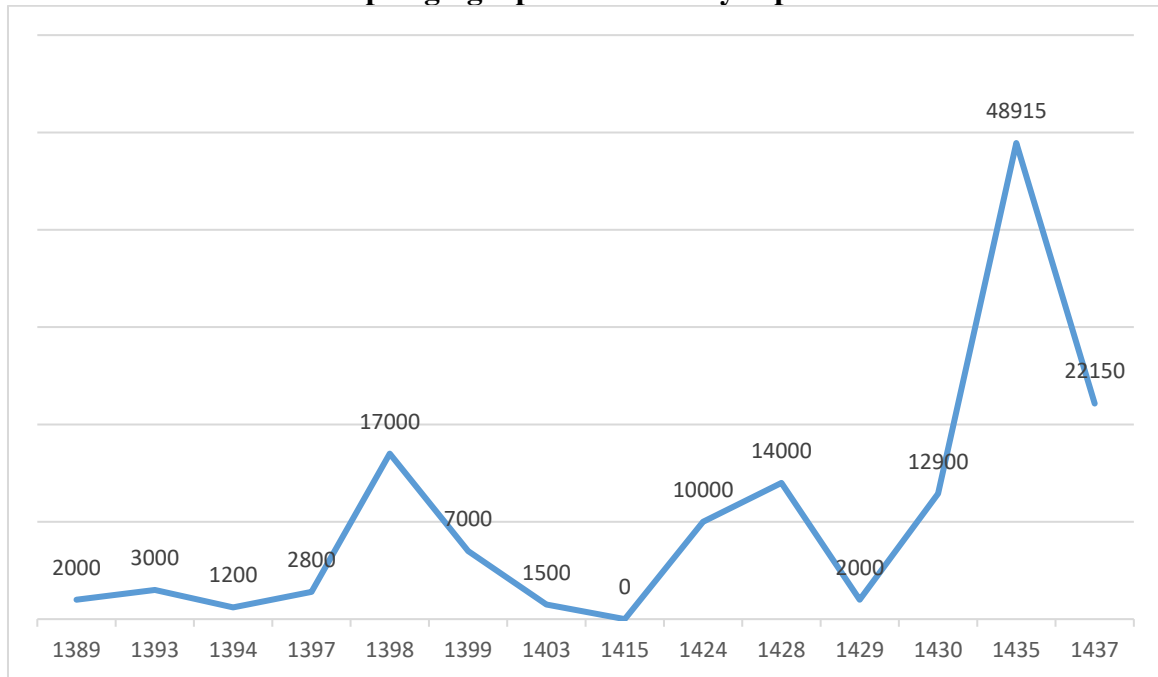
Not only the questions posed but also my approach and methodology will be different from the previous literature. For the reason specified above I will not follow the methodology of József Deér in creating categories, instead in the chart below I included only those pledgings of King Sigismund, which can be clearly connected to military outlays. In most of the cases this meant that those pledges where the defense of the kingdom's borders<sup>795</sup> was the reason for the pledging, or where military services were performed or would be performed by the pledge receivers.<sup>796</sup> Cases when the money of a pledging was used for keeping up royal castles are not included in the database, because the costs of these were not spent on financing war in the strict sense of the word. Furthermore, various services performed for the ruler -refunded by him by giving in pledge royal properties - are also omitted from the chart if the character and the details of these services are unknown.<sup>797</sup>

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<sup>795</sup> DL/DF 33980, 33285, 200424, 91021, 265865, 71678, 88317, 71469, 33941, 71955, 12725, 200436, 34067, 200437, 12770, 12785, 88127, 33411.

<sup>796</sup> DL/DF 34067, 231190, 24530, 13088, 58797, 10390, 12759. Ortvy, *Temes*, 181.

<sup>797</sup> This is the reason for which I decided to leave out the pledging of the castle of Tátika to Friedrich von Scharfeneck before the year 1401. According to the charter von Scharfeneck was a *strenuous miles* – a valiant knight and he received in pledge the castle for his services and salary. It is tempting to say that obviously the services of a knight cannot be else but something related to combat. However, *strenuous miles*- was more than simply a knight, it meant generally an honorable nobleman. Enikő Csukovits, *Az Anjouk Magyarországon I. I. Károly és uralkodása (1301–*

**Sums of pledgings spent on military expenditures**

For studying the financial side of the royal military expeditions in late medieval Hungary a number of sources is indispensable. The most important of these are the royal account books which tell us precisely how much money the royal treasury spent on various military expenditures. These payments were primarily the installments allocated to the mercenaries and to the royal and baronial *banderia*. In addition, the costs of purchasing weapons, food for the troops and the rulers' personal expenses related to the campaign could be included in these account books.<sup>798</sup> Unfortunately, only a single such account book has been preserved not only from the time of King Sigismund, but probably from the whole medieval period in Hungary. This account book from the year 1410 was compiled during a tense relation between the kingdoms of Poland and Hungary, on the occasion of a possible Polish incursion in the Northern part of Hungary. It enlists the names of barons and lords assigned to the defense against the incursions, it indicates the places where these military leaders had to deploy their contingents, and finally it provides exact numbers about how many soldiers served in the *banderia* and how much their wages was.<sup>799</sup>

1342) [The Angevins in Hungary I. Charles I and his reign (1301–1342)] (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, Történettudományi Intézet, 2012),92.

<sup>798</sup> E. Kovács, *Zsigmond isztriai hadjárata*, 227-228.

<sup>799</sup> C. Tóth, *Az 1395. évi lengyel betörés*, 461-462.

Having account books like this for every major military event that happened in medieval Hungary would be ideal, but unfortunately it is unrealistic seeing the scale of the destruction of medieval sources in the country. In the lack of royal account books, only the scattered data of the family archives and town-books can be used for this purpose.<sup>800</sup> Approximately two hundred thousand charters survived from the Middle Ages<sup>801</sup> from which significant amount is from the reign of Sigismund. Searching through such an immense amount of data for information about payments related to royal military expenses is a work almost like searching for a needle in a haystack. That is why the study of the topic is discouraging, and it explains why there are not many publications dealing with the financial background of military campaigns in medieval Hungary. Despite the fact that documents of primary importance are missing, still there is enough data dispersed that allows us to do at least some basic research.

From this scattered material the chart above was compiled by adding new sources to the previous scholarship's already existing compilations. The 30 transactions of the chart comprise data from the day of Sigismund's ascension to the Hungarian throne (1387) till his death (1437). Usually any compilation of historical data can be expanded with new data, this chart is not an exception either. However, the chart is complete enough to see that in case of its expansion it would not change the fact that a significantly lower amount of money of Sigismund's pledges was spent on military expenditures than the previous scholarship thought. The 144.465 florins of the chart is not the grand total of Sigismund's pledges used for war financing, – since in the lack of sources it is impossible to calculate it precisely – rather it is the lower minimum that he definitely used for this purpose and for which there is data.

Of course, among the abundant cases of Sigismund's pledgings where there are no hints about the spending of the money, there could be a good number of cases when the sum of the transaction actually helped to cover military outlays. In such instances there is not a direct connection between the pledging and the military actions, but the political events happening around the conclusion of the contracts of pledge are indicating that the pledges were linked to Sigismund's military expenditures. In such cases in the lack of direct evidence they can be linked only hypothetically to war financing. Therefore, – and for the reason that only after thorough

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<sup>800</sup> E. Kovács, *Zsigmond isztriai hadjárata*, 228.

<sup>801</sup> Csukovits, *Anjouk Magyarországon*, 9.

studies it can be found out whether a transaction had anything to do with one of Sigismund's armed conflicts, – I have decided to omit such pledges from the chart and include only those which undoubtedly can be connected to armed conflicts. However, in the following I will present two pledges of Sigismund to illustrate how it can be found out from the context of the pledging whether the sums of these represented a financial aid for wars.

One of them is the transaction of July 9, 1396, when the king asked for 2.000 florins in addition to the initial 8.838 –the sum of giving in pledge the castle of Boldogkő – from the widow of Peter Cudar.<sup>802</sup> The document is silent about the ruler's need for the money,<sup>803</sup> however, the date and the place of issuing the charter suggest that it was related to the battle of Nicopolis. About the military crusade of 1396 it is known that lengthy and thorough preparations proceeded it<sup>804</sup>, and the events speeded up this year. Already in April Venice promised four ships for the crusade,<sup>805</sup> in May the suspense of lawsuits started on the reason of the war,<sup>806</sup> and in June Sigismund asked money from seven provostries for the military campaign against the Ottomans.<sup>807</sup>

According to the king's itinerary, he left Buda in June 14 for visiting Ľubovniansky hrad (Lubló), his next destination was Vizsoly where in July 9 he borrowed money from the widow of Peter Cudar, and from here he headed directly to the southern border of the kingdom to wage war on the Ottomans.<sup>808</sup> The village of Vizsoly was mentioned as a pertaining settlement to the castle of Boldogkő, when this was put in pledge to Peter Cudar in December 1388.<sup>809</sup> So, Sigismund actually paid a visit to a settlement that he formerly pledged, and on the basis of this earlier transaction he demanded more money from the wife of the meanwhile deceased Peter Cudar. Taking into account the circumstances of this visit –that the king was on the verge of going to a

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<sup>802</sup> The 2.000 florins was a loan for which the king did not had to pledge any new royal property, it was counted together with the 8.838, thus the pledging value of the castle increased to 10.838.

<sup>803</sup> DL 8170.

<sup>804</sup> Already a year before Sigismund wrote about an attack he was planning against the Ottoman Empire that would take place in the following year. Iván Bertényi, "A Nikápoly alá vonult sereg hátszaga. Magyarország 1396 nyarától 1397 tavaszélig" [The hinterland of the army marching towards Nicopolis. Hungary from the summer of 1396 till the spring of 1397], *Hadtörténelmi közlemények* 111, no.3 (1998): 611.

<sup>805</sup> ZsO. I. 4345.

<sup>806</sup> Bertényi, *Nikápoly alá*, 611.

<sup>807</sup> DF 234011.

<sup>808</sup> Engel, *Királyok és királynék itineráriumai*, 71-72.

<sup>809</sup> ... *castrum nostrum Boldokw vocatum cum possessionibus nostris et villis videlicet Wysol et Zerench...* DL 7454.



crusade, and after he received the money he headed southwards into battle –it indicates that the 2.000 florins were related to bearing the costs of the military preparations.

The other case is without any doubt the most famous pledging of King Sigismund, which is the pledging of the Spiš region (Szepesség). Almost everywhere where a few words are dedicated to Sigismund's finances the transaction about the Spiš region is mentioned, because the region was pledged to the Polish ruler for a fortune,<sup>810</sup> and because the region returned to Hungary only in 1772 on the occasion of the first partition of Poland.

After the battle of Grunwald, the first Peace of Thorn was concluded in 1411, which obliged the Teutonic Order to pay indemnities to Poland.<sup>811</sup> The peace treaty did not prove to be a long solution, in 1412 King Sigismund intervened as a mediator in the conflict, and took over half of the indemnities payable by the Teutonic Knights. Sigismund's generous gesture had a major setback, Hungary was in war with Venice since the autumn of the previous year, and thus he was short of money. However, he managed to overcome this obstacle and keep his promise by putting in pledge the region of Spiš with its settlements and castles situated in the northern part of the country close to the Polish border.

The conflict between the Republic of Venice and the Kingdom of Hungary rooted in the dispute about Dalmatia. In 1409 Ladislaus of Naples sold his rights to Dalmatia to Venice, and the Republic started to bring under its control the settlements of the region.<sup>812</sup> The military campaign against Venice started in autumn of 1411, and at the time of concluding the contract of pledge of the Spiš region, the war was still underway, moreover, at the beginning of the next year Sigismund personally travelled to the battle front.<sup>813</sup> Between issuing the charter of the pledging and signing the five year armistice with the Republic (17 April 1413)<sup>814</sup> Sigismund received money in several

<sup>810</sup> In the transaction concluded in November 8 1412 the region was put in pledge for 37.000 Prague groschen. ZsO. III. 2897.

<sup>811</sup> Jörg K. Hoensch, "König/Kaiser Sigismund, der Deutsche Orden und Polen-Litauen" *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 46, (1997): 13.

<sup>812</sup> Engel, *The Realm*, 234. Gyula Schoenherr, *Az Anjou ház és örökösei: (1301-1439). A magyar nemzet története. 3. köt.* [The House of Anjou and its heirs (1301-1439). The History of the Hungarian Nation, vol 3.] (Budapest: Athenaeum Irodalmi és Nyomdai Részvénytársulat, 1895): 504-507.

<sup>813</sup> E. Kovács, *Zsigmond isztriai hadjárata*, 238.

<sup>814</sup> Ioan Hațegan, *Filippo Scolari - Un condottier italian pe meleaguri dunărene* [Filippo Scolari – A condottiere on the lands of the Danube] (Timișoara: Mirton, 1997), 32-33.

installments,<sup>815</sup> thus it is reasonable to believe that this money contributed to funding this armed conflict.<sup>816</sup>

## The transactions and Sigismund's armed conflicts

### The Hussite incursions

Intriguingly, from the 30 transactions listed in the chart 11 are from the year 1435. There were no major conflicts in the country and outside its borders this year,<sup>817</sup> still these sources generally allude to the defense of kingdom. Some of them do not specify which parts of the kingdom and against whom it had to be defended,<sup>818</sup> in others some short arguments can be read about the need of pledging as it was needed *pro defensione regni nostri Hungariae*<sup>819</sup> without giving more details. However, not all of them are so laconic with respect to guarding the kingdom's borders, there are a number of them which say concretely that Sigismund looked for the money for the defense of country's upper parts.<sup>820</sup>

After the Polish-Hungarian relations were normalized there was no real threat of a Polish attack against Northern Hungary, instead Hussite troops lead several incursions into the region, capturing settlements and castles and keeping garrisons in these. Their first major raid was in 1428, when after crossing the border at Skalica (Szakolca), they headed towards Bratislava (Pozsony), of which suburb they burned down, and left the country by sacking everything in their way. The next Hussite raid was two years later, but this time the Hungarian forces were expecting them, and after a bloody battle that took place around the town of Trnava, the intruders returned to Moravia.<sup>821</sup> In the following years the incursions continued with more success. They captured the

<sup>815</sup> ZO. III. 3059; IV. 113, 131, 394.

<sup>816</sup> There is another opinion saying that the money was needed for the construction of the Saint Sigismund church in Buda castle. I agree with András Végh that the money of the transaction could be spent on the construction and on the war too. Végh, *Adatok a budai*, 25.

<sup>817</sup> The ones that Mór Wertner suggests are rather the preparations for the military expedition of the following year. Mór Wertner, "Magyar hadjáratok a XV. század első felében" [Hungarian military campaigns in the first half of the fifteenth century], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 12 (1911): 542.

<sup>818</sup> ...in estate tunc ventura versus quascumque partes et contra quoscumque suos seu regni sui hostes... DL 88513.

<sup>819</sup> DL 71955, 71469, 12770, 12785.

<sup>820</sup> DL/DF 33941, 12725, 200436, 200437.

<sup>821</sup> Dvořáková, *A lovag és királya*, 377-380. Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 124. František Šmahel, *Die hussitische Revolution. vol. I-III* (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2002), vol. I, 119.

castle of Likava<sup>822</sup> – in which they established their headquarters in Hungary – and managed to seize among many the settlements of Nitra (Nyitra),<sup>823</sup> Trnava, Skalica, Topoľčany (Tapolcsány), Ludanice (Ludány), Lednica (Lednic), Žilina (Zsolna) and finally in 1433 they led a raid against the Spiš region. There was a hope that peace could come to these lands when in 1434 the radical wing of the Hussites was defeated in the battle of Lipany, and also the council of Basel was convoked with the aim to settle the Hussite problem.<sup>824</sup> However, this resulted in bringing the incursions to an end, but the garrisons in the towns and castles would have not given up these of their own free will instead they were demanding money from Sigismund.

In this context it becomes clearer why Sigismund was in want of money and why he referred to the defense of upper parts of the kingdom in his charters of pledge issued in the respective period. In fact he made the necessary preparations for recovering the settlements well before the charters of pledge in discussion were issued. Already in 1434 negotiations had started to recover the captured castles and towns, in case these proved to be futile then Sigismund tried to take them back by force.<sup>825</sup> In 31 January 1435 he wrote in a letter that he strives to regain the castles occupied by the Hussites who demanded money for it.<sup>826</sup> Two months later he issued a decree about strengthening the kingdom's borders, especially the Bohemian and Moravian sides, against the "Czech military campaigns".<sup>827</sup> He intended to secure the northern borders of the country against possible attacks, therefore he not only assumed to fortify certain settlements and castles in the region at his own expenses, but he installed strong garrisons in those which were newly recovered<sup>828</sup>, and tried to alleviate the inflicted damage that these suffered by visiting these places to deal with the problems personally.<sup>829</sup> Of course for all these measures – the recuperation

<sup>822</sup> Tóth-Szabó, *A cseh-huszita*, 108. Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 124.

<sup>823</sup> They besieged the castle of Nitra too, but without any success. Ján Lukačka, Martin Štefánik, ed., *Lexikon stredovekých miest na Slovensku* [Lexicon of medieval towns in Slovakia] (Bratislava: Prodama, 2010), 293.

<sup>824</sup> Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund* 125-126. Engel, *The realm of Saint Stephen*, 239.

<sup>825</sup> It is still unknown whether the recovering of the castles of Likava, Lednica (Lednic), and the town of Žilina was the result of Pongrác of Szentmiklós's military undertaking or of something else. Branislav Varsik, *Husitské revolučné hnutie a Slovensko* [Hussite revolutionary movement and Slovakia] (Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo Slovenskej Akadémie Vied, 1965), 335-336. Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 126-127. There was a similar attempt to expel the Hussites from the town of Trnava at the end of the year 1434, but this was unsuccessful. Varsik, *Husitské revolučné*, 336-337. Štefánik, *Lexikon*, 531.

<sup>826</sup> Endre Kovács, *Magyar - cseh történelmi kapcsolatok* [Hungarian-Czech historical relations] (Budapest: Közoktatásügyi Kiadóvállalat, 1952), 93.

<sup>827</sup> ....*contra guerras Bohemorum*... DL 44025, Fejér X/8 645.

<sup>828</sup> As in Skalica and Trnava. Štefánik, *Lexikon*, 426. Varsik, *Husitské revolučné*, 337.

<sup>829</sup> Such event was his visit to Trnava. Štefánik, *Lexikon*, 531.

by money or force, fortifying settlements, securing the borders, and starting the rebuilding – substantial financial resources were required and if these were not available, Sigismund could simply resort to his preferred fund raising method of pledging. Probably this is how the sums of the majority of the pledging transactions of 1435 were used.<sup>830</sup>

Before the Hussite troops would have started their regular attacks against northern Hungary, already in 1424 Sigismund borrowed 10.000 florins to defending the borders against the “detestable Hussites” and to avoid their temerity.<sup>831</sup>

After a Hussite incursion in the previous year, Sigismund borrowed 2.000 florins from the Marcali brothers on the grounds of the defense of the country in October 1429,<sup>832</sup> and for this sum he authorized them to redeem the castle of Tátika in his name and to hold in pledge afterwards. This year the target of the Hussite troops was not Hungary but the German territories, of which the regions of Saxony and Brandenburg had to suffer two incursions led in the autumn and at the end of the year.<sup>833</sup> At the beginning of 1429 there was a hope of solving the conflict in a peaceful way. On April 4 Sigismund received the leaders of the Hussite movement at Bratislava to negotiate peace but they could not reach an agreement, which led to the continuation of the war. Six days later Sigismund was already planning the campaign against the Hussites for the summer,<sup>834</sup> and promulgated full-scale uprising on September 29 in Trnava.<sup>835</sup> The mobilization of the lordly *banderia* started,<sup>836</sup> and the 2.000 florins credit of the Marcalis lent at the beginning of October played a role in this mobilization and in the preparation for the expedition. However, the planned

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<sup>830</sup> There are two cases that do not fit entirely into this picture. One is the 13.000 florins for which the castle of Đurđevac was put in pledge to Matko Talovac and his brothers. Only 7.000 of this sum were needed...“*pro certorum nostrorum negotiorum comodum et utilitatem totius regni nostri et signanter tutelam et defensionem harum partium nostrarum superiorum per maxime concernentium...*” DL 34067. The remaining 6.000 were the outlays of Matko Talovac on providing military aid to Stephen Tvrtko II – king of Bosnia – against the Ottomans a year before. The second case is the pledging granted to John of Reichenau – royal artillery master (*magistrer bombardarum nostre maiestatis*) – who received in pledge the manor house in Vrakuňa (Vereknye) ...“*pro suo salario... et pro bombardis et pixidibus per ipsum magistrum Johannem nobis datis...*” DL 12759.

<sup>831</sup> “...*pro defensione confiniorum ipsius regni nostri contra detestabilium Huzitarum absordam temeritatem emersis evitandis...*” DL 33411, ZsO. XI. 951. The castle of Stupčanica (Szaplónca) was used as a security of the payment. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 153.

<sup>832</sup> “...*pro... comodum utilitatem et defensam regni nostri concernens...*” DF 200424.

<sup>833</sup> Tóth-Szabó, *A cseh-huszita*, 99.

<sup>834</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>835</sup> Tóth-Szabó, *A cseh-huszita*, 97-98.

<sup>836</sup> Wertner, *Magyar hadjáratok*, 440. Schoenherr, *Az Anjou ház és örökösei*, 572.

attack on the heretics did not happen,<sup>837</sup> unlike the Hussite attack against the above mentioned German lands and later in the following year's spring against Northern Hungary.

After a smaller clash at the Moravian-Hungarian border, the decisive battle happened around the city of Trnava at the end of April.<sup>838</sup> The battle was bloody, leaving both sides with plenty of casualties, among them the leader of the Czech troops Vlk Koudelník of Březnice and the ban of Macsó Stephen Újlaki.<sup>839</sup> Sigismund was nearby in the castle of Šintava (Sempte) waiting for the outcome of the battle, which even if was not as successful as he hoped still it forced the Hussites to withdraw. However, their withdrawal did not mean that they could not return any time, therefore the king took a set of measures to ensure the security of the region before he would leave the country.<sup>840</sup> Among these was the granting of the city of Bratislava with the right of coinage on the condition that a part of this revenue should be spent on fortifying the city, and also to deploy armed contingents in the region.<sup>841</sup> Shortly after the battle, on May 6<sup>th</sup> he was still in Šintava where he started to raise funds for the security measures. This day he issued two charters of pledge. By one he borrowed 6.000 florins from John Maróti “for the defence of our Hungarian kingdom and its boundaries,”<sup>842</sup> and by the other he assigned Imre Marcali to mobilize 140 lances<sup>843</sup> at his own expenses<sup>844</sup> to serve him with these against the Hussites up to three months.<sup>845</sup> Moreover, he borrowed even from queen Barbara 4.100 florins, one and a half month later again for the defence of the region.<sup>846</sup> It seems that all these measures of precaution

<sup>837</sup> Probably due to the lack of firm support of the German estates. Tóth-Szabó, *A cseh-huszita*, 97-99.

<sup>838</sup> Branislav Varsik dates the battle to April 28. Varsik, *Husitské revolučné*, 56.

<sup>839</sup> Tóth-Szabó, *A cseh-huszita*, 100. Dvořáková, *A lovag és királya*, 380-381.

<sup>840</sup> In August 10 he went away from Hungary and returned only in 1434. Engel, *Királyok és királynék*, 125-129. Dvořáková, *A lovag és királya*, 381.

<sup>841</sup> Tóth-Szabó, *A cseh-huszita*, 101. Schoenherr, *Az Anjou ház és örökösei*, 573. Varsik, *Husitské revolučné*, 56-58.

<sup>842</sup> “...pro... defensam pretacti regni nostri Hungariae et eius confinium...” DF 265865.

<sup>843</sup> A lancea was a military unit consisting of three (sometimes of four) people, usually these were two (three) mounted horse archers and a heavy armored knight. C. Tóth, *Az 1395.évi lengyel betörés*, 467.

<sup>844</sup> According to the agreement the wages of 140 lances for three months would be 2.800 florins, which Sigismund secured by pledging the town of Virovitica (Verőce). “...quadraginta lanceas cum gentibus exercitibus... que ad summam duorum millium et octingentorum florenorum auri puri se extendit...” DF 91021.

<sup>845</sup> “...cum eisdem centum quadraginta lanceis eorundemque gentibus exercitibus in hiis partibus nostris superioribus...contra perfidissimos Hussitas et Taboritas...per tres menses integros servire debet nostre maiestati...” Ibid.

<sup>846</sup> “...pro ...tutelamque ac defensionem predicti regni nostri Hungarie et suorum confinium presertim que harum partium nostrarum superiorum per maxime concernens...” DL 71678.

were not enough to discourage the followers of Jan Hus, since next year they paid twice unpleasant visits to the region.<sup>847</sup>

Also in the last year of Sigismund's reign there was a royal pledging with reference to the defense of the upper parts of the country. The *ispánok* of Pozsony county Stephen and George Rozgonyi received in pledge royal villages because they kept safe and protected the town of Trnava at their own expenses which cost them 900 florins.<sup>848</sup> Since there is no information about the Rozgonyis defending the town against the Hussite raids before it was captured,<sup>849</sup> a plausible explanation could be that Sigismund entrusted the *ispánok* with fortifying the town after he recuperated it and intended to reinforce it. It was their responsibility to secure the safety of the town as this was located in Pozsony County, and this was also in correlation with granting the captaincy of the town to George a few months later.<sup>850</sup>

If not precisely strengthening the security of northern Hungary was the reason of hiring John Hunyadi and his brother to serve Sigismund with 50 lances for three months (from October till December 1437), still this is usually linked with the Hussite movement and the king's travel to the Czech lands. From a later document - issued by King Ladislaus V enumerating Hunyadi's merits - is known that after Sigismund's imperial coronation Hunyadi remained in the emperor's entourage and accompanied him to Bohemia.<sup>851</sup> Since here the fighting did not entirely cease with the Taborites,<sup>852</sup> probably the two Hunyadis and their small contingent's role was more than just escorting the ruler. Sigismund wanted to remunerate in advance the Hunyadi brothers' anticipated services for the mentioned time span, so he increased the pledging value of the district of Comiat with 1.250 florins.<sup>853</sup>

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<sup>847</sup> Dvořáková, *A lovag és királya*, 381.

<sup>848</sup> "...*pro euorum expensis in custodia et coservationem civitatis nostre Tirnaviensis ex nostre maiestatis mandato per eos factis noningentis florenis ... obligare dinoscimur*" DL 13124.

<sup>849</sup> Although the possibility cannot be excluded, however the fact that their efforts were paid only after five years (Trnava was captured in 1432) somewhat contradicts to it.

<sup>850</sup> From March 1438 is the first mentioning of George Rozgonyi's vice castellan of Trnava. DL 1534.

<sup>851</sup> Lajos Elekes, *Hunyadi* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1952), 100.

<sup>852</sup> Schoenherr, *Az Anjou ház és örökösei*, 606.

<sup>853</sup> DL 13088.

### The southern military campaigns and the defense of the southern borders

The battle of Kosovo in 1389 had major consequences not only for the Serbian Despotate but for Hungary too, which after the battle had suffered from recurrent Ottoman incursions in its southern parts. It was a crucial shift in the foreign policy of the country that with the Ottoman expansion the Kingdom of Hungary lost its previous role in the region's political life, and the defense of its borders became a primary question. It shows clearly the gravity of the situation that a couple of months later after the Ottoman victory at the battlefield of Kosovo Sigismund led personally a military campaign against Serbia. The expedition is usually reckoned among the anti-ottoman campaigns, though in the phrasing of the contemporary sources it appears as a military expedition meant to repress the Serbs revolting against the power of the Holy Crown of Hungary.<sup>854</sup> The main aim of the military undertaking was to maintain the influence of the kingdom in the region in this changed political climate, and it ended with seizing the castles of Borač and Čestin north of Kragujevac. There is not much known about the financial side of the campaign but it looks almost certain that pledging played a role in raising funds for it. Sigismund left Buda on September 12 and was heading towards Serbia,<sup>855</sup> when two days later in Tolnavár he pledged in the value of 2.000 florins a village to Stephen Losonci because he committed himself to take part with his men in the military expedition on his own expenses.<sup>856</sup>

The Ottoman response to Sigismund's actions in Serbia was an incursion to Hungary, that later was followed by couple of others. The campaign of 1389 was only the beginning of a series of armed expeditions of the Hungarian troops, though not all of them were led by the ruler himself. From 1389 till 1395 each year was a military campaign outside the kingdom's southern borders. To these and to the protection of the southern borders, two pledgings of Sigismund can be linked. One is from 1393, when Stibor of Stiboricz lent 3.000 florins to the ruler in change of pledging Dolná Súča (Szúcsa) castle, the money admittedly was needed for the defense against the Ottoman raids.<sup>857</sup> The other is from the next year, this time the influential archbishop of Esztergom John

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<sup>854</sup> Pál Engel, "A török-magyar háborúk első éve, 1389-1392" [The first years of the Ottoman-Hungarian wars, 1389-1392] in *Honor, vár, ispánság*, [Honor, castle, domain (*ispánság*)], ed. Enikő Csukovics (Budapest: Osiris, 2003), 557.

<sup>855</sup> Engel, *Királyok és királynék*, 62.

<sup>856</sup> "...cum sua gente ad presentem nostram expeditionem exercitualem de nouo motam in propriis suis sumptibus et expensis proficisci debeat et teneatur...". Ortway, *Temes*, 181.

<sup>857</sup> "...pro defensione et tuitione annotati regni nostri quod permittente Deo per nephandorum Thurcorum crebros insultus cottidie lacessitur..."DL 7892.

Kanizsai received in pledge royal properties. Nicholas Zámbo, the former master of treasury was charged with fraudulent misuse of funds, and remained indebted with 1.200 florins, therefore the king seized all his possession in Žitný ostrov (Csallóköz) and pledged to the archbishop, because he together with other barons was fighting against the Ottomans at the lower parts of the kingdom.<sup>858</sup>

The defeat at the battle of Nicopolis in September 1396 did not change Sigismund's determination to wage war against the Ottoman Empire. In contrary, he was striving to organize a new crusade for which he sought the help of Venice and of his half-brother Wenceslaus, King of Bohemia and of the Romans. The seriousness of his intentions is shown by the fact that in 22 May 1397 he ordered the cessation of public business<sup>859</sup> and convoked the battalions to Timișoara (Temesvár).<sup>860</sup> Two weeks later he was dealing with the financial part of the crusade. On the basis of a previous pledging he borrowed 2.800 florins from George Kővágóörsi for the campaign against the Ottomans.<sup>861</sup> It was not easy for Kővágóörsi to put up the money the king had asked for, in fact he had to sell one of his properties,<sup>862</sup> and probably it was not a great consolation that at least the 2.800 loan was acknowledged by the ruler as part of the previous pledging.

However, after all these efforts the anti-ottoman crusade failed, the king went to war only in the following year, but against Bosnia. At the beginning of the year 1398 there was an Ottoman attack against Bosnia, as a consequence that the queen of Bosnia Helen Gruba was deposed and Stephen Ostoja became the king with the support of Duke Hrvoje Vukčić.<sup>863</sup> One of the pillars of Hungary's defense against the Ottoman expansion was to extend the country's influence to the neighboring states, maintaining a buffer zone in this way that could ward off the raids; in this

<sup>858</sup> "...*prefatus dominus Johannes archiepiscopus nunc per nostram maiestatem ...pro tuitione et custodia partium inferiorum contra insultus paganorum cum certis baronibus electus existit et deputatus...*" DL 7938.

<sup>859</sup> "...*cum nos universas causas regnicolarum nostrorum propter presentem expeditionem nostram exercitualement contra Turcos instaurandam generaliter duximus prorogandas...*" DL 78210. Imre Nagy, Iván Nagy, Dezső Véghely, *A zichi és vásonkeői gróf Zichy-család idősb ágának okmánytára* [The cartulary of the older branch of the count Zichy family of Zich and Vásonkeő] (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1878), vol. V, 37.

<sup>860</sup> Károly Kranzieritz, "Változások a Délvidéken Nikápoly után" [Changes on the southern territories after Nicopolis] in *Micae Mediaevales. Fiatal történészek dolgozatai a középkori Magyarországról és Európáról* [Studies of young historians about medieval Hungary and Europe], ed. Bence Péterfi et al. (Budapest: ELTE BTK, 2012), 99. Schoenherr, *Az Anjou ház és örökösei*, 438.

<sup>861</sup> "... *pro presenti nostra valida exercituali expeditione contra Turkos habita...*" DL 100279. ZsO. I. 4807.

<sup>862</sup> "...*ut promittitur nobis persolvatis et assignatis ipse magister Georgius quandam suam possessionem Bennek vocatam... vendidisse...*" DL 100279.

<sup>863</sup> John V. A. Fine, *The late medieval Balkans* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 458-459.



respect Bosnia was especially important for the defense of Croatia and Slavonia.<sup>864</sup> With the deposal of the queen sustaining the Hungarian influence in the country became threatened moreover, Duke Hrvoje openly supported Ladislaus of Naples, a pretender to the throne of Hungary. The campaign against Bosnia led by Sigismund himself in the summer was not successful. The conflict lingered on in the following months,<sup>865</sup> moreover at the beginning of the following year probably there was an attack of the Hungarian troops against Bosnia.<sup>866</sup> In this late 1398 and early 1399 period Sigismund borrowed 24.000 golden florins through two transactions from the Frankopan family, giving the castle of Ozalj (Ozaly) in pledge in exchange for the money. In both cases the defense of the kingdom's borders against the Turks was the reason for borrowing the money.<sup>867</sup> It may be that because the Bosnian and Ottoman problem was closely related, this significant amount of money was spent in fact on the Bosnian war.

Nevertheless, there are further explanations, too. Since in both cases the Ottomans and not the Bosnians are explicitly denoted as the enemy against whom the kingdom has to be defended, the answer may lie in the preparations for a possible Ottoman attack led by the sultan himself. A week and a half later after the second installment of the credit was borrowed from the Frankopans, the postponement of law suits was announced on the basis of the Ottoman threat and continued throughout the end of May.<sup>868</sup> What kind of threat it was, a letter of the Wallachian voivode - written to Sigismund on May 23 – informs us. According to the voivode the sultan was gathering a huge army at Adrianópolis and was probably heading north towards the Danube.<sup>869</sup> After all it turned out that this was a false alarm.<sup>870</sup> Finally there is another plausible explanation related to the fortification system built on the southern parts of the kingdom to prevent the Ottoman incursions. A part of this system between the castles of Hram (Haram) and Turnu Severin

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<sup>864</sup> Dubravko Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti: sveta kruna ugarska i sveta kruna bosanska 1387-1463* [*The Landslide of History: Holy Crown of Hungary and the Holy Crown of Bosnia*] (Synopsis, Zagreb-Sarajevo, 2006), 89. I would like to thank Antun Nekić for helping me understanding the contents of the book.

<sup>865</sup> Kranzieritz, *Változások a Délvidéken*, 103-106. Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti*, 91.

<sup>866</sup> Ibid.

<sup>867</sup> "...*pro tuitione confinium regni nostri ab insultibus Turkorum...*" DL 33980, Frangepán I/127. "...*pro tuendis et defensandis a turcorum molestis insultibus ipsius regni nostri confiniis...*" DF 33285, Frangepán I/129.

<sup>868</sup> ZsO.II. 5706, 5719, 5833, 5877.

<sup>869</sup> ZsO. II. 5769.

<sup>870</sup> Schoenherr, *Az Anjou ház és örökösei*, 442.

(Szörényvár) was probably built in the 1390s<sup>871</sup> and it is possible that if not the whole, than at least a certain amount of the credit was spent on building fortifications in the area.

The Ottoman defeat at the battle of Ankara in 1402 temporarily relieved the pressure from the southern borders of Hungary, till the beginning of the 1420s there were no more raids. In the summer of 1427 the Serbian despot Stefan Lazarević died, and according to an agreement concluded between him and Sigismund, after Lazarević's death a number of fortifications along the Danube had to be handed over to the king of Hungary. Among these fortifications was the fortress of Golubac which was surrendered by its castellan to the Ottomans. Golubac was a crucial piece in the fortification system since it helped to protect Belgrade, also it had an important harbor, and it was a crossing point of the river.<sup>872</sup> Sigismund wanted to take the fortress by force, in the spring of 1428 he declared general insurrection (*exercitus generalis*) and at the end of April he was already on the spot. The siege lasted till around 3 June and proved to be unsuccessful.<sup>873</sup> The costs of the siege were borne partially by a pledging. In the beginning of May<sup>874</sup> in the need of money for the Ottoman war the king pledged the castle of Veliki Kalnik (Nagy-Kemlék) to the bishop of Zagreb for 14.000.<sup>875</sup>

After the failure at Golubac Sigismund did not deal with the southern border problem personally, rather he entrusted the task to the Talovac brothers.<sup>876</sup> The task included not only the protection of the borders against the raids but also to secure and maintain the influence of the kingdom in the neighboring countries. In the summer of 1434 Matko Talovac led a military expedition to southern Bosnia in the aid of Stephen Tvrtko II King of Bosnia and the ally of Sigismund. As a result of the expedition a number of castles and fortifications were occupied<sup>877</sup>

<sup>871</sup> Engel, *Ozorai Pipo*, 268.

<sup>872</sup> László Veszprémy, "Zsigmond Galambócnál 1428-ban" [Sigismund at Golubac in 1428], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 121, no.2 (2008):283-284.

<sup>873</sup> *Ibid.*, 287-290.

<sup>874</sup> The charter was issued in Veliki Kalnik (Nagykemlék), which does not really fit into Sigismund's itinerary. However there is no doubt that the transaction happened, other sources prove that the castle came under the bishops' command. In his last will the bishop bequeathed the castle to the church of Zagreb. Fejér X/7 437. Engel, *Királyok és királynék*, 122-123.

<sup>875</sup> The original charter was lost, only excerpt of it exists - Fejér X/6 924. According to it the castle was sold to the bishop with the restriction that for the same amount of money the king can buy back at any time. Even if there are differences in the phrasing, basically it is a pledge transaction, also the scholarship considers it so. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 135.

<sup>876</sup> Engel, *Ungarn und die Türkengefahr*, 69-70.

<sup>877</sup> Mályusz, *The Four Tallóci*, 152-155. Pál Engel, "A 14-15. századi bosnyák-magyar kapcsolatok kérdéséhez" [About the question of the Bosnian-Hungarian relations of the fourteen-fifteenth centuries] in *Honor, vár, ispánság*,

and apparently the costs of this military operation to some extent were covered by putting in pledge the Castle of Đurđevac (Szentgyörgy) to Matko. According to the document of the transaction Matko spent 6.000 florins on raising armed forces of 1117 lances with which he managed to bring back the inhabitants of Bosnia to Sigismund's obedience.<sup>878</sup>

Three years later Matko's brother Franco led a similar campaign to Serbia, and even if there are no data about financing this military action through loan, this year Sigismund issued two charters of pledge that can be linked with the course of the military events at the southern borders, and with the Ottoman threat. One of the two documents refers to events that happened a year before it was issued. Less than a week before his death, Sigismund issued one of his last charters of pledge in which he put in pledge a number of settlements to Peter Lévai Cseh for his expenses in the value of 10.000 florins for defending the province of Transylvania.<sup>879</sup> The document does not specify against whom he defended the province, therefore the charter could allude to the peasant revolt of Antal Budai Nagy. Nevertheless this was not the case. Already in May 1436 Lévai is said to be engaged in the defense of the province,<sup>880</sup> and in the winter an Ottoman raid was registered in the southern parts of the province.<sup>881</sup> As a result of it in February 1437 Sigismund entrusted Lévai with the protection of Transylvania against the Ottomans.<sup>882</sup> Consequently, the 10.000 florins were more likely spent against the Ottoman devastation rather than the peasant revolt.

The other charter issued in the autumn of 1437 may refer to the military events at the southern borders of the kingdom. In the summer an Ottoman army laid siege to Smederovo the primary residence of the Serbian Despot Đurađ Branković. The siege was lifted as a result of

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[Honor, castle, domain (*ispánság*)], ed. Enikő Csukovics (Budapest: Osiris, 2003), 506. *The late medieval Balkans*, 475.

<sup>878</sup> "...mille centum et decem et septem lancearum ad rationem nostre maiestatis levavit...universos etiam magnates nobiles ac proceres et incolas ipsius regni Bosne ad obedientiam nostre maiestatis reduxit..." DL 34067.

<sup>879</sup> DL 88127.

<sup>880</sup> Wertner, *Magyar hadjáratok*, 543.

<sup>881</sup> Gustav Gündish, "Siebenbürgen in der Türkenabwehr" in *Aus Geschichte und Kultur der Siebenbürger Sachsen: ausgewählte Aufsätze und Berichte*, ed. Gustav Gündish (Cologne: Böhlau Verl., 1987), 44.

<sup>882</sup> Wertner, *Magyar hadjáratok*, 546.

Pongrác Szentmiklósi and his troops' intervention.<sup>883</sup> In order to put up the money that Szentmiklósi needed Sigismund pledged the castle of Döbrököz for 3.000 florins.<sup>884</sup>

### Other armed conflicts

Besides the many external armed conflicts in which the kingdom of Hungary was involved during the long reign of King Sigismund, a few internal clashes and struggles were also overcome by the ruler with the aid of pledging. One of them is from the turbulent period of the beginning of the fifteenth century, when a number of barons headed by the archbishop of Esztergom John Kanizsai imprisoned the ruler and started to govern the country in the name of the Holy Crown. The captivity did not last long, only a few months, after which Sigismund was restored to his throne. However, the events took a serious turn in the beginning of 1403 when a rebellion broke out, after a number of influential barons and prelates led by the archbishop of Esztergom offered the Hungarian throne to Ladislaus of Naples. The rebellion was repressed thanks to the swift mobilization of the troops of the lords faithful to Sigismund.<sup>885</sup>

A symbolic and a key moment of suppressing the rebellion was the surrounding of the castle of Esztergom, the seat of archbishop Kanizsai. For raising troops for the siege on September 4 Sigismund commissioned Peter Forgách to hire around 300 horsemen.<sup>886</sup> According to the agreement the king would have paid 10 florins after each 4 horsemen for a month, so around 750 florins for the whole contingent.<sup>887</sup> The castle of Hrušov (Hrussó) was used as a security of the payment, with the condition that the castle remains in pledge until its incomes would reimburse Forgách's expenses of siege. The transaction is especially interesting for the reason that it shows the ingeniousness Sigismund showed in dealing with this whole business. Namely, he pledged that

<sup>883</sup> Gyula Rázsó, "A Zsigmond-kori Magyarország és a török veszély (1393-1437)" [Hungary under the reign of Sigismund and the Ottoman threat (1393-1437)], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 20, (1973): 440. Engel, *Ungarn und die Türkengefahr*, 70.

<sup>884</sup> The charter mentions Pongrác fighting with his men to aid the Serbian despot in the lower parts of the kingdom: "...nobili viro Pangratio de Blathnicza ad suas certas gentes cum quibus idem Pangratius in partibus inferioribus videlicet in subsidio illustris principis Georgii despoti Rascie et Albanie dominus contra insultus sevissimorum Turcorum ad certa tempora debet perseverare..." DL 24530.

<sup>885</sup> Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 103-105. Engel, *The Realm of St. Stephen*, 206-208.

<sup>886</sup> "...ad obsidionem castris Strigoniensis trecentos equites vel circa numerum predictum adducere debet..." DL 58797.

<sup>887</sup> The siege was already going on at the end of September and in November 4 it was already over. Forgách and his horsemen were probably in arms for two months, and following the terms of the agreement this meant that their wages were around 1.500 florins. ZsO. II. 2636, 2698, 2699.

castle of Hrušov which only recently became his possession thanks to the same Peter Forgách who after a successful siege managed to take it from the rebels.<sup>888</sup> In other words Sigismund was able to raise a contingent of 300 horsemen without any significant financial effort, he simply pledged a castle that he had just obtained to the same person who seized it in the king's name.

The other case of internal conflict did not endanger Sigismund's throne and no civil war broke out, rather the root of the disagreement was constituted by a quarrel over a family inheritance. In the first part of the fifteenth century three prominent families owned great part of Croatia and Slavonia, these were the Frankopan, Cilli and the Nelipčić families. In 1434 the last male member of the Nelipčić family died and before his death he bequeathed his huge wealth to his daughter and his son-in-law John Frankopan. Sigismund, fearing that the already powerful Frankopan family was to become even more influential in the region, on the basis of the royal right - that granted the properties of extinct families on the male line to the king- demanded all the bequest for himself. Because John Frankopan was unwilling to relinquish the inheritance that behoved him, Sigismund had to resort to force and ordered Matko Talovac to organize a military expedition against the Frankopans. The conflict ended by the death of John, after which her widow entered into negotiations.<sup>889</sup> In the following year the accounting of the expenses of Matko took place. To cover these, the king did not want to give in pledge additional royal domains than the already pledged ones, instead he simply added 7.000 florins to the initial 13.000 pledging value of Đurđevac castle, which meant that he could redeem the castle only after paying 20.000 florins.<sup>890</sup>

There is an external armed confrontation that does not fit in the Hussite and Ottoman hostilities. The war against Venice and the role of pledging the Spiš region to finance it has been already mentioned, nevertheless apparently there was another transaction that contributed to raising funds for it. King Sigismund, striving to depose the counter-popes – to have only one universally acknowledged pope – set off to a long western European journey in 1415.<sup>891</sup> Perpignan was one of his stops on this travel where he issued a solemn charter in which palatine Nicholas

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<sup>888</sup> "... *tempore videlicet disturbii regni nostri castrum Hrusow nuncupatum...nostre maiestate comissione et edicto cum gente et comitiva suis obsidente et castellum ex oppositu eiusdem castris praeparari faciente...*" DL 58803.

<sup>889</sup> *The late medieval Balkans*, 495-497. Mályusz, *The Four Tallóci*, 155-157. Pál Szabó, *1440 – Nándorfehérvár első oszmán-török ostroma és előzményei* [1440 – The first Ottoman siege of Belgrade and its antecedents] (Phd diss., University of Szeged: 2014), 92-93.

<sup>890</sup> DF 231190.

<sup>891</sup> Engel, *The Realm*, 230. Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 222-223.

Garai took in pledge the castle of Devín with all of its appurtenances. Garai gained the castle for his various services and expenditures, like escorting the queen to Germany, contributing to deposing popes and following the orders of the king he besieged a number of castles and fortifications held by the Venetians.<sup>892</sup> The document does not say precisely when Garai took part in the fighting, but there is a hint that helps us to identify when these events happened. This clue is the mentioning of Garai's merits in the war with Venice as happening when he was together with the king himself in Friuli.<sup>893</sup> It is well known that during the early phase of the Venetian-Hungarian conflict Sigismund marched in personally into Venetian lands only once, and that was between late 1412 and early 1413.<sup>894</sup> There is another source proving that this a right assumption, in February 1413 when Sigismund was in Italy on the expedition he donated domains exactly to palatine Garai. Nevertheless, we are not so lucky with the sum of the pledging as with identifying the date of the events, because it was not specified precisely in the charter how much expenses Garai's involvement in the war generated.

## Pledge holders

The pledge holders of the discussed transactions range from the queen and the leading elite of the kingdom to the *ispánok* and simple vice-castellans.<sup>895</sup> It is not by chance that the barons and prelates were the most numerous, as being highly influential and wealthy they were able to lend substantial amounts of money to the ruler. Generally these pledge holders were the inhabitants of the kingdom, thus these military expeditions of Sigismund were not financed by foreign merchants and bankers; however, in rare cases it could happen that foreign capital was involved in some of the transactions. Such was Matko Talovac's campaign against the Frankopans in 1436. After the fighting was over Matko sought Sigismund out regarding the payment, and reported about 42.000 florins of expenses. He was able to gather this money by borrowing it from various merchants,

<sup>892</sup> "...*terras quas tunc veneti...occupatas tenebant ubi in plurimorum castrorum et fortalitorum circumvallatione expugnatione et obtentione nobis fideliter serviendo adherebat...*" DL 10390

<sup>893</sup> "... *versus Foriully partes nobiscum progrediens in quibus similiter in quamplurimorum castrorum fortalitorum et terrarum circumvallatione expugnatione et optentione...assistebat.*" Ibid.

<sup>894</sup> Engel, *Királyok és királynék*, 95-96.

<sup>895</sup> Stephen Bátfai is mentioned in the charter of pledging as "*vicecastellanus castris Czokakev*". DL 24530. Among the *ispánok* were: Stibor of Stiboricz DL 7892, Peter Forgách DL 58797, etc.

among these there were Venetians too.<sup>896</sup> Even if it was not as palpable as in this case, but involvement of foreign credit can be assumed in the king's two transactions with the Frankopans too. The family had strong economic connections with the Republic of Venice, they often borrowed money and put in pledge some of their domains to the Republic.<sup>897</sup> Consequently, it is very probable that parts of the 24.000 florins lent in two installments to Sigismund were gained from Venice.

There is not much information about where the pledgees had the money from if they did not borrow it. As we could see, George Kővágóörsi even sold some of his properties to comply with the king's financial demand, John Hunyadi could lend money from his wages he received from the Duke of Milan when he was in his service,<sup>898</sup> and Queen Barbara – known for her good skills in finance management – owned large domains in the country.<sup>899</sup> Besides these cases, I think, generally the pledge holders lent money from the incomes of their own domains and from the ones that were allocated to them on the basis of the public offices they held.

Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the sums of the transactions were not always lent in cash, but often these represented the military expenses of the pledge holders serving the king. The military services included taking part with own battalions in royal campaigns, raising troops, hiring mercenaries, or even organizing and leading military expeditions in the name of the ruler. The payment of these services happened generally in two ways, either by anticipating the military service and paying in advance for these, or in the way that after the services were performed, the expenditures were reimbursed. In the first case the terms of the contract of pledge were more detailed as they listed the number of soldiers to be hired, their monthly wages, and the time span of the service. The Hunyadi brothers undertook to perform their military duties with 50 lances for three months, expecting 25 florins payment for each lance. Ladislaus Jakcs and Stephen Losonci promised to provide military aid to the king with 250 lances for the next summer for a remuneration again of 25 florins per lance.<sup>900</sup> Péter Forgách took part in the siege of Esztergom

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<sup>896</sup> “...*ab extraneis partibus et notanter de certis civibus et mercatoribus venetiarum et ragusii ac aliarum certarum civitatum ad maxima ipsorum obligamina nomine veri mutui ac acquisitis et receptis...*” DF 231190. On another occasion Matko reported that his expenses were 60.000 florins. Mályusz, *The Four Tallóci Brothers*, 155.

<sup>897</sup> Teke, *Egy délvidéki főúr*, 96-98.

<sup>898</sup> Elekes, *Hunyadi*, 98-99.

<sup>899</sup> Amalie Föbel, “The Queen's Wealth in the Middle Ages” *Majestas 13* (2005): 39.

<sup>900</sup> “...*pro qualibet lancea solvendo florenos viginti quinque auri...*” DL 88513.

with around 300 horsemen for whom he managed to negotiate a payment of 10 florins for a month after each 4 horsemen.

In the second case the settling of the expenses happened in the other way round, somebody took place in military operations fighting for the king's cause, and after the operations were over their expenses were repaid. It took time before the king reimbursed their expenditures, this varied from a few months to a couple of years. Palatine Garai received in pledge the castle of Devín in 1415 for his military services of the years 1412-1413. Matko Talovac managed to collect his wages earlier than the palatine, the costs of his military expedition to Bosnia in 1434 were refunded a year later just as his campaign against the Frankopans in 1436. Péter Lévai Cseh the Transylvanian voivode, was defending the province against the Ottoman raids in 1436 and the accounting took place at the end of 1437. Intriguingly, paying off the expenses was sometimes a good opportunity for the ruler to ask for money besides the performed military services. Lévai received in pledge a number of settlements for his military outlays and because he lent an additional 3.000 florins at Sigismund's request.<sup>901</sup> This pattern appeared once again in the case of Matko Talovac too, he spent 6.000 florins on an armed expedition against Bosnia and in order to settle his expenditures by taking in pledge Đurđevac castle he lent 7.000 florins to the king.<sup>902</sup>

Many of the pledgees took part in the military actions themselves for which Sigismund needed the money of the transactions. Among these persons were Stephen Losonci, Archbishop Kanizsai, Palatine Garai, John Maróti, Ladislaus Jakcs, Matko Talovac, Stephen, Simon and George Rozgonyi, and Péter Lévai Cseh. Of course their involvement in the fighting is understandable considering that usually in these instances the sum of the pledging represented their military expenses. However, this was not always the case, John Maróti lent 6.000 florins to the king and was attested to have fought in the battle near Trnava in 1430 for which Sigismund borrowed the money from him. Furthermore, among these pledge holders there were persons who not just simply participated in the military operations but they were actually the leaders of these expeditions. Stephen Losonci did not simply join the royal army with his own banner in 1389 but in fact he was the leader of it.<sup>903</sup> According to Eberhard Windecke's information John Maróti was

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<sup>901</sup> DL 88127.

<sup>902</sup> DL 34067.

<sup>903</sup> ZsO. I. 1190. Engel, *A török-magyar háborúk*, 557.



one of the leaders of the Hungarian troops fighting against the Hussites at Trnava.<sup>904</sup> Matko led the attack against Bosnia in 1434, and he was behind the fighting with the Frankopans in 1436. Also, Péter Lévai Cseh was entrusted personally by the ruler to defend Transylvania from the Ottoman attacks.

## The contribution of pledgings

The costs of military actions depended on a set of factors, as the number of soldiers, composition of the army, duration and character of the campaign (internal-external), the distance covered and so on. Therefore and because the account books of the campaigns are missing, it is impossible to make an estimate about the whole expenses of certain expeditions and about how much pledges could contribute to bearing the outlays. From the discussed military events - in which pledgings were involved - only the costs of one are known precisely, that is the campaign against the Frankopans, reported to be 42.000 florins by Matko Talovac. However, even if there are no precise data about the full expenses of the other expeditions, still it can be found out whether Sigismund relied solely on pledges in covering the expenses.

The pledging of the village of Hodoş (Hodos) to Stephen Losonci certainly did not finance the whole royal campaign against Serbia in 1389. There are a number of lords attested being present in the campaign,<sup>905</sup> and the pledging of Hodoş had nothing to do with their expenditures, rather the domain donations at the end of the fighting did.<sup>906</sup> In 1394 Archbishop Kanizsai received in pledge some domains of Nicholas Zámbo because he was fighting with the Ottomans, against whom Sigismund was planning another crusade in 1397, for which he borrowed money from George Kővágóörsi and pledged domains to him. In both cases besides pledges levying taxes made it possible to finance these events. In both years extraordinary tax was levied on the ground of the Ottoman war.<sup>907</sup> As these examples show, pledging contributed to financing military operations

<sup>904</sup> Altmann, *Eberhard Windeckes Denkwürdigkeiten*, (pars 270) 280.

<sup>905</sup> Engel, *A török-magyar háborúk*, 557.

<sup>906</sup> András Borosy, "Hadi érdemek Magyarországon a XIV. században" [Military merit in Hungary in the fourteenth century], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 117, no.2 (2004): 414.

<sup>907</sup> Engel, *Ungarn und die Türkengefahr*, 58-59. Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 144.

but was not used exclusively for bearing the whole costs. This was not due to the lower amount of money of these transactions.

The fact that in certain pledgings greater sums were involved does not mean necessarily that only this money was used in financing wars. The 7.000 florins of Matko Talovac spent on the campaign against the Frankopans was only a fraction of the whole cost of 42.000. Similarly, the 6.000 florins of Matko could hardly be enough for hiring 1117 lances in 1434. Considering that the wages of a lance for a month were usually around 10 florins,<sup>908</sup> the 6.000 florins would have covered the whole costs only if the expedition would have lasted just a half month, which is not probable. Moreover, this year Sigismund entrusted Matko Talovac with organizing the collection of the chamber's profit (*lucrum camerae*) tax, of which money he likely spent on the expenses of the Bosnian campaign.<sup>909</sup> The huge sum of 37.000 schock of pledging the Spiš region - probably used for financing the war with Venice - did not cover the whole expenses of it. Palatine Nicholas Garai's expenditures were refunded by pledging Devín castle, furthermore, the town of Udine gave 1.000 ducats to the Hungarian troops during the war.<sup>910</sup>

Enumerating such instances can be continued, however it cannot be excluded that in some cases the sums of the pledges were enough for bearing the military costs. Even so, in the majority of the cases as the above presented examples prove, pledging only contributed to funding military actions and was used in combination with other fundraising methods as various regular or extraordinary taxes, leaving vacant bishopric seats, selling and donating domains and so on.

## Conclusion

Merit has to be given to József Deér for picking up on the implication of Sigismund's pledges in his wars and for trying to collect all the data about it that he could. Nevertheless, his results need to be revisited in the light of new research. About a significantly less amount of money of pledges than Deér's calculation can one claim with full certainty that it was spent on Sigismund's military expenses. Furthermore, these sums were not exclusively spent on the defense of the country as he

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<sup>908</sup> C. Tóth, *Az 1395.évi lengyel betörés*, 480. The data is from 1410, but in 1434 this could not be much lower, rather higher.

<sup>909</sup> Mályusz, *The Four Tallóci Brothers*, 153-154.

<sup>910</sup> E. Kovács, *Zsigmond isztriai hadjárata*, 245.

phrased it, but on many occasions the Kingdom of Hungary was not attacked, but it was the attacking side.

The discussed pledgings were related to almost every adversary with whom the country had a military conflict in the time of King Sigismund's reign, and were used in his internal clashes likewise. However, protecting the upper (northern) parts of the kingdom and waging war with the Ottomans were the two main directions in which the majority of the money involved in the presented transactions was spent. From this aspect the Hussite conflict and especially the year 1435 stands out, since in this year Sigismund regularly resorted to pledgings for raising funds to solve the Hussite problem. Only this year can a certain regularity in Sigismund's pledging practice be traced, similarly to his practice of pledging church properties in the Czech lands for financing the Hussite wars.<sup>911</sup> Otherwise, no consistency could be traced when this purpose was explicitly mentioned in the charters of pledge.

There was no regularity regarding the pledge holders either; when Sigismund was in great need of capital for his military plans, he did not seek out the same persons to borrow money from them. There were no bankers or wealthy creditors on whose financial support Sigismund could rely regularly. Instead, the range of the lenders is relatively large, but the upper stratum of the nobility and especially the barons and the prelates were able to provide large sums at the king's disposal. Not only through lending money it was possible to get hold of a royal pledged property, but also by contributing to bearing the costs of the king's military outlay by taking part in his military campaigns. Therefore, often, issuing the charter of pledge was not the result of lending money to the ruler, but was actually the settlement of the pledgee's military expenses or was the king's advance payment for the pledgee's prospective expenses.

Additionally, although sometimes it happened, generally Sigismund did not rely solely on pledging in financing one of his campaigns, rather he used it in conjunction with other financial resources. As Elemér Mályusz phrased it, writing about Matko Talovac's campaign in 1434: "Sigismund had to create the financial basis of his military enterprise from several places with great artifice".<sup>912</sup> I think this was true not only for Matko's Bosnian expedition but generally for

<sup>911</sup> Čechura, *Die Säkularisation*, 121-132.

<sup>912</sup> "Vállalkozásához az anyagi alapokat Zsigmondnak több helyről kellett nem kis leleménnyel, biztosítania". Elemér Mályusz, "A négy Tallóci fivér" [The four Tallóci brother], *Történelmi Szemle* 23, no.4 (1980):551. Mályusz's

all the cases discussed in this chapter. Sigismund confronting often with liquidity problems tried to raise funds for his wars from wherever he could.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Domain</i>	<i>Sum</i> <sup>913</sup>	<i>Pledgee</i>	<i>Reference</i>
14.09.1389	The village of Hodoş (Hodos, Romania)	2.000	Stephen Losonci	Temes 181, Bánffy I 421 <sup>914</sup>
10.09.1393	Castle of Dolná Súča (Szúcsa, Slovakia)	3.000	Stibor of Stiboricz	DL 7892
24.04.1394	Domains of Nicolas Zámbo situated in Žitný ostrov (Csallóköz, Slovakia)	1.200	John Kanizsai	DL 7938
03.06.1397	Settlements of Polgár, Batthány Somlyó etc. (Hungary)	2.800	George Kővágóörsi	DL 100279
01.11.1398	Castle of Ozalj (Ozaly, Croatia)	17.000	Nikola Frankopan	DL 33980
29.01.1399	Castle of Ozalj (Ozaly, Croatia)	7.000	The widow of Stjepan Frankopan	DL 33285
04.09.1403	Castle of Hrušov (Hrussó, Slovakia)	1.500	Peter Forgách	DL 58797
18.10.1415	Castle of Devín (Dévény, Slovakia)		Nicholas Garai	DL 10390, 30418
14.08.1424	Castle of Stupčanica (Szaplónca, Croatia)	10.000	Nicholas Garai	DL 33411
01.05.1428	Castle of Veliki Kalnik (Nagy-Kemlék, Croatia)	14.000	Albeni János	Fejér X/6 924 <sup>915</sup>
04.10.1429	Castle of Tátika (Hungary)	2.000	Stephen and George Marcali	DF 200424
06.05.1430	The town of Virovitica (Verőce, Croatia)	2.800	Emeric Marcali	DL 91021
06.05.1430	Castle warriors ( <i>nobiles iobagiones</i> ) of Križevci castle with their taxes, jurisdiction and incomes (Körös, Croatia)	6.000	John Maróti	DF 265865
24.06.1430	Liptovský castle and the county of Liptó (Liptóóvár, Slovakia)	4.100	Queen Barbara	DL 71678

Hungarian article about the four Talovac border has been published in English, however the English version is shorter and this part that I am quoting was omitted from it.

<sup>913</sup> All the sums of the table are given in Hungarian golden florin.

<sup>914</sup> The charter of this pledging is not available in the Hungarian National Archives, only transcription exists.

<sup>915</sup> The document is missing from the Hungarian National Archives.

24.04.1435	Castel of Şoimi (Sólyomkő, Romania)	6.250	Ladislaus Jakcs and Stephen Losonci	DL 88317, 88513
07.06.1435	Castle and market town of Fil'akovo and Jelšava (Füleky, Jolsva, Slovakia) <sup>916</sup>	2.000	Peter, Emeric, Ladislaus Bebek	DL 71469
08.06.1435	Castle of Voćin (Atyina, Croatia)	17.000	Ladislaus and Nicholas Garai	DL 33941, 33788
10.06.1435	Part of the domain of <i>Kaza</i> (Borsod county)	500	George Serkei and Ladislaus Serkei	DL 71955
23.06.1435	Market town of Gyöngyös (Hungary)	1.400	Stephen and Peter Rozgonyi	DL 12725
25.06.1435	Castle of Tátika (Hungary)	2.000	George Korbáviai	DF 200436
27.06.1435	Castle of Đurđevac (Szentgyörgy, Croatia)	13.000	Matko Talovac	DL 34067
03.10.1435	Manor house in Vrankuňa (Verecknye, Slovakia)	1.265	John of Reichenau	DL 12759
13.10.1435	Castle of Tátika (Hungary)	1.100	Ladislaus and Peter Pető of Gerse	DF 200437
10.11.1435	Castle of Jelšava (Jolsva, Slovakia)	3.300	John and Stephen Perényi	DL 12770
08.12.1435	Bosanska Krupa (Krupa, Bosnia Herzegovina)	1.100	Frederick Count of Celje	DL 12785
21.09.1437	The district of Comiat (Komját, Romania)	1.250	John Hunyadi and his brother also John	DL 13088
23.10.1437	Castle of Döbrököz (Hungary)	3.000	Stephen Rozgonyi and Stephen Bátfai	DL 24530
26.11.1437	Castle of Đurđevac (Szentgyörgy, Croatia)	7.000	Matko and Franko Talovac	DF 231190
03.12.1437	Settlements of Pásztó (Hungary), Ipeľský Sokolec (Szakálas, Slovakia) etc.	10.000	Peter Lévai Cseh	DL 88127
04.12.1437	Settlements of Strekov, Čierny Brod (Kürt, Vízkelet, Slovakia) etc.	900	Stephen, Simon, George Rozgonyi	DL 13124, 13126
	<b>TOTAL</b>	144.465		

<sup>916</sup> After all, only the castle of Jelšava was given in pledge. Engel, *Királyi hatalom* 112, 118.

## Other expenditures

### Rendered services

Pledging used for rewarding the services of the adherents was common in late medieval Europe. Sigismund's Hungarian pledging practice was no different from this. Apart from loans, the sums of the pledgings were often the expenses of the adherents' various services. Regularly the charters of the transactions do not elaborate on what these services mostly consisted.<sup>917</sup> If there is more information available about the pledge holders, then these could shed some light on what these services were. For example, in 1404 a certain Michalko received a village in pledge from the king.<sup>918</sup> His services had to be related to hunting and more precisely to keeping the royal hunting dogs, as he was hired for this.<sup>919</sup>

The charters of pledging get into details only rarely about the services rendered to the ruler, like in the case of pledging Devín castle to palatine Nicholas Garai in 1415 for his services. The palatine served the ruler in the following way: he helped him waging war against Venice and forced Venice to ceasefire. In 1414, he accompanied Queen Barbara to Aachen, to Sigismund's coronation. Garai also helped the ruler in restoring the Church's unity at the Council of Konstanz. Finally, he aided Sigismund in preparing the meetings with the Kings of France, England and Aragon.<sup>920</sup> From all these the palatine had 12.000 florins expenditure which Sigismund compensated by increasing the pledging value of the castle with this sum.<sup>921</sup>

Guarding royal castles was among the services remunerated with pledges.<sup>922</sup> The ruler owed to pay them for it, and it was not unexceptional that he failed to make the payments in time. Like in the case of John Blagay who had to receive a yearly 500 florins for guarding the castle of

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<sup>917</sup> DL 8944. 8944. The military services were discussed earlier in the chapter.

<sup>918</sup> DL 8993.

<sup>919</sup> In 1412 Michalko is mentioned as *canifer*. DL 9926. ZsO. III. 2393

<sup>920</sup> DL 10390. ZsO. V. 1136. This part of the charter enumerating Garai's merits was transcribed and can be read in: Kondor, *The Ginger fox's*, 64, 191.

<sup>921</sup> Palatine Garai received the castle in pledge a year earlier after he redeemed it from Hening Lessel for 8.000 florins. DL 10202. ZsO. IV. 1944.

<sup>922</sup> The market town of Zavar was pledged to Gregory Majtényi and John Újfalusi in 1435 for their faithful services rendered to Sigismund and Stibor of Stiboricz, and for guarding the castle of Csejte. DL 73105. The widow of John Frankopan and her son received Rmanj castle and the district of Lapac in pledge in 1437, because they spent money on guarding Croatian and Dalmatian castles after John's death. He was the *ispán* of Dalmatia-Croatia from 1432 until his death in 1436, and he held these castles under his authority due to his office. DL 88445. Engel, *Archontológia*, 26.

Vrbaški and Kozarac in Slavonia, but Sigismund did not pay him for more than three years.<sup>923</sup> The ruler came up with a solution by which he could not only pay the arrears of Blagai's salary but could secure his wages for the long run. He put in pledge the castles to Blagai with the condition that not only his arrears of wages would be cleared off by this, but the pledges would serve for his future salaries. Blagai was not the only one whose salary issue was sorted out by pledging; the artillery master's, John of Reichenau's case was already discussed.<sup>924</sup> Besides him Frederick Scharfenecki's and Eberhard Cliber's examples can be mentioned. Scharfenecki received a castle and a town for his faithful service and salary,<sup>925</sup> while the royal *familiaris*' Cliber's wages were secured for two years by pledging certain mining chambers to him.<sup>926</sup>

### Travel related expenditures

A different type of service, which was remunerated sometimes by pledges, was accompanying the ruler in his travels. After he was elected King of the Romans, Sigismund was often on the way due to various political issues related to the Holy Roman Empire, the Czech lands or the Catholic Church.<sup>927</sup> He embodied the archetype of the *rex ambulans* (traveling king) covering huge distances in the continent, traveling as far as England, France or Constantinople. From 1412, he was frequently on the road until his death, spending almost fifteen years out of Hungary, out of which six were without returning a single time to the country.<sup>928</sup> During these travels, he was accompanied by a large entourage of people, among them councilors and familiars of the king, barons, churchmen various dignitaries, noblemen, etc.<sup>929</sup> There are various reports on the size of the traveling Sigismund's retinue, which rarely consisted of less than 300 men rather this number

<sup>923</sup> Blagai's arrears of salary were 1.600 florins, and if he was paid 500 florin a year than this sum had to be more than three years payment. DL 66578.

<sup>924</sup> See footnote 830.

<sup>925</sup> DL 200390 ZsO.II. 3471.

<sup>926</sup> DL 249918. Wenzel, *Magyarország bányászatának*, 359. 359

<sup>927</sup> Enikő Csukovits, "Egy nagy utazás résztvevői: Zsigmond király római kísérete" [The participants of a great journey: King Sigismund's retinue in Rome], in *Tanulmányok Borsa Iván tiszteletére* [Studies in honor of Iván Borsa], ed. Enikő Csukovits (Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltár, 1998), 11.

<sup>928</sup> Kondor, *The Ginger fox's*, 59-60. Péter E. Kovács, *Zsigmond király Sienában* [King Sigismund in Siena] (Budapest: Corvina, 2014), 10.

<sup>929</sup> Péter E. Kovács, "Zsigmond császár megkoronázása Rómában" [The coronation of Emperor Sigismund in Rome] *Századok* 143 No.6 (2009): 1376. Understandably, the retinue mostly consisted of younger people, as they had greater endurance and were more willing to take on such long journey. E. Kovács, *Zsigmond király Sienában*, 46. This was also the case with Sigismund's most important barons, only the younger ones have turned up at the ruler's side on these travels. Kondor, *The Ginger fox's*, 66.

often surpassed 1000 people.<sup>930</sup> Traveling in the Middle Ages was an expensive enterprise, and it made no difference if a ruler or someone else was traveling. This was the true for Sigismund too, who on top of putting up the money for the travel costs, had to provide a regular salary for the barons, noblemen and his *familiars* traveling with him.<sup>931</sup> Planning the journey in a way to be shorter and more importantly choosing routes which led through allied territories could decrease the costs significantly.<sup>932</sup> Traveling through the lands of the allies meant that the local lords, or the settlements visited by the traveling king covered some costs of the travels. Usually this took form in providing accommodation and food for the ruler and his entourage,<sup>933</sup> but it could also happen that on top of this the ruler received a regular payment from the hosts. From the many journeys of Sigismund,<sup>934</sup> the ones in the Italian Peninsula are the most studied, and among these his visit and long stay in Siena is the most thoroughly researched. Sigismund, in his way to Rome for the coronation, spent 288 days in Siena between July 1432 and April 1433. The town was very generous with the distinguished guest as aside of providing accommodation they paid the wages of Sigismund's soldiers, supplied him with 70 or 100 florins monthly and paid the food of his men and soldiers.<sup>935</sup> The costs were immense; it was estimated that the town spent around 120.000 golden florins on Sigismund's and his retinue's long stay in the town.<sup>936</sup> Nonetheless, seemingly, all this money spent on their need was not enough, since members of the king's entourage often had to borrow money, put their valuables in pledge or had to undertake some extra work. The cause

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<sup>930</sup> Most probably it was the largest when he travelled to Rome for his imperial coronation. During this journey he was reported having an entourage of 1.200 people in Piacenza, 1.500 in Siena, around 1.000-1.500 in Rome. In the 1410s when he endeavored to end the Western Schism, his retinue was mentioned consisting of 400-1.500 people. In his visit to England in 1416 he was escorted by around 1.000-1.500 people. Attila Bárány, "Zsigmond király 1416-os angliai kísérete" [The entourage of King Sigismund in his 1416 England visit] *Aetas* 20, No.3 (2004): 5. Csukovits, *Egy nagy utazás*, 12. Péter E. Kovács, "Ceremónia és politika. Zsigmond bevonulásai Itáliában 1431–1433" [Ceremony and Politics. The Ceremonial Entrées of Sigismund in Italy 1431–1433] *Történelmi Szemle* 55 No. 3 (2013): 355, 358. E. Kovács, *Zsigmond császár megkoronázása*, 1358.

<sup>931</sup> E. Kovács, *Zsigmond király Sienában*, 127,129.

<sup>932</sup> Brigitta, Szanka. "Luxemburgi Zsigmond utazásainak gyakorlata az 1414. év példáján keresztül" [Sigismund of Luxemburg's Travels through the Example of 1414] *Belvedere Meridionale* 3 (2015): 91. Péter E. Kovács. "Zsigmond császár Gubbiónban" *Aetas* 23 No. 1 (2008): 58-59.

<sup>933</sup> Csukovits, *Egy nagy utazás*, 16. Kovács E., Péter. " 'A szent koronára! Ez kedvemre telik': Zsigmond császár Luccában" ["On the Holy Crown! I Like this": Emperor Sigismund in Lucca] *Századok* 141 No.2 (2007): 364.

<sup>934</sup> On his travel to France and England see: Sándor Csernus, "Zsigmond és a Hunyadiak a középkori francia történetírásban" [Sigismund and the Hunyadies in the medieval French historiography] *Századok* 132, No. 1 (1998), 65-86. Attila Bárány, "Zsigmond király angliai látogatása" [King Sigismund's visit to England] *Századok* 143, No. 2 (2009).

<sup>935</sup> Besides these, Sigismund had other funds at his disposal during his visit of Siena. E. Kovács, *Zsigmond király Sienában*, 59, 70, 80-84.

<sup>936</sup> *Ibid.*, 79, 84.



for the shortages in funds could easily be that their lord, the king could not pay their wages in time. He himself suffered likewise from the financial difficulties which he tried to alleviate frequently by pledging.<sup>937</sup>

There is a pledging which can be directly linked to Sigismund's travel in Italy and his visit to Siena. In 1435, Paul Wolfurt received in pledge a market town and two villages of Pozsony County, because he lent money to the ruler and because he accompanied Sigismund to Siena and to other Italian towns. On his way back, in Ptuj (Pettau), while he was on assignment, he got caught and was held captive by some local lords and set free only for a certain amount of money. This amount was also calculated in the sum of the pledging.<sup>938</sup> Stephen Frankopan also accompanied the king in his travels in 1434 and a year earlier in the Holy Roman Empire, in Lombardy, Tuscany, Rome, and in other parts of Italy. His services were rewarded by increasing the value of an earlier pledging by the sum of his expenses.<sup>939</sup> There is also an earlier example, from the time of the Council of Konstanz. Sigismund confirmed the pledging of Steničnjak castle to Frederick II of Celje because he spent significant sums on elevating his royal dignity in the Holy Roman Empire and especially in Konstanz. Furthermore, since in the earlier charter of pledging the castle to Frederick was sealed with the secret seal, the king granted him the secret seal to have the same degree of power as the great seal.<sup>940</sup> The reason for this was that between 1414 and 1419 the traveling Sigismund did not have his pending great seal with him, that is why he used the red secret seal instead.<sup>941</sup>

Besides traveling with the ruler, lending money for his travel expenses was also sometimes remunerated with pledges. On 11 September 1431 he borrowed 550 florins from Stephen Rozgonyi in Augsburg. In the following day he was in Landsberg, thus presumably the lent money was related to meet his travel related outlays.<sup>942</sup> The loan was not paid off, but instead the value of an earlier pledging was increased by this sum.<sup>943</sup> The same Stephen Rozgonyi received royal authorization to redeem for himself a certain market town and royal villages of Heves County in

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<sup>937</sup> It happened often that members of Sigismund's retinue pawned their own horses while they were in Siena. Ibid., 127, 130, 162.

<sup>938</sup> DL 12717.

<sup>939</sup> DL 33314. E. Kovács, *Zsigmond király Sienában*, 84. E. Kovács, *Zsigmond császár megkoronázása Rómában*, 1380.

<sup>940</sup> DL 34052. ZsO. V. 450.

<sup>941</sup> Kondor, *The Ginger fox's*, 35-36.

<sup>942</sup> Engel, *Királyok és királynék itineráriumi*, 127.

<sup>943</sup> DL 12412.

1435 partly because he lent 700 florins to Sigismund in Basel.<sup>944</sup> A year later, while Sigismund was on his way to Bohemia, he borrowed 3.333 florins from Ladislaus Garai in Bratislava. The castle of Voćin (Körös) and the *castellum* of Mykola were already given in pledge to Ladislaus, and the king decided to secure the loan by adding this amount of money to the value of the pledging.<sup>945</sup>

### Construction costs and wedding presents

In the second part of his reign, Sigismund began to spend less and less time in Buda and started to reside much more in Bratislava. Besides the town's political and economic importance, Bratislava had such a favorable location that it was easier for Sigismund to travel to the Czech lands and to the Holy Roman Empire. For all these Sigismund chose Bratislava as his new primary residence but without diminishing entirely Buda's role as the capital of the kingdom. Creating his new seat there meant that constructions of large magnitude were carried out on Bratislava castle. The constructions began in the early 1420s with improving the castle's fortification and from the 1430s these were focused on transforming the Romanesque citadel into a gothic palace. The expenses were gathered from different funds: a mint was set up in the town for this purpose, special levies were issued, the bequest of a town convicted was spent on the constructions, and lastly pledges helped to cover the remaining expenditures.<sup>946</sup> The *ispánok* of Pozsony County, George and Stephen Rozgonyi were entrusted with the supervision of the construction works; when funds were depleted they put up the needed sums for the continuation of the works. In 1430, they received in pledge the castle of Šintava with its appurtenances because they spent 7.403 florins on the constructions in Bratislava. However, this sum was on top of the earlier sums which they spent on

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<sup>944</sup> DL 12725.

<sup>945</sup> DL 37598. Sigismund continued to put in pledge royal domains while he was travelling on the continent. Possibly sometimes he concluded pledge transactions during his travels to cover his growing travel related expenses. Some random examples of charters of pledge issued during his journeys: DL 11300, 12574, 94474, etc.

<sup>946</sup> The revenues of the newly founded mint were allocated to the Rozgonyi brothers. Boglárka Weisz, "A pozsonyi kamara felállítása és működése a Zsigmond korban" [The foundation of the Bratislava mint and its functioning during Sigismund's reign], in *Veretek, utak, katonák. Gazdaságtörténeti tanulmányok a magyar középkorról* [Coins, roads, soldiers. Economic historical studies on medieval Hungary], ed. István Kádas– Renáta Skorka– Boglárka Weisz (Budapest: MTA BTK TTI, 2018), 18, 26. Kondor, *The Ginger fox's*, 160-161. Papp, *Die neue Residenz*, 239-240. Skorka, *Pozsony gazdasági szerepe*, 433-434.

this and on other royal issues.<sup>947</sup> Next year they spent a further 1.600 florins on the constructions, which was calculated in the value of an earlier pledging.<sup>948</sup> Although the Rozgonyies continued to take royal domains in pledge after it,<sup>949</sup> this was the last mentioning of the lent sums which were spent on the construction works.

A different area of expenses for which pledges were used occasionally by Sigismund were the wedding presents. This, just as rewarding the rendered services with pledges was common in the period, practiced by German and Polish ruler likewise.<sup>950</sup> The first such known instance is from 1410. Then, by the occasion of John Garai's marriage with Hedwig of Masovia Sigismund wanted to present them with 12.000 as dowry (*dos*) and bridal gift (*res parafarnales*). Instead donating this amount of money to the couple, the king gave in pledge the castle of Tállya, the estate of Tokaj and a village.<sup>951</sup> Before the wedding Tállya was held by John's father, palatine Nicholas Garai *pro honore*, who might have influenced the king in his decision of putting in pledge this and not another castle.<sup>952</sup> Sigismund proceeded in a similar way when Louis II, Duke of Brzeg married Elisabeth, the daughter of Frederick V, Burgrave of Nuremberg in 1418. Then the castle and the town of Trenčín were given in pledge to them as trousseau (*Heimsteuer*) and dowry (*Ehegeld*). This time he was even more generous than earlier since the value of the pledging reached 32.000 florins (40.000 Rhenish guilders), and it was stipulated that the pledge should provide the couple with a yearly 3.200 florins (4.000 Rhenish guilders).<sup>953</sup>

From more than 250 Sigismund's transaction of pledge only about a smaller part can be known with greater certainty how the money of the transaction was spent or what rendered services were covered by them. This is due to the fragmented source material and because the charters of transactions only occasionally denote the area on which the money would be spend. Frequently, only the various allusion of the sources and the circumstances of the pledges are the only clues left which might provide answer to this question. Based on all these, Sigismund used pledging on a

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<sup>947</sup> "...*ultra omnium pecuniarum summas per nostram maiestatem ad labores nostros Posenienses et ad alia facta nostra sollicitationi et directioni ipsorum commissa...*" DL 24522. Szűcs, *Középkori építészet*, 322, 329.

<sup>948</sup> DL 12410.

<sup>949</sup> See page: 162-163.

<sup>950</sup> Landwehr, *Die Verpfändung*, 158. Ludwig, *Besteuerung und Verpfändung*, 126, 130.

<sup>951</sup> DL 11225. ZsO. IX. 235.

<sup>952</sup> Engel, *Archontológia*, 438-439.

<sup>953</sup> DF 287090.

wide area from waging wars to travels, to remunerate services or to solve temporarily liquidity problems just as the other contemporary rulers did.

## Conclusion

Putting in pledge royal domains to complement the ordinary revenues was a known and practiced method before Sigismund of Luxembourg's rule in Hungary. However, his ascension to the throne marked a new era, as the volume of pledging reached heights unknown before his reign and presumably even after his death. In late medieval Europe, it was common that rulers struggling with financial difficulties resorted to this fundraising method, especially in the countries neighboring Hungary. Indeed, in Central Europe, pledging was wide-spread, so much so that it historians have even proposed that an entire era should be named after it.<sup>954</sup> Thus, it was not unparalleled at all that Sigismund used pledgings to put money up when quickly was needed. He originated from a dynasty where it was a kind of family tradition to raise money this way,<sup>955</sup> and it became an indispensable element of his financial policy, as he used pledging in all the polities where he ruled. In this, Hungary was no exception. Indeed, in Hungary in particular the conditions were optimal, since as a result of the efficient policy exercised by his predecessors, the Angevin rulers, to preserve the integrity of the royal demesne, Sigismund had plenty of resources that he could use for this purpose. No wonder that most probably he managed to pledge the most in his Hungarian kingdom, so much that his "achievements" in this field should be regarded significant also in a larger Central European context.

Already for securing his claim to the Hungarian throne, Sigismund had to resort to this method, as the pledging of the Váh-Danube interfluve played a crucial part in this process. Later,

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<sup>954</sup> See footnote 44.

<sup>955</sup> It was already mentioned that John the Blind put in pledge so many castles in Bohemia that when his son Charles returned from France to this country, then he could hardly find a royal castle that was not pledged. Nonetheless, he continued his father's policy in the Holy Roman Empire, where he became one of the rulers with the most pledges. His successor Wenceslas followed his footsteps when he began to pledge the possessions of the church in the Czech lands. Only Charles IV's younger brother John Henry, the Margrave of Moravia was renowned for his economical financial policy as a result of which he died as a rich person and was able to leave considerable wealth to his offspring. His elder son Jobst was not this successful in finances as a Moravian Margrave, especially in the second part of his reign he had to pledge heavily. Meznik, *Die Finanzen*, 70-74, 84. The members of the dynasty had extensive pledging practice as counts of Luxembourg, estimated to a total of 638.000 florins between the years 1250–1354. Reichert, *Landesherrschaft*, 353.

as a consequence of his generous alienation policy in the first years of his governing — when countless royal domains were granted away —, he had to turn to pledging partly out of necessity. He was unwilling to alienate more royal possessions, therefore he used pledging as one of the most economical ways of rewarding the services of his adherents. The charters' phrasing concerning the need for pledging were often vague enough to allow Sigismund to spend the money as he wished, nonetheless, most likely the funds were spent on military costs, travel and construction expenses, and on keeping up the courtly pomp – these were the primary areas where the money of the pledgings was needed.

Sigismund cannot be considered to be poor among the late medieval rulers of the Kingdom of Hungary, and his revenues were not negligible even on a larger European scale, nonetheless, apparently his expenses were higher than his ordinary incomes. Therefore, he used all sorts of extraordinary incomes and even if he was able to raise high sums from the extraordinary tax and the levy imposed on the church, pledging still played a major role in his finances. This statement is proved by the 86 pledged castles, by his more than 250 transactions and more than a million florins gained through these. His reputation as a bad debtor was widely known not only in the country but also outside its borders; nonetheless, remarkably, he still managed to find lenders.<sup>956</sup> It was much easier to find such persons if they knew that they would receive parcels of royal land for temporary possession in exchange for their money. Pledging provided Sigismund above all with a flow of liquid cash and with great financial flexibility, since with its help he could anticipate his regular revenues.

Apart from its initial importance in gaining the throne of the kingdom, the significance of pledging among the royal revenues grew gradually and reached its peak in the last two decades of Sigismund's life. The reason behind this trend could be multiple. The Hussite wars, the reemerging Ottoman conflict, the building and the upkeep of the chain of castles at the southern frontier all played a major role in this, along with Sigismund's intention to bestow his wife with royal lands, partly via pledging. Sigismund's charters of pledge also show signs of smaller developments during the course of his reign as their form and content became increasingly purpose-oriented with the passing of time. In his earlier documents it was not unusual that the royal order calling the

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<sup>956</sup> *The Cambridge Economic History* 3, 516.

inhabitants of the pledge to obedience was included in the charter of the transaction itself.<sup>957</sup> Later, the general practice was that independent charters were issued for the transaction, for instituting into the pledge, and for the order which demanded obedience from the population. Moreover, a new element was added to the charters of pledge; from 1426 at the latest, some of these charters contained a clause which authorized the pledge holders, that should an extraordinary tax be levied, they could collect money from the inhabitants of the pledge. The development was unfinished however, since for unknown reasons, Sigismund's charters of pledge in Hungary did not touch upon the issue of letting royal troops in the pledged castles in war time, whereas in his heirs' documents this came up.

The hundreds of pledge transactions concluded during the fifty years of Sigismund's reign created a large network of pledge holders. It needs to be stressed that only a part of them took royal lands in pledge for loans; it was also common that services already performed or to be offered in the future were rewarded with pledges. Only a limited number of foreigners were involved in Sigismund's business of pledging, the overwhelming majority were represented by residents of the country. Péter E. Kovács phrased it aptly that Sigismund could raise loans with incredible ease and charm.<sup>958</sup> It should be added to this that he was at least as talented in finding pledge holders. The group of the pledgees comprised almost all affluent strata of society, since it incorporated burghers, members of the lower and middle nobility, knights of his court, clergymen, royal *familiars*, barons, and aristocrats alike. However, the most important business partners who received the largest domains and provided the ruler with the highest amount of money were members of only a few wealthy and influential families and the royal consort, Barbara of Cilli. Additionally, a significant role was played in pledging by the new political elite raised by Sigismund from the ranks of the middling nobility.

Half a century of intensive pledging left a strong imprint on royal power. The granting away of large shares of the crown lands by Sigismund in his early years of rule already brought irreversible changes in the country's domain structure. He tried to slow down this process with a thrifty approach concerning the donations of the royal lands. Putting in pledge the royal domains and recovering only a fraction of them, however, led to the amplification of the previous trends.

<sup>957</sup> For example, Appony castle's charter of pledge. DL 7519. ZsO I. 1125.

<sup>958</sup> "Zsigmond hihetetlen könnyedséggel és bájjal szerzett kölcsönöket" Péter E. Kovács, *Hétköznapi élet Mátyás király korában* [Everyday life during King Matthias' reign] (Budapest, Corvina, 2008), 69.

The results proved to be severe and long lasting. The great landowner aristocracy emerged as a political factor that outweighed the royal authority, a process which ultimately led to crises in governing.

Possibly as a response to the more and more widespread practice of the pledging of crown lands in Central Europe, initiatives emerged whose aim was to confine this practice within certain boundaries. In Poland, as a consequence of the nobility's pressure, decrees prohibiting the pledging of royal domains were issued multiple times during the fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries.<sup>959</sup> Also in the Holy Roman Empire, a similar push emerged already in the first part of the fifteenth century, whose aim was to create a general inventory of the pledged *Reichsgüter* in order to be recovered for the crown. Later, another idea proposed that the ruler should keep the tax returns for redeeming the pledges.<sup>960</sup>

In Hungary, a regulation that endeavored to achieve either the restriction of pledging the royal possessions or their recovery was first adopted during Sigismund's rule. A decree was promulgated at the diet of Timișoara in 1397, prescribing that the previously pledged royal domains could be recovered without any compensation. However, as later proved to be the case, the decree was issued mainly in order to take back the pledges from the Kaplai family.<sup>961</sup> The question was brought up again after the death of Sigismund, possibly not entirely independently from his extensive pledging practice. Just like Sigismund had to give his consent to a set of terms prepared by a group of the nobility, also his successor, King Albert from the House of Habsburg had to do this in order to be crowned king of the country. One of the terms demanded from the prospective ruler was to pledge the properties (rights) of the crown solely with the accord of the barons and the prelates.<sup>962</sup> Later, in May 1439, a diet was convoked in Buda, where the king had to issue a decree containing similar content to his pre-election promises. A major difference to the promises concerned exactly the issue of pledging. The decree's sixteenth paragraph prescribed that

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<sup>959</sup> Ludwig, *Besteuerung und Verpfändung*, 113-117, 121. Matuszewski, *Die Verpfändung der Krongüter*, 52-53.

<sup>960</sup> Isenmann, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 253, 265.

<sup>961</sup> See pages: 72, 154-155.

<sup>962</sup> "...venditiones vel impignorationes iurium regalium et corone nostrorum, si quis necessitate regni urgente facere volerimus absque consilio prelatorum et baronum consiliariorumque nostrorum predictorum non faciemus..." The document was issued without a date. According to Wilhelm Wostry, who first published the text, it can be dated to around 17 and 31 December 1437. Wilhelm Wostry, *König Albrecht II. (1437-39)*, Vol.I (Prague: Rohlíček und Sievers, 1906), 147. Elemér Mályusz, "A magyar rendi állam Hunyadi korában." [Estates of the realm in Hungary in the time of Hunyadi] *Századok* 91 (1957): 50.

royal properties could not be pledged at all, not even with the consent of the barons and prelates as it had been stated earlier.<sup>963</sup> The middling nobility stood behind this major shift of emphasis, under whose pressure the whole decree was issued.<sup>964</sup>

The *Tripartitum*, a collection of customary laws of the Kingdom of Hungary, compiled by Stephen Werbőczy, a spokesman of the middling nobility, raised a strong objection against pledging in general, as the author considered it damnable and contrary to salvation.<sup>965</sup> Although he finished his work much later (1514) than the events happening in King Albert's time, presumably this sentiment was present among the ranks of the nobility earlier as well. Despite the decree of 1439, putting in pledge royal domains continued after Albert's death as if nothing had happened, and when the question became more pressing, then it was again brought forward. The first article of the royal decree issued at the diet held in 1514 begins with the following lines:

“Then, it is known to all what great and frequent dangers attended and arose in the affairs of the royal majesty and the whole country by the pledging and temporary alienation of the real and just revenues of the Holy Crown of the kingdom to diverse persons, as was done hitherto.”<sup>966</sup>

Therefore, the decree stipulated the return of half of the pledged royal rights and possessions with the condition that if there was debt leftover, then the ruler had to clear it off. It further prohibited to put in pledge royal revenues without the approval of the royal council. The most drastic measures regarding royal pledging were taken in 1518, at another diet, this time held in Bács. The middling nobility, striving to create a solid financial foundation for organizing the

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<sup>963</sup> *Perpetuas vero venditiones vel impignorationes iurium regalium et corone nec cum consilio, neque sine consilio quoruncunque faciemus.* Vera Bácskai, György Bónis, Ferenc Döry, ed. *Decreta Regni Hungariae: 1301-1457. Gesetze und Verordnungen Ungarns* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976), 291. For further information about this paragraph, see: János M. Bak, Pál Engel, Paul B. Harvey, James Ross Sweeney, ed. *Decreta regni mediaevalis hungariae 1301-1457. The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary 1301-1457.* (Salt Lake City: C. Schlacks Jr., 1992), vol. 2, 213-214. Mályusz, *A magyar rendi állam*, 72.

<sup>964</sup> Engel, *The realm*, 279-280. Mályusz, *A magyar rendi állam*, 71-73.

<sup>965</sup> “*Et quanquam iura possessionaria impignoratitia nedum possidere aut gubernare damnabile salutique contrarium verum etiam aliquid de illis scribere fomidabile videatur...*” János Bak, Péter Banyó, Martin Rady, *The laws of medieval Hungary*, vol. V. *The customary law of the renowned Kingdom of Hungary: A work in three parts, the "Tripartitum" = Tripartitum opus iuris consuetudinarii inclyti regni Hungarie per Stephanum de Werbewcz editum* (Salt Lake City: Charles Schlacks, Jr., 2006.), 157-158 (first part, chapter eighty).

<sup>966</sup> “*Item quanta incommoda et sepe numero pericula in factis regie maiestatis et tocuis regni sui, ex inscriptione, et ad tempus alienacione verorum et iustorum sacre regni corone proventuum diversis hominibus hactenus facta, subsequuta et illata fuerint, omnibus plane constat.*” János M. Bak, Péter Banyó, Martyn Rady, ed. *Decreta regni mediaevalis Hungarie, The laws of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary 1490-1526*, Series I, Vol. 4 (Budapest: CEU Dept. of Medieval Studies, 2012), 177-179 (translation quoted).



defense against the Ottoman threat managed to secure an even more explicit ruling on royal pledges. As a result, the seventh article of the diet's decree ordered no less than the return of all pledged royal possessions and rights.<sup>967</sup> This time, the decision was not without consequences, as the palatine and the Archbishop of Esztergom complied with the decree.<sup>968</sup> By this time, there were not many pledges that initially were given by King Sigismund,<sup>969</sup> still these issues tackled by the diets were symptoms of a problem deeply rooted in his rule. Although he was not the one who established royal pledging in Hungary, his contribution to making pledging an almost indispensable element of royal finances in the times to come was immense.

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<sup>967</sup> “*Ita tamen; ut omnes proventus regii (quocunque nomine censeantur) una cum civitatibus, et aliis bonis regiae majestatis in arenda, vel pignore existentibus, et habitis, per quoslibet, extunc, et defacto remittantur.*” Gyula Nagy et al. ed, *Corpus Iuris Hungarici. Magyar törvénytár, 1000-1526 évi törvényczikkek* [The laws of Hungary, the decrees of the years between 1000-1526] (Budapest: Franklin társulat, 1899), 756.

<sup>968</sup> Bakóc gave back the pledged town of Esztergom. András Kubinyi, “A Jagelló-kori magyar állam” [The Hungarian state of the Jagiellonian era] *Történelmi Szemle* vol. 48, nr. 3-4 (2006): 306. Norbert C. Tóth, “Bakóc Tamás kölcsönei a királynak” [Thomas Bakóc’s loans to the king] in *Hadi és más nevezetes történetek: Tanulmányok Veszprémy László tiszteletére* [Military and other notable stories. Studies in honor of László Veszprémy], ed. Katalin Mária (Budapest: HM Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum, 2018), 82-83.

<sup>969</sup> For example, Vladislaus II had also turned frequently to pledging when he needed money urgently. József Főgel collected data about his pledgings. József Főgel, *II. Ulászló udvartartása (1490-1516)* [The household of Vladislaus II] (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1913), 14-15.

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## Appendix

### List of the pledgings

<i>Date</i> <sup>970</sup>	<i>Domain</i> <sup>971</sup>	<i>Sum</i> <sup>972</sup>	<i>Pledgee</i> <sup>973</sup>	<i>Reference</i>
1385	Váh - Danube interfluve		the Moravian Margraves	CDM XI, 331
1386 <sup>974</sup>	Castle of (Apáca)Somló, the estate of Pápa (Veszprém County)	8.200	baron Nicholas Zámbó, former master of treasury	DL 100237
before 09-07-1388 <sup>975</sup>	Castle of Füzér (Abaúj)	3.000	baron Leusták Jolsvai, master of doorkeepers	DL 7417
31-01-1388	The village of Chynorany pertaining to castle Topoľčany (Nytitra)	833 <sup>976</sup>	magisters John and Ladislaus Pásztó(h)i	DL 96613
19-04-1388	The castle of Bernstein (Vas)	1.333 <sup>977</sup>	John Kanizsai, archbishop of Esztergom, Nicholas	DL 7385, 7383

<sup>970</sup> The dates included in this column are the ones of issuing the charters of the pledgings (conclusion of the contracts). However, due to the fragmentary nature of the sources the precise date of concluding the transactions are often not known, that is why in such cases the data of the column represents the earliest piece of information about the pledging, or the most feasible date.

<sup>971</sup> Since in the sources often all the pertaining villages, estates, towns of the pledged royal possession are listed at length in the chart only the primary estates are indicated, e.g. the name of the castles but without their appurtenances. Estates' names are italicized when the transaction was not a new pledging but the king raised loan on the basis of an earlier transaction.

<sup>972</sup> All the sums are given in Hungarian golden florin.

<sup>973</sup> The titles of the pledge holders are the ones given by the charters of the pledgings, and only those have been included which represented concrete functions (hence adjectives as *fidelis*, *nobilis*, *dilectus* are omitted). In case of many titles only the most important ones are listed. Furthermore, not all the pledgee's names are represented but only those who lent the sums to the king or who performed any kind of services for him which were rewarded with the pledgings. In cases when only the pledge holder's personal name and his function are given by the source, then these persons were identified and represented with their full names.

<sup>974</sup> For the dating see: Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 151. The document of the transaction is missing. The information regarding this pledging is from the transaction of 22 June 1389.

<sup>975</sup> In this charter Jolsvai only gave the pledged royal castle to his wife, without shedding light on the date of the pledging.

<sup>976</sup> 2.000 florins paid in groats: *quemlibet florenum per sexaginta grossos computando*. The florins of 60 groats were equivalent with 240 pennies. Pál Engel, "A 14. századi magyar pénztörténet néhány kérdése" [Some problems of 14th-century Hungarian monetary history] *Századok* 124, no.1 (1990): 67. Thus 2.000 florins of 60 groats worth 833 golden florins.

<sup>977</sup> 3.200 florins paid in groats, which was equivalent with 1.333 golden florins. On the exchange rate see the footnote above. Ten days later Sigismund pledged the castle to Kanizsai again, without mentioning this earlier deal. However, it is certain that this transaction was not only a promise, because on 4 May 1388, Kanizsai was instituted into the castle. ZsO. I. 530.

			Kanizsai, ispán of Sopron, etc. counties	
29-04-1388	The castle of Bernstein (Vas)	2.400 <sup>978</sup>	archbishop John Kanizsai, baron Nicholas Kanizsai, master of the treasury	DL 7389
before June 1388 <sup>979</sup>	The market town of Moldava nad Bodvou (Torna)	4.000	baron John Kaplai judge royal and his brother Dezső, judge of the Cumans of the queen	Wenzel, <i>Diósgyőr</i> , 42
09-07-1388	The castle of Vučjak Kamenski (Pozsega)	781 <sup>980</sup>	Nicholas Treutel, ispán of Pozsega County	DL 70822
08-12-1388	The castle of Boldogkő (Abaúj)	8.838	baron Peter Cudar, former ban of Slavonia	DL 7454
29-12-1388	The village of Koson (Bereg)	1.250 <sup>981</sup>	Dominic Dobó Ruszkai	DL 71900
22-06-1389	The queenly market town of Segesd	2.571 <sup>982</sup>	baron Nicholas Zámbó, former master of treasury	DL 100237
around 20-08-1389 <sup>983</sup>	The castle of Oponice (Nyitra)	1.000	master Dezső Kaplai, knight of the royal court	DL 7519
14-09-1389	The village of Hodoş (Temes)	2.000	baron Stephen Losonci, ban of Szörény	Ortvay, <i>Temes</i> I. 181 <sup>984</sup>
1390 <sup>985</sup>	The castle of Cheresig (Bihar)	1.333	baron Stephen Losonci and his wife	DF 286391

<sup>978</sup> 5.600 florins are given in the charter, of course the 3.200 florins loan lent ten days earlier should be counted here, thus 2.400 florins was the value of the credit provided by the Kanizsais this day.

<sup>979</sup> The initial pledging must have occurred before June 1388, when the previous owners of the town protested against giving it away. ZsO I. 619. On 10 April 1392 the Kaplai brothers gave back a village to Sigismund who in exchange confirmed that Moldava nad Bodvou was pledged to them earlier.

<sup>980</sup> 1.000 florins of 32 groats. The 32 groats worth 128 pennies, thus 1.000 florins was equivalent with 781 golden florins. Engel, *A 14. századi magyar pénztörténet*, 128.

<sup>981</sup> 3.000 florins, *florenos per centum denarios computando*. This year a golden florin worth 240 pennies, thus the village was pledged for 1.250 golden florins. Engel, *A 14. századi magyar pénztörténet*, 52.

<sup>982</sup> The costs of the refurbishment of the castle carried out by Zámbó were counted in addition to the 2.571 florins loan.

<sup>983</sup> This is not the pledge charter but a royal order to the inhabitants of the estate of Oponice castle to obey in everything to the pledge holder.

<sup>984</sup> The charter of the transaction has not survived, only transcriptions of it exist.

<sup>985</sup> For the dating see: Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 125. Only a charter dated to 1405 informs us about this transaction, when Stephen Losonci had already passed and his widow was involved in a series of domain exchange with the ruler. Bánffy. I. 430. Most probably, Losonci held the castle in pledge before it was donated to him.

26-11-1390	The village of Ostrovany pertaining to the castle of Šarišský hrad (Sáros)	133 <sup>986</sup>	Peter Szeretvai nobleman ( <i>vir nobilis</i> )	DL 7655
around 25-07-1390 <sup>987</sup>	The castles of Lockenhaus and Sárvár, and the market towns of Csepreg and <i>Zigeth</i> (Sopron)		archbishop John Kanizsai, baron Nicholas Kanizsai, master of the treasury, Stephen Kanizsai, young man of the royal court	DL 7633
before 21-12-1391 <sup>988</sup>	The villages of Sedlice, Miklósvágása and <i>Szopotnicza</i> (Sáros)	600	Gál Szécsi, knight of the court	DL 71239
1391	Vinica castle (Varasd)	6.000	palatine Stephen Lackfi	Engel, <i>Királyi hatalom</i> , 169.
before 12-03-1392 <sup>989</sup>	The two castles of Kőszeg (Vas)	4.400	Ellerbach <sup>990</sup>	DL 7772
24-04-1392	The castles of Litva, Rajec and Hričov (Trencsén)	3.000	Dezső Kaplai, judge of the Cumans of the queen	DL 7786
before 1393 <sup>991</sup>	The castle of Červený Kameň (Pozsony)		Ulrich Wolfurt	ZsO II. 1218
around 22-01-1393 <sup>992</sup>	The village of Veseuş (Küküllő)	1.100	Gregory Bethleni	DL 29744, 62753

<sup>986</sup> 400 florins, *florenos per centum denarios computando*. The charter does not say that the currency was golden florins, nor that the pennies were *denarius novus* (CNH 121) introduced that year. Therefore, it must have been the old, the so-called Saracen penny (CNH 120) which was exchanged at a rate of 300 pennies = 1 golden florin. Based on this currency the 400 florins worth 133 golden florins. On the *denarius novus* and the Saracen penny see: Arthur Pohl, “Zsigmond király pénzverése (1387-1437)” [Coinage under King Sigismund (1387-1437)] *Numizmatikai Közlöny* 66-67 (1967-1968): 46. Ulrich, “*Geldpolitik und Geldverkehr*, 123-126. Gábor Mikó, “Zsigmond király 1411. évi rendelete a kamarahaszna és a tized behajtásáról” [King Sigismund’s decree on collecting the *lucrum camere* and the tithe from the year 1411] *Századok* 146, no. 2 (2012): 342-343.

<sup>987</sup> This is only a letter of institution (*litterae introductoria*), more details of the transaction as the exact date, the sum, etc. were not included in it.

<sup>988</sup> On 21 December 1391 Sigismund donated the villages to Gál, before this he held the villages in pledge.

<sup>989</sup> On 12 March 1392, the king authorized Nicholas Garai to redeem the castles pledged to Ellerbach without providing further information about the date of the pledging.

<sup>990</sup> The charter does not specify which member of the Ellerbach of Monyókerék was the pledge holder. It might be that the brothers John and Bertold, the *familiares* of the king, held it together. Engel, *Archontológia*, 486, 488.

<sup>991</sup> In 1393 the castle was under Wolfurt’s authority, but it is not known when was it given in pledge precisely. ZsO I. 2867. For more see: Engel, *Archontológia*, 462.

<sup>992</sup> This is only a letter of instituting Bethleni into the village.

before 11-09-1393 <sup>993</sup>	The villages of Močenok ( <i>Chanok</i> ), Blatné, Čataj, Poľný Kesov and Topoľníky (Pozsony)		baron Thomas (Temelin) Szentgyörgyi <sup>994</sup>	DL 7893
10-09-1393	The castle of Súča (Trencsén)	3.000	baron Stibor of Stiboricz, <i>ispán</i> of Pozsony County	DL 7892
24-04-1394	The domains of Nicholas Zámbo situated in Csallóköz <sup>995</sup>	1.200	John Kanizsai, Archbishop of Esztergom	DL 7938
before 1395 <sup>996</sup>	The village of Tarpa (Bereg)	1.000	George Kusaly	DL 8048
before 05-11-1395 <sup>997</sup>	The estate of Rača (Körös)	8.000 <sup>998</sup>	master Mikcs Prodavizi	DL 33776
19-04-1395	The villages of Bili Brig, Ratkovica, <i>Rohonch</i> (Pozsega) and Pišchia (Temes)	4.000	baron Nicholas Garai, ban of Dalmatia-Croatia, and his brother John	DL 8050
before 1396 <sup>999</sup>	The market town of Vinohragyiv (Ugocsa)		Baron Drag Bélteki, voivode of Moldavia and <i>ispán</i> of Máramaros	Sztáray I. 540.
20-05-1396	The castle of Vršatec (Trencsén)	3.000	baron Stibor of Stiboricz, Transylvanian voivode, and his brothers	DL 8158
09-07-1396	<i>The castle of Boldogkő (Abauj)</i>	2.000	<i>the widow and the sons of ban Peter Cudar</i>	DL 8170

<sup>993</sup> It was 11 September 1393 when Sigismund donated the villages to Szentgyörgyi that previously were pledged to him. The details of this transaction are not revealed by the charter.

<sup>994</sup> In the charter, he is called only baron (*magnificus*) without any further details. At the time of issuing the document in 1393 he held no baronial offices, but before that he served as judge royal (1385), ban of Dalmatia-Croatia (1384-1385), and master of treasury (1387-1382). Engel, *Archontológia*, 8, 24, 38.

<sup>995</sup> Veľký Meder (Komárom county).

<sup>996</sup> On 4 April 1395 Sigismund granted away the village, and in the document of the donation it is mentioned that the village was previously held in pledge by George Kusaly.

<sup>997</sup> A charter from 14 April 1406 mentions that Rača had been pledged to Mikcs Prodavizi earlier and left to his widow after his death. Prodavizi died in 1395, so the pledging contract must have been concluded prior to this date. Pál Engel, *Középkori magyar geneológia* [Medieval Hungarian genealogy]. Arcanum Digitéka, CD-ROM, Budapest, 2001.

<sup>998</sup> In October 1394 Sigismund promised in pledge the castle of Steničnjak to Mikcs Prodavizi for 3.000 florins, but Prodavizi never managed to get the possession under his authority. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 158. However, according to the document of the transaction Mikcs handed over the money (*tria milia florenorum auri maiestati nostre integraliter amministravit seu assignavit*). DL 34040. Therefore, it is possible that Rača was pledged for this relatively high sum because the 3.000 florins earlier paid were counted in too.

<sup>999</sup> Sigismund wanted to grant away the market town held in pledge by Drag, who refused to yield it until his loan to the king has not been repaid. The document does not reveal the details of the pledging.



before 01-06-1397 <sup>1000</sup>	The domains of Nicholas Szécsi: Boghiş (Középszolnok), Valea Lungă (Küküllő) and of Nicholas Marcali: Léta and Kokad (Bihar)	5.000	masters George, Stephen, John Kusalyi	DF 254821
15-04-1397	The village of Rusovce pertaining to castle Óvár (Moson)	1.400	master John Tompek Walbersdorfi and his sons	DL 73117
27-04-1397	The villages of Csabja, Battyán, Polgár (Fejér) and Zamárd (Somogy) all confiscated from Stephen Lackfi (Simontornyai)	3.000	George Kővágóörsi, castellan of Esztergom and his sons	DL 100278
01-06-1397	The castle of Solymár (Pilis), and the market town of Földvár (Tolna)		masters George, Stephen, John Kusalyi	DF 254821
03-06-1397	The villages of Csabja, Battyán, Polgár (Fejér) and Zamárd (Somogy)	2.800	master George Kővágóörsi, and his sons	DL 100279
01-08-1397	The castle of Orava (Árva) and 2.311 florins from the yearly tax of the 24 town of the Spiš region	23.115	Vladislaus II of Opole and his wife Euphemia of Masovia	Cod. Dipl. Sil. XXXI/22-23.p.
around 1398 <sup>1001</sup>	The castle of Hanigovce (Sáros), the market town of Stropkov and the village of Pozdišovce	6.000	Prokop Balicki, loyal nobleman	DL 8944
1398 <sup>1002</sup>	The castle of Đurđevac (Körös)	2.000 <sup>1003</sup>	palatine Detre Bebek	DF 33377
13-06-1398 <sup>1004</sup>	The yearly tax of 7.000 florins paid by Venice	14.000 <sup>1005</sup>	Dino Rapondi da Lucca, banker	Fejér X/2 736

<sup>1000</sup> In 1 June 1397 Sigismund swapped these estates for the castle of Solymár and the market town of Földvár, this is from where it is known that these estates had been in pledge prior to that date.

<sup>1001</sup> For the dating see: Engel, *Archontológia*, 453.

<sup>1002</sup> A charter from 1401 informs about the pledging. For more about its date: *Ibid.*, 426.

<sup>1003</sup> This sum was lent to Bebek by his *familiaris* for taking the castle in pledge from the king. This could be only a fracture of the whole sum, of which extent is not known precisely.

<sup>1004</sup> The dating is based on: ZsO I. 5365.

<sup>1005</sup> In 1381, the peace of Torino stipulated that Venice had to pay an annual 7.000 florins to the kings of Hungary. In the battle of Nicopolis John the Fearless, the successor of the Burgundian ducal throne fell in Ottoman captivity and was set free only for a huge ransom of 200.000 ducats. Sigismund promised to cover half of this sum and he planned to do this by pledging the 7.000 annual tax to Dino Rapondi, a merchant of Lucca, who played a crucial role in putting up the money for ransoming John. The transaction did not go the way Sigismund expected, since Venice refused to pay the tax from 1400, thus Dino possibly collected only 14.000 florins. Venice's refusal of paying the tax caused long debate with Hungary and Burgundy. For more on this long and very complicated story see: E. Kovács, *Zsigmond király és Velence*, 40-56. Bart Lambert, *The City, the Duke and Their Banker: The Rapondi Family and the Formation of the of the Burgundian State (1384-1430)*. Studies in European Urban History 7. (Turnhout: Brepols 2006), 113-120.

01-11-1398	The castle of Ozalj together with its district (Zágráb)	17.000 <sup>1006</sup>	Nicholas Frankopan count of Veglia, and his mother	DL 33980
before 1399 <sup>1007</sup>	The village of Haraszti (Pest)		The wife of Mircea the Elder, the Voivode of Wallachia	DL 8508
29-01-1399	The castle of Ozalj	24.000 <sup>1008</sup>	The widow and the daughter of baron Stephen Frankopan	DL 33285
around 17-04-1399 <sup>1009</sup>	The district of Rača (Körös)	2.000	Ursula Bebek	DL 34049
24-08-1399	The castle of Blatnica with the estates of Sučany and Béla (Turóc) and the yearly tax of the 24 town of the Spiš region is raised to 3.000 florins <sup>1010</sup>		Vladislaus II of Opole and his wife Euphemia of Masovia	Cod. Dipl. Sil. XXXI-22
before 11-06-1400 <sup>1011</sup>	The castle of Stadtschlaining (Vas)	4.000	George Tompek Oroszvári and Nicholas Szarka Pecöli	DL 100318
29-12-1400	The villages of Tăuții and Săsar with the toll (Szatmár)	1.000	baron George Jakcs Kusalyi master of treasury, and his brother master Stephen	DL 42838
before 1401 <sup>1012</sup>	The castle of Ostrý Kameň (Pozsony)		Hening Lessel, Austrian knight <sup>1013</sup>	Wenzel: <i>Stibor</i> 145
before 1401	The castle of Devín (Pozsony)	8.000 <sup>1014</sup>	Hening Lessel, Austrian knight	DL 10202

<sup>1006</sup> The currency is Venetian ducats which were roughly equivalent to the Hungarian golden florin. Lajos Huszár, "Pénzforgalom és pénzértékviszonyok Sopronban" [Money circulation and currency relations in Sopron] *Századok* 105 (1971): 1160.

<sup>1007</sup> Related to a perambulation of boundaries of Taksony village is mentioned that neighboring Haraszti is held in pledge from the king by the wife of the voivode.

<sup>1008</sup> This is not another loan raised on a pledging, but it is a new transaction with a different branch of the family. 24.000 florins are written in the charter, however the 17.000 sum of redemption should be counted in. Stephen Frankopan was Nicholas' uncle.

<sup>1009</sup> The district was held as a *honor* by the bans of Macsó, and the king ordered them to hand it over to the Ursula Bebek, to whom he gave in pledge.

<sup>1010</sup> The married couple gave back the castle of Orava to the king who in exchange gave them Blatnica in pledge.

<sup>1011</sup> The exact date of the pledging is unknown, but it can be assumed that it was before 11 June 1400, when the two pledgees concluded an agreement about inheriting the money of the pledging in case any of them dies. ZsO II. 335.

<sup>1012</sup> In 1411 Sigismund authorized Stibor of Stiborc to redeem the castles of Ostrý Kameň and Devín pledged to Lessel. In the agreement concluded between the magnates and Nicholas Garai in 1401 about the terms of releasing the king from the captivity, the castles are mentioned to be in foreign hands, very likely in the hands of Lessel. For more about this: Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 109; Engel, *Archontológia*, 308.

<sup>1013</sup> *Ladislaus Heryngh de Austria*. ZsO IV. 1944.

<sup>1014</sup> The sum of the transaction is known from 1414 when Palatine Nicholas Garai redeems the castle from Lessel for this sum. DL 10202.

before 1401 <sup>1015</sup>	The castle of Tátika and the market town of Keszthely (Zala)	8.020	knight Frederick Scharfenecki	DL 200390
01-02-1401	The villages of Hidegkút, Esztergár and a part of an estate situated in the village of Örs (Veszprém)	400	Ányos Gregory Vámosi, castellan of Veszprém	DL 101943
before 14-04-1401	The <i>comitatus</i> of Bužane (Croatia)	2.000 <sup>1016</sup>	The counts of Korbávia (Krbava) Thomas, Frank, Peter, Paul <sup>1017</sup>	DL 33933
14-04-1401	The <i>comitatus</i> of Bužane (Croatia)		master Paul Zrinski <sup>1018</sup>	DL 33933
16-04-1401	<i>The castle of Steničnjak (Zágráb)</i> <sup>1019</sup>	8.500	<i>Catherine, the widow of Stephen Frankopan</i>	DL 34052
around 1403 <sup>1020</sup>	The castle of Lednica (Trencsén)	8.181 <sup>1021</sup>	Bělík of Kornice	DL 103008
around 10-01-1403 <sup>1022</sup>	The castle of Tátika and the market town of Keszthely	<sup>1023</sup>	baron Nicholas Marcali, Voivode of Transylvania, and his brothers Dénes, <i>ispán</i> of the Szeklers, and master Peter	DF 200389
04-09-1403	The castle of Hrušov (Bars)	1.500 <sup>1024</sup>	Peter Forgách <i>ispán</i> of Nyitra County	DL 58797

<sup>1015</sup> In November 1404 Sigismund swapped the castle of Tátika for the town of Segesd, this is how it is known that it was given in pledge. For more about the dating see: Engel, *Archontológia*, 441.

<sup>1016</sup> Initially Queen Mary pledged the *comitatus* to the counts of Korbávia for 9.000 florins. Based on this transaction Sigismund borrowed 2.000 florins in addition from the family. This is known from a document dated to 14 April 1401, when Sigismund authorized Paul Zrinski to redeem the *comitatus*.

<sup>1017</sup> ZsO II. 996-998.

<sup>1018</sup> Paul Zrinski did not have to pay in addition to the king for permitting him to redeem the *comitatus* for himself. He had to pay only the 11.000 florins, for which sum the counts of Korbávia kept under their authority. However, the counts refused to hand Bužane over to Zrinski, therefore it remains unanswered when he could enter in its possession. ZsO II. 1167, 1379, 1984.

<sup>1019</sup> The castle was given in pledge by King Louis I; Sigismund borrowed 8.500 florins based on this earlier pledging.

<sup>1020</sup> For the dating see: Engel, *Archontológia*, 356.

<sup>1021</sup> 3.000 shock Prague groschen, calculating at an exchange rate of 22 Prague groschen is equivalent to one florin. Sejbal, *Dějiny peněz*, 173. The sum of the pledging is known from a charter issued in 1475. DL 103008.

<sup>1022</sup> There is only a letter of institution informing us about the pledging, the transaction was probably concluded around this date.

<sup>1023</sup> According to a charter from 1404, the Marcali brothers redeemed the castle from the previous pledgee Frederick Scharfenecki for the same sum that he lent to the ruler. DL 200390.

<sup>1024</sup> Forgách received the castle in pledge because he promised to be in the service of the king with 300 horsemen for which the ruler would have paid 750 florins for a month (10 florins after each 4 horsemen). Most likely they were serving Sigismund for two months, thus the value of the pledging was around 1.500 florins. For more see page: 191. The currency is: *florenos per centum denarios novos computando*.

after 1403	The castle and the market town of Ludanice, the <i>castellum</i> of Nitrianska Blatnica (Nyitra) <sup>1025</sup>	5.217 <sup>1026</sup>	Donin of Skrzynno	ZsO VIII. 563
before 12-04-1404 <sup>1027</sup>	The village of Lehnice situated in the Žitný ostrov region (Pozsony)	1.000	Martin Ders Szerdahelyi	DL 8956
before 03-11-1404 <sup>1028</sup>	The market town of Segesd (Somogy)	<sup>1029</sup>	Orsolya Vezsenyi, the widow of Stephen Losonci	DF 286391
around 1404 <sup>1030</sup>	The market town of Virovitica (Slavonia)	<sup>1031</sup>	Orsolya Vezsenyi, the widow of Stephen Losonci	DF 286391
12-03-1404	The castle of Hanigovce (Sáros), the market town of Stropkov, and the village of Pozdišovce	6.000 <sup>1032</sup>	Andrzej, Jan, and Mikołaj Balicki	DL 8944
03-11-1404	The market town of Segesd (Somogy)	<sup>1033</sup>	baron Nicholas Marcali, former Transylvanian Voivode and his brothers Dénes, former <i>ispán</i> of the Szeklers, and master Peter	DL 200390
17-12-1404	The village of Chocholná (Trencsén)	<sup>70</sup>	hunter Michalko	DL 8993
before 1405 <sup>1034</sup>	The annual tax of the town of Presov		Oszvárd Poháros Kapi	DL 42834

<sup>1025</sup> A charter from 1421 informs about the pledging (ZsO VIII. 563). The castle was erected by the Ludányi family from whom it was confiscated in 1403 and given to Stibor, because they took part in the rebellion against the king. Donin was a *familiaris* of Stibor, and he helped him to get the castle in pledge sometime after 1403. Dvořáková, *Lengyelek*, 407. Engel, *Archontológia*, 363.

<sup>1026</sup> The sum is also known from the charter dated to 1421 according to which 2.000 Prague groschen Donin paid for these pledged estates. In the second part of the 1400s the Prague groschen was exchanged to Hungarian florins at a rate of 23 groschen equivalent to one florin which makes 2.000 groschen 5.217 florins. Sejbál, *Dějiny peněz*, 173.

<sup>1027</sup> On 12 April 1404 Ders approached the king with the request to receive royal permission for pledging the village further for 1.000 florins, for which sum he himself held the estate in pledge.

<sup>1028</sup> On 03 November 1404 Sigismund pledged the town to the Marcalies, thus Orsolya Vezsenyi must have held it in pledge before this. DL 200390.

<sup>1029</sup> Sigismund only swapped the castle of Cheresig for Segesd, the value of the pledging was not affected by this.

<sup>1030</sup> The ruler took back Segesd from the widow of Losonci and pledged it to the Marcalies in November 1404. DL 200390. Probably around this date Sigismund gave the town of Virovitica to her in exchange for Segesd.

<sup>1031</sup> This was only a swapping of pledged towns without causing any changes in value.

<sup>1032</sup> The possessions were already pledged to their cousin Prokop for 6.000 florins. For the redemption, both sums, altogether 12.000 had to be paid.

<sup>1033</sup> Following the king's request, the Marcali brothers gave castle Tátika and the town of Keszthely back, they received Segesd from him in return, for the same sum they held the castle and the town in pledge (8.020).

<sup>1034</sup> The king wanted to redeem it in 1405, but no date of the pledging are given.

14-09-1405	The castle of Buják with the toll of Hatvan (Nógrád)	<sup>1035</sup>	Orsolya Vezensenyi, the widow of Stephen Losonci	DF 286391
05-10-1405	<i>The castle of Steničnjak (Zágráb)</i>	2.000	<i>Catherine, the widow of Stephen Frankopan and their daughter Elisabeth</i>	DF 287058
24-05-1405	The castles of Čakovec and Štrigova, the districts of Međimurje and Bednja (Zala, Körös) <sup>1036</sup>	48.000	Hermann II of Celje, the count of Zagorje	DF 288300
after September 14 06 <sup>1037</sup>	The castle of Drenovac (Körös)	4.000	The widow of Ferenc Bebek Pelsőci	DF 34112
before 04-05-1407 <sup>1038</sup>	The estate of Poroszló (Heves)	3.000	learned ( <i>litteratus</i> ) Andrew Kapi	DL 64125
around 27-03-1409 <sup>1039</sup>	The village of Kovarce (Nyitra)	2.500 <sup>1040</sup>	Sigismund Csetneki	DL 9529
before 1410 <sup>1041</sup>	The castle and the market town of Šintava (Pozsony)	5.217 <sup>1042</sup>	Mościc of Sęszew <sup>1043</sup>	DL 11300
1410 <sup>1044</sup>	The castle of Tállya, the estate of Tokaj with the <i>castellum</i> and village of Tarcal (Zemplén)	12.000	baron John Garai and his wife Hedwig of Masovia <sup>1045</sup>	DL 11225

<sup>1035</sup> Sigismund swapped the market town of Virovitica for the castle and the toll. The value of the pledging was still the original 1.333 florins for which Stephen Losonci took in pledge the castle of Cheresig.

<sup>1036</sup> Following the phrasing of the charter, Sigismund sold the castle and districts with the buy-back right (*duximus perpetuo vendendum immo vendimus*). Ten years later, in 5 April 1415 the king issued another charter related to this earlier one, in which a different phrasing can be read, that in fact he pledged the districts and the castles (*obligaverimus et appropriaverimus*). DL 10330.

<sup>1037</sup> According to a charter from 1421 when Sigismund sold the castle, Drenovac was pledged to the widow for 4.000 florins. Since her husband died in September 1406 the pledging should be dated after this date. Engel, *Geneológia*.

<sup>1038</sup> A charter from 4 May 1407 informs us that Poroszló was given in pledge to Tétényi for this sum. A more precise date is not known.

<sup>1039</sup> Only the order of instituting into the village had been preserved, therefore, presumably the transaction was concluded on this date.

<sup>1040</sup> 4.100 florins, *quemlibet florenum per centum denarios novos computando*. I could not find data on the exchange rate of the *denarius novus* to golden florins from 1409. In the year 1407 164 new pennies worth 1 golden florin which makes 4.100 equivalent with 2.500 golden florins. Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 243.

<sup>1041</sup> A more precise dating is not possible. In June 1410, when Sigismund raised further loan on this pledging, he mentioned that he pledged the castle and the town previously.

<sup>1042</sup> 2.000 schock Prague groschen. Sejbál, *Dějiny peněz*, 173.

<sup>1043</sup> Although, only Mościc was the pledgee in this case, there was an agreement between him and his brother, by which they split among them everything that was under their authority in Hungary. For more about it: ZsO X. 259.

<sup>1044</sup> The data about this pledging is from a document issued in 1422, when the couple gave back these pledged estates to the king and received others in exchange. The pledging in fact was a wedding present of Sigismund. The two of them married in 1410, that is why the pledging can be dated around this date. Zichy VI/38. Engel, *Archontológia*, 438.

<sup>1045</sup> In this case the baronial title was inherited (from his father Nicholas I Garai), since John Garai did not hold any position that would have entitled him to bear the baronial title.

1410 <sup>1046</sup>	The <i>castellum</i> of Nitrianska Streda, and the villages of Topoľčany and Nemčice (Nyitra)		Donin of Skrzynno	DL 50202
02-06-1410	The castle of Sklabiňa with <i>comitatus</i> of Turóc and the market town of Debrecen (except for the salt chamber) (Turóc) <sup>1047</sup>	1.000 <sup>1048</sup>	Andrew Balicki	DF 212742
03-06-1410	<i>The castle and the market town of Šintava (Pozsony)</i>	4.000 <sup>1049</sup>	<i>Mościc of Stęszew</i>	DL 11300
around December 1410 <sup>1050</sup>	The castle of Sokolac, the market town of Bihać, and the <i>castellum</i> of Ripač (Croatia)	3.000 <sup>1051</sup>	Paul Csupor, <i>ispán</i> of Záhgráb and Körös Counties and his brother	Alsó-szlavóniai okmánytár, 321.
07-07-1412	The village of Chocholná (Trencsén)	<sup>1052</sup>	John Apáti	DL 9926
29-08-1412	The yearly tax and the New Year's gift of the town of Bardejov (Sáros) <sup>1053</sup>		Andrew Balicki	DF 212748
01-11-1412	<i>The castle of Ozalj (Zagráb)</i> <sup>1054</sup>	3.000	<i>baron Nicholas Frankopan, comes Wegle, Segnie, Modrusse</i>	DL 33982

<sup>1046</sup> This charter is from 1412, and this is the one claiming that the villages and the castellum were pledged. They were under Donin's authority in 1410, who held them most probably in pledge already at that time. ZsO II.8067.

<sup>1047</sup> Sigismund even authorized Andrew to collect the chamber's profit of Sklabiňa and Debrecen, but kept the salt chamber functioning in Debrecen for himself. Probably not the entire estate of Tállya castle was pledged, since in 1413 Sigismund wanted to pledge some appurtenances of the castle which were in Nicholas Debrői's possession. ZsO IV. 1137.

<sup>1048</sup> The charter talks about 13.000 florins as the sum of the pledging, however because Andrew Balicki gave castle Hanigovce back to the king, at least twenty days before this transaction (ZsO.II.7713), probably this business was much more a domain exchange than a genuine pledging. Andrew held Hanigovce castle in pledge for 12.000 florins, therefore, most likely only the remaining 1.000 florins could have been the real loan in the deal. Incze, *Bound by pledge*, 88.

<sup>1049</sup> In addition to the previous loan of 2.000 (5.217) schok Prague groschen Sigismund borrowed 4.000 florins from Mościc and promised to pay back this latter sum till Saint Michael's day of that year. In case he could not do this till the deadline, the 4.000 florins would be added to 2.000 schok Prague groschen. It is very likely that the king could not fulfill his promise, because later Mościc pledged the castle further for a not much higher sum (10.500 florins) than the one he lent to Sigismund in two installments (9.217 florins). ZsO. VII. 932.

<sup>1050</sup> The source of this deal is a report from 04 January 1411 of the chapterhouse of Zagreb about instituting the Csupor brothers into the estates. Most probable the transaction was concluded not long before this.

<sup>1051</sup> The currency was new pennies (*denarius novus*), and the transaction's value was 6.000 florins. In 1410 200 new pennies were equivalent with 1 golden florin, thus the 6.000 florins worth 3.000 golden florins. ZsO. VIII.1269.

<sup>1052</sup> The village was given originally in pledge to hunter Michalko in 1404, and on 7 July 1412 the king pledge it further for the same sum to John Apáti.

<sup>1053</sup> Because Sigismund wanted to give the market town of Debrecen to the Serbian despot, he exchanged it with the tax of the free royal town of Bardejov. In this way, the sum of the previous pledging remained intact, changes affected only the object of the pledging. Incze, *Bound by pledge*, 87.

<sup>1054</sup> Intriguingly, three days later the king issued the order to institute Nicholas in the possession of Ozalj by right of donation and not by right of pledge. *Frangepán* I, 173.

08-11-1412	Thirteen town of the Spiš, the towns of Podolíneć and Hniezdne and castle of Stará Ľubovňa with its appurtenances (Szepes)	96.521 <sup>1055</sup>	Władysław II Jagiełło, King of Poland	DF 288581-184b, DL 9984
30-05-1413	Three villages of Šúrovce (Pozsony)	2.501 <sup>1056</sup>	Mościc of Stęszew	DL 11300
13-05-1414	The castle and the market town of Devín and the village of Rača (Pozsony)	<sup>1057</sup>	baron Nicholas Garai palatine	DL 10202
before 1415 <sup>1058</sup>	The village of Šíd (Gömör)		Gyula and Lóránd Kakas Kazai, knights of the court	DL 89749
before 1415 <sup>1059</sup>	Óvár <i>et toto comitatu</i> (Moson)		Ulrich Wolfurt	DL 10350
before 05-04-1415 <sup>1060</sup>	The castle of Steničnjak (Zágráb)		baron Frederick II of Celje, the count of Zagorje	DL 34052
05-04-1415	<i>The castles of Čakovec and Štrigova, the districts of Međimurje and Bednja (Zala)</i>	52.000 <sup>1061</sup>	<i>Hermann II of Celje, the count of Zagorje</i>	<i>DL 10330</i>
18-10-1415	<i>The castle of Devín and half of the village of Rača (Pozsony)</i>	12.000 <sup>1062</sup>	<i>palatine Nicholas Garai, and his wife Anne</i>	DL 10390

<sup>1055</sup> 37.000 schock Prague groschen. For the calculation and the exchange rate footnote 589.

<sup>1056</sup> The sums consist of the following items: 2.300 florins loan, nine horses in value of 60 schock Prague groschen and a palfrey (*palifredus*) in value of 45 florins. Around this year 23 groschen had the worth of one Hungarian florin, consequently 60 schock Prague groschen made 156 florins. Sejbál, *Dějiny peněz*, 173.

<sup>1057</sup> An Austrian knight, called Hernng Lessel held the castle and its appurtenances in pledge. On this date, the king authorized Palatine Garai to redeem them for himself for the same amount of money for which earlier they were pledged to Hening (8.000 florins). Intriguingly, Garai did not have to pay an additional fee for the authorization. For more about Devín castle and the earlier attempts of redeeming the castle: Dvořáková, *A lovag és királya*, 285-286.

<sup>1058</sup> By this charter from April 1415 Sigismund donated villages to the Kazais, and among the donated possessions was the village of Sid also, about which there is a note that it was held in pledge by them.

<sup>1059</sup> The source about this transaction is Ulrich's own last will dated to 1415. Pál Engel dated the transaction to 1412 without providing an explanation. Engel, *Archontológia*, 385. Unfortunately, in his last will Ulrich did not specify how much he paid for the castle.

<sup>1060</sup> In this royal charter from 1415 is mentioned that the king pledged the castle to Frederick in another charter, further details of the transaction are not revealed. It was certainly more than a promise, since Frederick was instituted into the castle three months later. ZsO V.843.

<sup>1061</sup> 100.000 florins altogether with the previous 48.000 florins. Just as in the case of the earlier transaction (1405), Sigismund sold the castles and the districts (*titulo emptionis*) again to Hermann with a buy-back clause. It seems that this kind of transactions were interpreted as pledgins by contemporaries, and that was the reason why Čakovec and the Međimurje were enumerated among the pledged castles in the list of the royal possessions (*Castrum Chaktornia, Pertinentiae inter fluvios Draua et Mara, apud comites Ciliae*). Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 202; DL 13137.

<sup>1062</sup> A year and a half after palatine Garai redeemed Devín from Herin Lessel, 12.000 ducats were added to the original sum of 8.000 florins. The 12.000 ducats were not a loan but the expenses of the Garai's services performed for the king. The ducats and the Hungarian golden florins were equivalent in value, which is well represented by the fact that the 8.000 florins — for which Garai redeemed Devín — were added to this new 12.000 ducats, and in this way the

1416 <sup>1063</sup>	The castle of Scharfeneck (Moson)		baron Stephen Kanizsai, master of the doorkeepers	DL 10646
1416 <sup>1064</sup>	The castle of Kittsee and the thirtieth collected at Rusovce (Moson)	9.000 <sup>1065</sup>	Henry Schlandensberger	ZsO IX. 777, ZsO VI.1269
22-07-1417	All the castles, domains and towns which he holds under his authority as <i>honor</i> <sup>1066</sup>	10.500 <sup>1067</sup>	Stibor of Stiboricz jr.	DL 10596
21-12-1417 <sup>1068</sup>	The castle of Scharfeneck (Moson)		The widow of Ulrich Wolfurt and their children	DL 10646

king could have redeemed the castle only for 20.000 ducats. This never happened, in 1419 Sigismund donated the castle to palatine Garai. Engel, *Archontológia*, 300.

<sup>1063</sup> The castle was erected by the Scharfeneck family, and its pledging to Kanizsai could not have happened before the family's extinction on male line. Friedrich of Scharfeneck, the last male member died on March 1416, thus the pledging should be dated after it. Engel, *Archontológia*, 407. A charter from 1417 is the only one informing us about the transaction, in which it is mentioned that the castle, which was given to the widow of Ulrich Wolfurt, first had to be redeemed from Stephen Kanizsai.

<sup>1064</sup> This castle was also in the possession of the Scharfeneck family, the pledging happened after the family died out. The same charter provides information about the transaction as in the case of Scharfeneck. Again, Ulrich Wolfurt's widow wanted to take the castle in pledge, but again she had to redeem it first, this time not from Stephen Kanizsai but from Henry Schlandensberger.

<sup>1065</sup> The source of information about the sum of the transaction is from another charter of pledging, issued in 1422, by which Sigismund pledged Köpcsény to Peter Kapler's widow, who first should have redeemed it for 9.000 florins from Schlandensberger. Seemingly, Ulrich Wolfurt's widow failed to redeem Kittsee from Schlandensberger for herself, in April 1418, the castellan of the castle refused to hand it over to her. ZsO VI. 1818.

<sup>1066</sup> From 1415 till 1419 he was the *ispán* of Trencsén County, consequently the pledged domains could be identified with the ones situated in the county and being under the *ispán*'s authority. In this period the castles of Trenčín, Súča, Vršatec, Kasza were usually the appurtenances of the *ispanate*. Nonetheless, most probably Stibor jr. could hold only Trenčín and Vršatec castles as *honor* in 1417. He held the two other castles under his jurisdiction also but on a different ground. Súča was pledged to his father and inherited by Stibor jr. himself, while Kasza was donated to his uncle Nicholas, from whom it was transferred to Stibor senior and after his death, to his son. Besides these castles, Stibor Jr. held the castle of Považský hrad as a *honor* too. Považský hrad together with the adjacent castles formed a quasi-independent district in the northern part of Trencsén County. The castles belonging to the district in 1417 were the following: Starhrad, Strečno, Hričov, Litva. Starhrad was mentioned as being held by Stibor jr. as *honor* in 1414, also a domain pertaining to Starhrad estate was documented as being under his authority between 1414-1419. In 1419 Strečno was under Stibor jr.'s jurisdiction, and Pál Engel considered likely that a castellan from 1416 could have been Stibor jr.'s adherent. Litva was recorded under Stibor jr.'s authority in 1418; this castle together with Hričov usually followed the fate of Považský hrad. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 117, 131, 140, 159, 187-188. Engel, *Archontológia*, 213, 279, 329, 359, 382, 386, 436, 447. Engel, *Zsigmond bárói: rövid életrajzok*, 446.

<sup>1067</sup> Sigismund gave an order to Stibor Jr. to join his retinue with a hundred horsemen and accompany him to the lands he visited, especially to France. For the services of these horsemen, the king promised a monthly payment of 700 florins in return. However, to make sure that Stibor and his men get the promised money, Sigismund pledged these possessions to him and promised that he could keep them till he could extract the promised sum from them. According to Daniela Dvořáková, Stibor was abroad serving the king till October of the next year, thus approximatively for fifteen months. Dvořáková, *A lovag és királya*, 352. Following the terms of the agreement, the king had to pay 10.500 florins for this amount of time (700x15).

<sup>1068</sup> The charter of pledging is not preserved. This document is a royal order to the chapter house of Pozsony by which the ruler commands that after the widow redeemed the castles Kittsee and Scharfeneck, she and her children should be introduced into these castles. The charter of the transaction could have been issued on this day or a few days earlier.



01-05-1418	The castle and the town of Trenčín (Trencsén) <sup>1069</sup>	32.000 <sup>1070</sup>	Louis II, Silesian prince, Duke of Brzeg and Legnica	DF 287090
24-02-1419	The village of Košťany nad Turcom (Turóc)	1.500 <sup>1071</sup>	Stephen Kis Leszkóci, knight of the court	DL 63121
24-02-1419	The villages of Ostratice and Súľov-Hradná (Trencsén)	1.250 <sup>1072</sup>	Stephen Kis Leszkóci, knight of the court	DL 71794
11-04-1419	The castles of Považský hrad and Strečno (Trencsén)	<sup>1073</sup>	Louis II, Duke of Brzeg and Legnica	DF 288581, page 473, 3 <sup>rd</sup> entry
around 02-09-1420 <sup>1074</sup>	The castle of Óvár (Moson)		The widow of Ulrich Wolfurt and their children	DF 225970
around 03-09-1420 <sup>1075</sup>	Castle of Orava (Árva)		Stibor of Stiboricz jr. and his mother Dobrohna	DL 64749
after 1420 <sup>1076</sup>	Castle of Hrušov (Bars)	4.400	baron John Bebek Pelsóci, former master of treasury	DL 11366
before 1421	Castle of Slovenská Lupča (Zólyom) <sup>1077</sup>	7.550 <sup>1078</sup>	Smil of Lichtenburk	Sedláček, <i>Zbytky register</i> , 130

The deadline of redeeming the castles was set for 24 April 1418. As it was mentioned earlier, only the castle of Scharfeneck was redeemed after all.

<sup>1069</sup> Sigismund pledged the castle and the town by the occasion of the couple's marriage, and the pledged domains served to contribute to the dowry (*Ehegeld*) and the trousseau (*Heimsteuer*).

<sup>1070</sup> The currency was 40.000 Rhenish guilders. In May 1418 Sigismund wrote in one of his letters that he owed 600 Hungarian florins to somebody and that was equivalent to 750 Rhenish guilders. ZsO VI. 1911. Thus, the Hungarian florin worth approx. 20% more than the Rhenish guilder. In this way, the 40.000 Rhenish guilders made up 32.000 Hungarian florins.

<sup>1071</sup> Sigismund had ten years to redeem the village, if he failed to do it before the deadline then the village devolved to Leszkóci.

<sup>1072</sup> The same terms were valid for this transaction as for the other one concluded with Stephen Kis Leszkóci.

<sup>1073</sup> Sigismund owed Louis 6.000 schock Prague groschen which he intended to allocate from the diocese of Breslau's tenth. In case these incomes had been not enough, Sigismund would have pledged the two castles to him. It is unknown how much revenue Louis could collect from the tenth of Breslau, and with how much he had to complement them with the revenues related to the castles. Therefore, it is not possible to determine the exact sum of this pledging. According to Pál Engel, Louis held the castles under his authority for two years. Engel, *Archontológia*, 279.

<sup>1074</sup> This is only the letter of instituting the widow and her sons into the castle.

<sup>1075</sup> Only the palatine's order of instituting the pledgees into the castle have been preserved, the exact day and sum of the transaction are not specified.

<sup>1076</sup> In June 1423 Sigismund took back the castle from Pelsóci and gave other domains in pledge to him. The castle devolved on the ruler in 1420, thus it is highly probably that soon after this it was given in pledge to Pelsóci. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 117-118.

<sup>1077</sup> In 1421 Sigismund swapped Slovenská Lupča — pledged to Smil of Lichtenburk — with the Moravian castle of Vranov nad Dyjí (Frain in German). The value of the transaction remained intact. I would like to thank Petr Elbel for the reference.

<sup>1078</sup> The sum consisted of 2.500 schock Prague groschen and of 1.300 Hungarian golden florins. There is no available exchange rate from 1421, or 1420. In 1409 the exchange rate of Prague groschen/ Hungarian florin was 23, and 25 in

25-05-1421	The villages of Patak and Dejtár, with the toll of Patak (Nógrád)	2.500 <sup>1079</sup>	Louis Szécsényi	DL 11088
around 18-07-1421 <sup>1080</sup>	The castle of Vučjak Kamenski (Pozsega)		baron John Alsáni, former master of the cupbearers	DL 11088
23-11-1421	All the domains of Elijah Farkas Vadászi <sup>1081</sup>	3.100	baron John Maróti, former ban of Macsó	DL 11155
20-04-1421	The castle of Rezi, the market town of Keszthely, and half of the <i>castellum</i> of Pölöske (Zala)	10.000	John Albeni, bishop of Zagreb, royal and queenly arch-chancellor and his brother Rudolf	DL 92575
24-08-1421	The villages of Chintelnic, Arcalia, Sărata, Sărăţel, (Doboka) Cămăraşu, Sâmboleni (Kolozs)	2.000 <sup>1082</sup>	Baron, David Lack Szántói, former ban of Slavonia	DL 81478
before 1422 <sup>1083</sup>	The village of Srijem (Körös)	1.000	Ladislaus Olasz Orbonai	DL 100423
before 04-07-1422 <sup>1084</sup>	The estate of Podolje (Baranya)	4.000	The widow of John Rupolyi	DL 11232
08-05-1422	All of Peter Bodolyai's villages, especially the ones in Baranya County and all Ladislaus Orbonai's domains, especially the ones in Slavonia <sup>1085</sup>	15.000	baron John Maróti, former ban of Macsó	DL 11211
06-06-1422	The castle and the market town of Komárno, and the market town of Neszmély (Komárom)	6.840	baron Nicholas Garai palatine	DL 87960

1430. Calculating the 2.500 schok Prague groschen at an exchange rate of 24, it would make 6.250 golden florins. Sejbal, *Dějiny peněz*, 173.

<sup>1079</sup> The currency was new penny (CNH 121) and the value of the transaction was 5.000 florins. In 1421 the new penny was exchanged on a rate of 200 new pennies = 1 golden florin, thus 5.000 = 2.500 golden florins. Mikó, *Zsigmond király 1411. évi rendelete*, 343.

<sup>1080</sup> Regarding this pledging only a royal letter has been preserved. In this Sigismund ordered that Kővár castle to be yielded to Alsáni, since he pledged it to him. No further details concerning the sum and the exact date are given.

<sup>1081</sup> Vânători, *Chegedzagh*, Şimand, Şomoşcheş, *Beztegnaw*, Berechiu, *Tholmach*, *Mazzagfalwa*, *Papfalua*, *Kyralmezeye*, *Karandrewa*, Belochfalwa, Cermei és Chermel (Zaránd County).

<sup>1082</sup> 4.000 florins of new penny. Calculating on a 200 new pennies = 1 golden florin rate, the 4.000 was equivalent with 2.000 golden florins. Mikó, *Zsigmond király 1411. évi rendelete*, 343.

<sup>1083</sup> A charter from 1422 provides data about this pledging but without the exact date.

<sup>1084</sup> In 1422 John Maróti received royal consent to redeem the *castellum* from Rupolyi's widow for himself. That is all what can be known about the date of the deal.

<sup>1085</sup> Orbonai died and his domains devolved on the ruler, while Bodolyai's estates were confiscated due to treason. Peter Bodolyai's villages were mainly those which belonged to the estate of Bodolya. DL 11232. Csánki, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza* II, 461. Ladislaus Orbonais' domains consisted mostly of the villages of Obrovnica, Srijem, Carevdar. DL 34113. Csánki, *Körösmegeye*, 21.

29-06-1422	The castle of Srebrenik (Bosnia) and the <i>castella</i> of Brčko and <i>Grabovac</i>	<sup>1086</sup>	baron John Garai and his wife Hedwig of Masovia	DL 11225
around 03-07-1422 <sup>1087</sup>	The castle and the market town of <i>Komárno</i> , and the market town of <i>Neszmély (Komárom)</i>	6.160	baron Nicholas Garai palatine	DL 11231
03-07-1422	The <i>castellum</i> of Garešnica, the estates of Čavlovica and Garešnica (Körös)	1.000 <sup>1088</sup>	Catherine, the widow of Jacob Olasz Orbonai	DL DL 100423, 100492
04-07-1422	The market town of Garignica (Slavonia)	<sup>1089</sup>	The widow of John Rupolyi	DL 11232
04-07-1422	The villages of Püspöki (Heves) and Jobbágy (Nógrád)	<sup>1090</sup>	Ladislaus Szécsényi	Erdödy cs. lt. 472. (96-10-2.)
09-07-1422	The castle of Köpcsény and the thirtieth collected at Oroszvár (Moson)	2.000 <sup>1091</sup>	Peter Kapler and his wife	ZsO IX. 777
before 02-06-1423 <sup>1092</sup>	The village of Böszörmény ( <i>Bezermen</i> ) (Szabolcs)	3.975	baron John Bebek, former master of treasury	DL 11366
02-06-1423	The market town of Gemer, the villages of Brzotín, Kružná and Rudná; an abandoned settlement	2.000 <sup>1094</sup>	baron John Bebek, former master of treasury	DL 11366

<sup>1086</sup> In fact, this was an exchange transaction. Garai and his wife gave castles Tállya and Tokaj back to the king, who in return gave Srebrenik and the *castella* in pledge. The sum of the transaction remained unaltered, in case of redemption the king and his heirs had to pay the same 12.000 florins which was stipulated in the contract of pledging Tállya and Tokaj.

<sup>1087</sup> This is only the royal order of instituting the palatine into the domains. The pledging occurred somewhere near this date.

<sup>1088</sup> Catherine's stepson Ladislaus Orbonai held in pledge the village of Srijem, but he had died without legal heirs in 1422 before this transaction was concluded. As Catherine was his closest relative, the king began to negotiate with her. Catherine gave back Srijem to Sigismund, and additionally lent him 1.000 florins for which the king pledged Garešnica with the domains to her. In case the widow had proven in a legal way that she held Srijem in pledge legitimately, then the sums of the two transactions would have been added together, making the sum of redemption 2.000 florins. Otherwise it would have remained only the 1.000 florins.

<sup>1089</sup> It was an exchange deal, the widow of Rupolyi received Garignica in return for giving Podolje back to the king. The sum of the pledging remained the same as in the first deal.

<sup>1090</sup> Ladislaus gave back Patak and Dejtár villages to the king, who in change pledged him Püspöki and Jobbágy. The swap did not affect the value of the transaction.

<sup>1091</sup> Peter Kapler redeemed the castle and the thirtieth for 9.000 florins and (according to Csánki) paid 2.000 florins additionally to the king for the authorization of redemption. Kapler and his wife were entitled to hold Kittsee and the thirtieth in pledge till they would collect as much money as for which they held these in pledge. Csánki *Magyarország történelmi földrajza* III, 674.

<sup>1092</sup> In 1423 John Bebek gave back the village to the king, who in return gave him other estates in pledge. Although there are no further references regarding the date of the deal, fortunately the sum of the pledging was not left out.

<sup>1094</sup> On this day Bebek gave back castle Hrušov — pledged previously to him for 4.400 — and the village of Böszörmény — pledged for 3.975 — additionally, he lent 2.000 florins to the king. In return, Sigismund gave Gemer and these other estates in pledge, and promised that they can be redeemed only for the value of the previous two pledgings and of the borrowed sum (10.375). Bebek did not have to renounce to Hrušov. A day later of issuing this

	( <i>predium</i> ); villages and certain estates of Gömör and Torna Counties <sup>1093</sup>			
before 06-10-1423 <sup>1095</sup>	The villages of Emőd (Borsod) and Vizsoly (Abaúj)		Mościc of Stęszew	DL 71976, 13137
before 1424	The <i>castellum</i> of Căpâlnaş and some other domains of Michael Kerekegyházi (Arad) <sup>1096</sup>		Pipo of Ozora (Filippo Scolari)	
around 1424 <sup>1097</sup>	The market town of Szécsény (Nógrád)		Queen Barbara	DL 13137
around 1424	The market town of Veľká Čalomija (Hont)		Queen Barbara	DL 13137
around 1424	The market town of Pétervására (Heves)		Queen Barbara	DL 13137
1424	The island of Csepel with its appurtenances <sup>1098</sup>		Queen Barbara	DL 13137
1424	The market towns of Tolnavár (Tolna) and Kecskemét with the cumans (Pest) <sup>1099</sup>		Queen Barbara	DL 13137
around 25-01-1424 <sup>1100</sup>	The castle of Bernolákovo (Pozsony)	4.440 <sup>1101</sup>	Louis, count palatine of the Rhine; Duke of Bavaria, <i>comes Mortaviae</i> <sup>1102</sup>	DF 225518
14-08-1424	The castle of Stupčanica (Körös)	10.000 <sup>1103</sup>	baron Nicholas Garai palatine	DL 33411

charter of pledge, the king donated Hrušov castle to Bebek because he gave back Szokoly castle to him. ZsO X. 719. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 118.

<sup>1093</sup> According to the stipulation of the charter, these latter villages and estates of the two counties are those which would devolve on the king and would be specified in the next county assembly of Gömör and Torna.

<sup>1095</sup> This is not the charter of pledging, but a document by which Mościc pledged half of the settlements further to his nephew John Jugo for 5.000 florins. According to the list of royal possessions, the settlements were still held in pledge by John Jugo at the time of compiling the list.

<sup>1096</sup> The *castellum* was part of the Kerekegyházi family domains. The last male member of the family died in 1420, and four years later it was in Filippo Scolari's possession, most probably in pledge as Pál Engel suggested. Engel, *Archontológia*, 419. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 219.

<sup>1097</sup> Szécsény, Veľká Čalomija, Pétervására were Nicholas Salgai's domains confiscated from him in 1424. The pledging should have occurred after the confiscation. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 198. Engel, *Salgai Miklós*, 416.

<sup>1098</sup> In 1424 Csepel is mentioned among the donated possessions of Queen Barbara, but in the list of royal possessions they appear as pledges.

<sup>1099</sup> In principle Tolnavár and Kecskemét were donated to her in 1424, however in the list of royal possessions they appear as pledged settlements. ZsO XI. 598.

<sup>1100</sup> Concerning the transaction, only the royal order of instituting into the castle has been preserved.

<sup>1101</sup> The sum consists of 3.000 Hungarian florins and 1.800 Rhenish guilders (1.440 Hungarian florins), which makes together 4.440. For the exchange of Rhenish guilders to Hungarian florins see footnote 1070.

<sup>1102</sup> Probably he was Louis III, Count Palatine of the Rhine (1410-1436).

<sup>1103</sup> The pledging of Stupčanica was related to the issue of the castle Voćin. Sigismund promised to pledge Voćin to Nicholas Garai if the owner of the castle died without heirs. Till that happened, the king pledged Stupčanica to him with the condition that its sum of redemption would be 6.000 florins if Garai or his heirs managed to obtain Voćin, if not, then this sum would be 10.000. Nicholas' son, Ladislaus Garai managed to take in pledge Voćin but only in 1435.

around 02-07-1424 <sup>1104</sup>	The village of Dâmbău (Küküllő)		Stephen Dorn Meggyesi <i>miles aulæ</i>	DF 253490
before 07-09-1425 <sup>1105</sup>	The possessions of a certain knight called Craczer <sup>1106</sup>		Nicholas Károli, burgher of Banská Bystrica <sup>1107</sup>	DL 11703
07-09-1425	The mill of Kremnica (Bars) <sup>1108</sup>	2.334	Conradus de Insula, burgher of Levoča	DL 11703
before 11-11-1425 <sup>1109</sup>	The castle of Hajnáčka (Gömör)		Queen Barbara	DL 68977
<i>before /around 1426</i> <sup>1110</sup>	<i>The castle and the market town of Kittsee; the market town of Pama and half of the village of Jarovce (Moson)</i> <sup>1111</sup>	2.000	<i>Walpurga, the widow of Peter Kapler and their children</i>	<i>DL 11755</i>
10-03-1426 <sup>1112</sup>	The two villages of Telekes (Borsod)	600	John and Stephen Perényi	DL 11766

In the source of that transaction there is no mention of this earlier deal concluded between Ladislaus' father and the king regarding Voćin. DF 33788. Most likely it was not relevant anymore, since the king donated Stupčanica to the Garais in 1429 before they could get hold of Voćin. Engel, *Archontológia*, 422. That is why the 10.000 florins was Stupčanica sum of pledging.

<sup>1104</sup> The charter of the pledging is missing. This is the order of instituting into the village.

<sup>1105</sup> As part of the deal concluded between the king and Conradus de Insula a clause was introduced in the contract which authorized Conradus to redeem Craczer's possessions — currently held in pledge by Károli — for himself. There is no further information regarding this transaction.

<sup>1106</sup> Probably he was Nicholas Kratzer who is mentioned as a knight of the court in 1394. Engel, *Archontológia*, 492. About this family see: András Kubinyi, "A budai német patriciátus társadalmi helyzete családi összeköttetéseinek tükrében a XIII. századtól a XV. század második feléig" [The social status of the German patriciate of Buda in the light of the their family relations, from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century] *Levéltári Közlemények*, 42, No 2. (1971), 232, 240.

<sup>1107</sup> In the document stands: *civis nostre civitati Novizoly, Neosolium* was the Latin name of Banská Bystrica.

<sup>1108</sup> Conradus could held the mill in pledge until the revenues from it reached the sum of the pledging, afterwards he had to give it back to the king.

<sup>1109</sup> In November 1425 Queen Barbara ceded the castle to Stephen Berzevici, and the document of this act mentions that the castle was held in pledged by the queen at that time. Hajnáčka was in the possession of Nicholas Salgai, from whom Sigismund confiscated it around 1423-1424 and he might have pledged it to his spouse not long after. Engel, *Archontológia*, 265. Pál Engel, "Salgai Miklós" [Nicholas Salgai] in Honor, vár, ispánság, [Honor, castle, ispánság], ed. Enikő Csukovics (Budapest: Osiris, 2003), 414.

<sup>1110</sup> The charter of 05-02-1426 mentions that prior to this date Walpurga lent 2.000 florins at the king's request, but does not provide further details about the date of this deal.

<sup>1111</sup> Ten years before, in 1416 Sigismund pledged the castle and the thirtieth of Rusovce to Peter Kapler. After it, there were these two partly new transactions, concluded with his widow where the thirtieth of Rusovce was not anymore part of the deal, but only the castle of Kittsee was. Also, there were further settlements added to the original transaction.

<sup>1112</sup> Already in 11 November 1425 Sigismund promised the two Telekes in pledge to John and Stephen Perényi for 400 florins. DL 11694. However, in this charter of March 1426 there is no mention of the earlier transaction, thus it was only a promise. The Perényi brothers managed to institute themselves into the villages in May 1426 which also proves that the earlier transaction did not materialize. ZsO XIII. 530.

05-02-1426	The castle and the market town of Kittsee; the market town of Pama and half of the village of Jarovce (Moson)	6.500 <sup>1113</sup>	Walpurga, the widow of Peter Kapler and their children	DL 11755
05-06-1426	The castle of Tátika (Zala)	6.345	Valentinus Vince Szentgyörgyi, count of the chamber	DL 200420, 200421
around 28-08-1426 <sup>1114</sup>	The village of Petelea (Torda)		Denis Losonci	DL 28370
around 10-10-1426 <sup>1115</sup>	The villages of Szada and Veresegyház (Pest)	1.400 <sup>1116</sup>	Ladislaus Alcsebi, and Catherine the sister of bishop Nicholas Alcsebi	DL 11859
14-10-1426 <sup>1117</sup>	The castle of Bernolákovo, the market towns of Bernolákovo and Senec, the village of Mierovo, and half of the Červeník estate (Pozsony)	1.500	Stephen and George Rozgonyi, <i>ispánok</i> of Pozsony and Simon, provost of Dömös	DL 11936
16-10-1426	The castle of Šintava, the market towns of Šintava and Sered', etc. (Pozsony, Nyitra)	10.060	George Pálóci, Archbishop of Esztergom, baron Matthew Pálóci, judge royal and Stephen Pálóci	DL 86789
after 1426 <sup>1118</sup>	The villages of Sósút, Százhalom, half of	6.000	Günther Stoss	Héderváry I., 323

<sup>1113</sup> The sum consists of the following items: 4.500 florins credit and of 2.000 florins that Walpurga and her children promised to spend on reparations of the castle.

<sup>1114</sup> Only the order of instituting into the village and another order to the inhabitants of the village to obey in everything to the pledge holder have been preserved. ZsO XIII. 1039.

<sup>1115</sup> This date is that of the order of instituting the pledgees into the villages.

<sup>1116</sup> Regarding the sum of this transaction the charter of 05-03-1430 provides information. On that date, Peter Reichel wanted to redeem the villages for 1.400 florins, thus this might have been the original sum of the pledging of the year 1426.

<sup>1117</sup> On 16 October 1426 Sigismund issued the order that the Rozgonyies had to be instituted into the estates. The report about the successful instituting is from 4 November 1426. ZsO XIII.1225, 1403. Thus these estates have been pledged in 1426, however there is a charter of pledge in the Hungarian National Archives, Hungaricana database which is dated to 14 October 1427 (DL 11936) and in which Sigismund pledged exactly these estates again to the same persons, but without mentioning that the Rozgonyies have them in pledge already. Instead, the charter claims that at the time of issuing this document, the estates were held by the Rozgonyi brothers *pro honore*. I think, this charter has been added to the Hungaricana database with an unprecise date; probably deciphering the last shafts of the year might have caused the confusion, and instead of 1427, it should be dated to 1426. This is also proven by the fact that the charter was issued in Buda, and in 1427 Sigismund spent the majority of September and October around Belgrade, taking part in a military campaign, but one year earlier he was indeed in Buda. Engel, *Királyok és királynék*, 120-122.

<sup>1118</sup> According to a charter of King Matthias from 1467, the villages and the domains were confiscated from Nicholas Salgai, and after it given in pledge to Günther for 6.000 florins. In 1426 Káposztásmegyér was in royal hands, thus the transaction of pledge was concluded after this date. Engel, *Salgai Miklós*, 416.

	Káposztásmegyér village, and the domains situated in Érd and Berki (Pest)			
1427 <sup>1119</sup>	The castle of Simontornya, the market towns of Dechtice, Jagodnjak and domains of the Kerekegyházi family (Tolna, Nyitra, Baranya)	10.000	John Garai	Temes I. 632
1427 <sup>1120</sup>	The castles of Diósgyőr, Dédes and Cserép (Borsod)	60.000	Queen Barbara	DL 12351
1427 <sup>1121</sup>	The castle of Koprivnica, the market town of Koprivnica, and the village of Peteranec (Körös)		John Albeni, bishop of Zagreb	Fejér X/7 436
17-04-1427	Half of the Závod domain, and the villages of Tevel, Kökényes, Boleta, Vejke, Kisapar, Terjék és Gerényes (Tolna)	400	Jeromos Kolos Némái and Stephen Ördög Bósi	DL 43695
around 21-04-1427 <sup>1122</sup>	The domains situated in the villages of Mére, Tolkaj, Szenna, Bárd, Szomajom és Kara (Somogy)		Benedict, the provost of the Holy Virgin church in Székesfehérvár, and his relatives	DL 70021
before 26-05-1427 <sup>1123</sup>	Half of all John Jánki's domains situated anywhere in the country <sup>1124</sup>	3.000	baron, George Csáki, ispán of the Székelys, and of Kraszna a Szatmár counties	DL 85720
11-11-1427	The estates of Fârdea, Traian Vuia, Mănăştur, <i>Swgya</i> (Temes), Căpâlnaş, and Vărădia (Arad) <sup>1125</sup>	15.400	baron John Garai, the <i>ispán</i> of Temes County, and his wife	DL 11942

<sup>1119</sup> A charter from 1430 provides information about this pledging, however the transaction was certainly concluded earlier. For more about the dating see: Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 149, 220. Engel, *Archontológia*, 410.

<sup>1120</sup> A charter from 1431 mentions that the castles were given in pledge to the queen for this sum. In 1427 Barbara had her own castellan in Diósgyőr, thus the queen held the castles in pledge at least from 1427. Engel, *Archontológia*, 302.

<sup>1121</sup> The bishops' testament from 1432 is the source of this transaction, which in fact was the swapping of castle Rezi and the *castellum* of Pölöske — both of which Albeni held in pledge from 1421 — for Kővár. Already in 1427 there is a castellan who was in the services of the bishop, therefore the pledging can be dated around this year. Engel, *Archontológia*, 351.

<sup>1122</sup> This is only a letter of instituting the pledgees into the domains.

<sup>1123</sup> The Jánki family died out on the male line with John's death. Sigismund first pledged half of John's domains, then in 19 May 1427 he donated all of John Jánki's domains to Albert Nagymihályi, prior of Vrana. Nagymihályi wanted to get hold of everything that was granted to him, therefore on May 26 he reached to common terms with Csánki concerning Jánki's pledged domains. This is the only document about the pledging, the transaction itself should be dated earlier to this date.

<sup>1124</sup> In Albert Nagymihályi's donation charter the following settlements are enlisted: the *castellum* of Sîngeorge with its appurtenances (Krassó), the villages of Nădlac, Mezőhegyes, Palota, Rétkert, Tamásháza, Satchinez, Derékegyháza, Acsa, Sânpetru Mare (Csanád), Felsőigazó, Alsóigazó (Temes). Pesthy, Krassó III, 311.

<sup>1125</sup> Sigismund donated all the estates of Michael Mikolai (accused of treason) to John Garai and his wife, with the provision that in case they would not be able to take Mikolai's estates in their possession, then the king would pledge the above villages to them. The estates promised in pledge were originally the domains of the Lackfi family of

before 1428 (1427)	Veliki Kalnik (Körös)	12.600 <sup>1126</sup>	John Garai and his wife Hedwig of Masovia	Temes I. 636
before 1428 <sup>1127</sup>	Veliki Kalnik (Körös)		Siemowit V, Duke of Masovia and his brothers	Temes I. 636
01-05-1428	Castle of Veliki Kalnik (Körös) <sup>1128</sup>	14.000	John Albeni, bishop of Zagreb	Fejér X/6 924
before 1428	The <i>comitatus</i> of Bužane and the castle of Potorjan (Croatia) <sup>1129</sup>		Nicholas Frankopan	Frangepán I. 220, 256, 285
09-05-1428	All of Michael Kerekegyházi's and his cousin Ladislaus' estates situated anywhere in the kingdom <sup>1130</sup>		Baron John Jakcs Kusaly, the count of the Székelys	DL 12011
before 1429	The castle of Bosanska Krupa (Zagreb) <sup>1131</sup>		Frederick II of Celje, the count of Zagorje	DL 12785
around 07-06-1429 <sup>1132</sup>	The domains situated in the villages of Mintia, Peștișu and <i>Tamástelke</i> (Hunyad)		baron John Kusaly, the <i>ispán</i> of the Székelys	DL 29772
before 01-09-1429 <sup>1133</sup>	The town of Virovitica with the tenths, the palace and the estate of Lipova Kosa (Verőce)	7.875	Imre Marcali, <i>ispán</i> of Somogy County	DL 33412
01-09-1429	<i>The town of Virovitica with the tenths, the palace and the estate of Lipova Kosa (Verőce)</i>	2.125	Imre Marcali, <i>ispán</i> of Somogy County	DL 33412

Kerekegyház, whose last male member died in 1420. In 1435 Sigismund pledged all of Mikolai's estates to another Garai, Ladislaus, thus John and his wife could not enforce their rights concerning Mikolai's possessions, and were recompensed with these pledged royal villages. DF 33788.

<sup>1126</sup> Duke Siemowit and his brothers paid this amount of money to the Garai couple for redeeming the castle for themselves.

<sup>1127</sup> Data about this pledging and the previous one in which Veliki Kalnik was involved is from the year 1430, and the only piece of information that helps dating the transactions is the selling of the castle to John Albeni, Bishop of Zagreb in 1428. Therefore, the pledgings should have occurred prior to this event. Andrija Lukinović, *Povijesni spomenici zagrebačke biskupije VI. 1421-1460* [Historical records of the Bishopric of Zagreb] (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost d.o.o., 1994), 229. Fejér, X/6, 924. Fejér's excerpt of the charter is misleading, it alludes to a pledging while in fact this was a sale transaction. Engel, *Archontológia*, 371.

<sup>1128</sup> This was a sale transaction with a buy-back clause, and it was included in this list for the same reason as Međimurje district.

<sup>1129</sup> In charters issued in 1435 and 1437 it is mentioned that these estates were pledged to Nicholas Frankopan, and there is data proving that it was held under Nicholas senior's authority in 1428.

<sup>1130</sup> John Garai and his wife received in pledge Michael's and Ladislaus Jakcs Kerekegyházi's domains in the course of the year 1427. On May 1428 John Jakcs was authorized to redeem these estates from Garai's widow for 16.000 florins. For more on the Kerekegyházi domains: Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 199, 219- 220. Engel, *Archontológia*, 419. the initial sum of the transaction had been increased with this amount of money

<sup>1131</sup> In 1435 King Sigismund raised a loan of 1.100 florins on the pledging of the castle of Krupa from Frederick. This the source of the transaction. In 1429 Sigismund intended to sell the castle to Frederick, thus at that time it was already given in pledge to him. DL 33939. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 129.

<sup>1132</sup> Sum and precise date are unknown since this is only an order of instituting the pledgee in the domains.

<sup>1133</sup> In 1429 Sigismund borrowed a further sum from Imre Marcali, and in that charter of that deal it is mentioned that previously he borrowed 7.875 from him and for that sum he pledged Virovitica.



04-10-1429	The castle of Tátika (Zala)	2.000 <sup>1134</sup>	George and Stephen Marcali	DL 200424
before 1430 <sup>1135</sup>	The castles of Sokolac, Lab, Vrlika, Knin, Ostrovica, Čovka, Rmanj, the <i>castellum</i> of Ripač, the towns of Bihać and Skradin together with the Vlachs of Croatia, the <i>comitatus</i> of Lika and Poljica	28.000	baron Nicholas Frankopan, ban of Croatia-Dalmatia, count of Veglia, etc.	DF 258343, 287113
before 1430	The town of Vukovar with the custom (Valkó) <sup>1136</sup>		Stephen Kórógyi junior	DF 233441
around 1430 <sup>1137</sup>	The castles of Fiľakovo (Nógrád) and Jelšava (Gömör) with their appurtenances	5.707	Queen Barbara	DL 71469
21-01-1430	<i>The villages of Szada, Veresegyház (Pest), Forna-Szent-Miklós (Fehér)</i>	200	<i>Nicholas Alcsebi, the bishop of Vác and the lord lieutenant of the royal chapel</i> <sup>1138</sup>	DL 11859
around 25-01-1430 <sup>1139</sup>	The estate of Kaza pertaining to castle Jelšava (Borsod)		Queen Barbara	DL 89907
around 05-03-1430 <sup>1140</sup>	The villages of Szada and Veresegyház (Pest)		Peter Reichel of Mahálfalva, the <i>ispán</i> of the royal mine chambers	DL 11859

<sup>1134</sup> This is only the fee that the Marcali brothers paid to be entitled for redeeming the castle from Bálint Vince and his children for themselves.

<sup>1135</sup> In 1430 Sigismund promised all these estates — which at that time were held in pledge by Nicholas Frankpan — to Hermann II of Celje in pledge. This is the only reference to the transaction.

<sup>1136</sup> In 1430 the Talovac brothers redeemed the castle from Stephen Kórógyi, this is the only source of information about the pledging.

<sup>1137</sup> Data about the castles being previously pledged to the queen are from the years 1435 and 1438. DL 13248. However, because the estate of Kaza pertaining to the castle of Jelšava was pledged to Barbara in January 1430, it is very likely that Fiľakovo and Jelšava castles were pledged around that year. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 118.

<sup>1138</sup> In 1426 only Bishop Alcsebi's relatives took in pledge the estates of Szada and Veresegyház, the bishop himself was not among the pledgees. DL 11859. Nonetheless, Sigismund raised a loan of 200 florin on the ground of this earlier pledging from 1426, and additionally the estate of Forna-Szent-Miklós was added to the two other estates as the subject of pledge. Probably the 200 florins were the value of Forna-Szent-Miklós.

<sup>1139</sup> Only the order of instituting the queen into the estate is known, further details of the deal are not revealed in it.

<sup>1140</sup> This is not the contract of the pledging, but it is the report of the former pledge holders of the two villages (Nicholas and Ladislaus Alcsebi) by which they acknowledge that out of the 1.400 florins (sum of the pledging of the two villages) they received 500 from Peter Reichert. Thus, Sigismund pledged further the villages. There is no information about a possible fee that Reichert had to pay to the king for the authorization to redeem the villages for himself.

around 12-03-1430 <sup>1141</sup>	The castles of Srebrenik and the castellum of Brčko (Bosnia, <i>in district Ozora</i> )	<sup>1142</sup>	Matko, Franko, Peter and John Talovac	DL 43837
around 14-03-1430 <sup>1143</sup>	The market town of Vukovar with the custom (Valkó)		Matko, <sup>1144</sup> Franko, Peter and John Talovac	DF 233441
06-05-1430	<i>The town of Virovitica with the tenths, the palace and the estate of Lipova Kosa (Verőce)</i>	2.800	Imre Marcali and his brothers	DL 91021
06-05-1430	Four kindred of castle warriors pertaining to castle Križevci (Körös) <sup>11457</sup>	6.000	baron John Maróti, former ban of Macsó	DF 265865
around 07-06-1430 <sup>1146</sup>	The villages of Isaszeg, Zsidó, (Felső and Alsó) Mácsa <sup>1147</sup> Iván and Poroszló with their appurtenances (Pest, Nógrád, Heves)		Peter Rozgonyi Bishop of Eger, baron Stephen Rozgonyi, <i>ispán</i> of Temes	DL 12259, 13137
24-06-1430	The castle of Liptovský Hrádok (Liptó)	2.000	Queen Barbara	DF 287804
24-06-1430	The castle of Veľký castle and the <i>comitatus</i> of Liptó (Liptó)	4.100	Queen Barbara	DL 71678
08-08-1430	The castle of Šintava, and the villages of Sereď, Šintava, etc. (Pozsony)	7.403 <sup>1148</sup>	barons Stephen and George Rozgonyi, the <i>ispánok</i> of Pozsony County	DL 24522
09-08-1430	The village of Hamuliakovo (Pozsony)	400	Thomas Frank, known as Kalmár, burgher of Pozsony	DL 59151, 12606
10-08-1430	<i>The castle of Šintava, and the villages of Sereď, Šintava, etc. (Pozsony)</i>	132	<i>barons Stephen and George Rozgonyi, the ispánok of Pozsony County</i>	DL 12299

<sup>1141</sup> Only the exact date of the royal order of instituting into the estates is known. In a royal charter dated to 6 January 1430 stands that the king ordered the redemption of Srebrenik and Brčko by Matko Talovac. Therefore, it might be the case that the agreement about pledging the two estates was concluded around the beginning of the year, but the order of instituting was issued only two months later. Temes I. 632.

<sup>1142</sup> In fact, the Talovac brothers redeemed the castle and the *castellum* from John Garai for exactly the same sum (12.000 florins) for which Garai had held them in pledge. Temes I. 632.

<sup>1143</sup> This is only the royal order of instituting into the market town. In fact, this transaction was a further pledging, the Talovac brothers were entitled to redeem the market town from Stephen Kórógyi.

<sup>1144</sup> Matko's title: *ispán* of Csanád, Keve and Krassó Counties.

<sup>1145</sup> The castle warriors were put in pledge with all their rights, taxes, revenues and the services they had to perform.

<sup>1146</sup> This is only the royal order of instituting the pledgees into the villages.

<sup>1147</sup> They are mentioned as *oppida* in the list of royal possessions.

<sup>1148</sup> Sigismund intended to clear a part (half) of the debt from the revenues of the Maramureş' (Máramaros) salt chamber. In this case, the castle and the villages could be redeemed for 3.701 florins, but if Sigismund failed to do that, then the sum of redemption would have remained unchanged, 7.403 florins.

10-09-1430	The village of Sazdice (Hont)	500	Stephen Aranyi, royal <i>familiaris</i>	DL 69467
before 1431 (1430) <sup>1149</sup>	The castles of Hodejov and Zagyvafő (Gömör, Nógrád) and villages and estates pertaining to them	<sup>1150</sup>	Ladislau Keszi and Michael Etre Kálnai, the castellans of Gede	DL 65031
before 07-11-1430 <sup>1151</sup>	The village of Motvarjevci (Zala)		the widow of John Rupolújvári, Anne, and her son	DL 92795
around 06-02-1431 <sup>1152</sup>	The castle of Hodejov (Gömör) and the desolated castle of Zagyvafő (Nógrád) with their appurtenances; the village of Lökösháza and an estate situated in Bánréve (Gömör); other villages and estates in other counties <sup>1153</sup>	6.500	baron Paul Besenyő Özdögei, former ban of Slavonia and his son	DL 44065
06-04-1431	<i>The castles of Sokolac, Lab, Vrlika, Knin, Osztrovica, Čovka, Rmanj, the castellum of Ripaç, the towns of Bihać and Skradin together with the Vlachs of Croatia, the comitatus of Lika and Poljica</i>	14.000	<i>baron Nicholas Frankopan, ban of Croatia-Dalmatia</i>	DL 88057
26-08-1431	<i>The castle of Bernolákovo, the market towns of Bernolákovo and Senec, the village of Mierovo, and half of the Červeník estate (Pozsony)</i>	1.600	<i>Stephen and George Rozgonyi, ispánok of Pozsony County</i>	DL 12410
11-09-1431	<i>The castle of Bernolákovo, with all its appurtenances (Pozsony)</i>	550	<i>Stephen Rozgonyi, the ispán of Pozsony County</i>	DL 12412

<sup>1149</sup> This is not the year of concluding the transaction but the end of the pledging period for the castellans, because the two of them yielded the castles to Paul Özdögei, the new pledge holder on 6 February 1431.

<sup>1150</sup> Paul Özdögei paid 6.500 florins for redeeming the castles with their appurtenances, but it is unknown whether this was exactly the amount which Keszi and Kálnai paid earlier to the king, or this sum contained the additional fee that probably Özdögei paid to the king for the authorization to redeem the castles. According to this fragmented charter Özdögei paid them several thousands (maybe five, the document is damaged at this part) and 916 florins for the redemption.

<sup>1151</sup> In this royal charter the king acknowledged that he gave the village in pledge to them, however the details of the transaction are not revealed.

<sup>1152</sup> The information about this transaction comes from the year 1435, when Sigismund transferred some of these pledged settlements (Lökösháza and Bánréve) to George Balogi and assures their former pledgee, the son of Paul Özdögei that the rest of the estates that his father took in pledge would remain in pledge for the original sum (6.500) of the transaction. That date of the pledging could be set not long before 6 February 1431, because that day the castellans and former pledgees of Hodejov passed the castle over to Paul Özdögei. DL 65031.

<sup>1153</sup> These estates were situated in the following counties: Hont, Borsod, Abaúj, Pest and Heves.

before 1432 <sup>1154</sup>	The town of Gradec (Zagreb)		John Albeni, the Bishop of Zagreb, royal and imperial arch chancellor	Fejér X/7 436
before 1433 <sup>1155</sup>	The castle of Spišský hrad (Szepes)	1.000 <sup>1156</sup>	baron Peter Berzevici, master of treasury	DL 70875
before 1433 <sup>1157</sup>	The domains of Paul Toldi situated in Bihar and Zaránd counties <sup>1158</sup>	2.000	baron Stephen Bátori, former master of the stewards, and his brothers	DL 30169
before 1434 <sup>1159</sup>	The village of Hrabovo (Nógrád)		George Soós and George Paltari Enhos	DL 67314
16-01-1434	<i>The castles of Sokolac, Lab, Vrlika, Knin, Osztrovica, Čovka, Rmanj, the castellum of Ripač, the towns of Bihać and Skradin together with the Vlachs of Croatia, the comitatus of Lika and Poljica</i>	3.000	<i>baron Stephen Frankopan, ban of Croatia-Dalmatia</i> <sup>1160</sup>	<i>DL 33314</i>
17-01-1434	The market town of Papy with the custom (Arad)	1.200	John Hunyadi, knight of the court	DL 12574
around 15-06-1434 <sup>1161</sup>	The village of Hamuliakovo (Pozsony)		Ladislaus Nagy Czokodi vice-master of horses	DL 12606
before 1435 <sup>1162</sup>	The market town of Bzenica with the custom (Nyitra)	1.100	Peter Nebojszai (Neboyza)	DL 94472

<sup>1154</sup> Bishop Albeni speaks briefly about holding in pledge Gradec in his last will dated to 1432. The town could have been in pledge already in 1405, about this see the subchapter about pledging of towns.

<sup>1155</sup> In 1434 John Perényi redeemed the castle from Berzevici's widow, and according to this document the castle was given in pledge to Peter Berzevici. He died in 1433, thus the transaction should have happened somewhere before that year. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 157.

<sup>1156</sup> 12.000 *quarting*. In November 1433 1.200 *quarting* worth a golden florin, thus 12.000 *quarting* was equivalent to 1.000 florin. DL 30169.

<sup>1157</sup> These estates reverted to the ruler following the death of Paul Toldi, who had pledged them to the Bátori brothers. However, meanwhile it turned out that there was a legal heir of Toldi who claimed these estates for himself. In the end, the Bátories had to cede these possessions to the heir of Toldi after they had received the sum they lent earlier to the ruler. This happened in 1433, and it is not known when the pledging transaction was concluded.

<sup>1158</sup> These were the following villages: Batăr, Salonta, *Chethfalwa* in Bihar, Adea, Olari, *Thwiseghaz*, Şimand, *Visnek*, *Whweth* in Zaránd County.

<sup>1159</sup> In 1434 the king donated the village away and in the charter of the donation is mentioned that it was held in pledge by these persons.

<sup>1160</sup> His father, Nicholas was the initial pledge holder but he died in 1432. Engel, *Geneológia*.

<sup>1161</sup> On this day Ladislaus Nagy redeemed the village from the previous pledge holder, the authorization for redeeming the village should have been issued not long before this date.

<sup>1162</sup> In 1435 the town was pledged further, this is the source of information about this transaction.

1435 <sup>1163</sup>	The castles of Mali Kalnik, Veliki Kalnik (Körös)		Tvrtko II of Bosnia	DL 13137
before 24-04-1435 <sup>1164</sup>	The customs of Poclusa de Barcău and Fughiu villages (Bihar)	500	Francis, George, and Ladislaus Csák	DL 88317, 88513
24-04-1435	The castle of Sólyomkö and the customs of Poclusa de Barcău and Fughiu (Bihar)	6.750	Stephen Bánfi Losonci and Ladislaus Jakcs Kusalyi	DL 88317, 88513
29-05-1435	The castles of Vrbaški grad and Kozarac with the <i>comitatus</i> , the castles' districts and their all appurtenances (Slavonia)	5.100 <sup>1165</sup>	John Blagai	DL 66578
02-06-1435	The market town of Comiat with its district (Temes)	300 <sup>1166</sup>	John Hunyadi	DL 12707
around 05-06-1435 <sup>1167</sup>	The castle and the town of Koprivnica (Körös)		Nicholas Antimfi Tapsonyi	DF 238195
07-06-1435	<b>The castles of Fil'akovo (Nógrád) and Jelšava (Gömör) with their appurtenances</b> <sup>1168</sup>	2.000 <sup>1169</sup>	baron Peter Pelsőci, former <i>ispán</i> of the Székelys; Ladislaus and Emeric Pelsőci	DL 71469
08-06-1435	The castle of Voćin (Körös); the market towns of Borovo and <i>Mykola</i> (Valkó) and all the domains of Michael Mikolai situated in Valkó County <sup>1170</sup>	17.000	baron Ladislaus Garai, the ban of Macsó and his brother Nicholas	DF 33788

<sup>1163</sup> The list of the royal possessions provides information about the pledging. From May 1436 the latest Tvrtko II kept his own castellans in Veliki Kalnik. Engel, *Archontológia*, 371.

<sup>1164</sup> In 1435 the king gave permission to Stephen Bánfi and Ladislaus Jakcs Kusalyi to redeem the customs. There is information about this pledging from here.

<sup>1165</sup> The sum is not the money that Blagai lent to the king but it consists of the following items: 1.600 florins arrears of Blagai's wages for upkeeping the castles, and the annual 500 florins wages due to him again for the same task till the king or his successors would redeem the castles. John Blagai died in 1447, before someone would have redeemed the castles, thus for seven years he received this salary, which at that time was 3.500 florins altogether. About the date of Blagai's death see: Engel, *Geneológia*.

<sup>1166</sup> The market town of Papi had been pledged to Hunyadi earlier. On this date Hunyadi gave *Papy* back to the king and lent 300 florins to him for which the king gave Comiat in pledge.

<sup>1167</sup> This is only the royal order informing the inhabitants of the estate and town about the transaction and ordering them to obey in everything to their new landlord. Nicholas Tapsonyi redeemed Koprivnica from the chapter house of Zagreb, which received them in pledge most likely from Bishop John Albeni. Fejér X/7 436.

<sup>1168</sup> The Pelsőcies managed to redeem only the castle of Jelšava from the queen. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 112. Probably this is why in a charter from 1438 the sum of pledging Jelšava to the Pelsőcies was stipulated in 6.007 florins. DL 13248. However, the contract of this pledging from 1435 clearly states that the 2.000 florins of the Pelsőcies had been already given to the king (*dederunt accomodarunt et realiter assignaverunt*). DL 71469.

<sup>1169</sup> Before taking in pledge the castles first the Pelsőcies had to redeem them for 5.707 florins from Queen Barbara.

<sup>1170</sup> The king already promised the castle in pledge in 1424 to Palatine Nicholas Garai (the father of the present pledgees) in case the owner at that time of the castle, Sigismund Atyinai dies. DL 33411. See the transaction about castle Stupčanica. Mikolai's domains in Valkó county mainly consisted of the estates of Borovo and *Mykola*. Csánki, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza* II, 378.

10-06-1435	A part of the royal estate situated on Kaza (Borsod)	500	George Serkei (Kaplai)	DL 71955
10-06-1435	The market town of Zavar (Pozsony) and the village of Žlkovce (Nyitra)	1.500	Gregory Majtényi and John Újfalusi the castellans of Csejte	DL 73105
around 12-06-1435 <sup>1171</sup>	The village of Solčany (Nyitra)	1.361	Peter Forgách Ghimesi and his relatives	DL 24524, 12715
17-06-1435	The market town of Modra, the villages of Igram and Horné Orešany (Pozsony)	6.060	Paul Wolfurt Vöröskői	DL 12717
before 23-06-1435 <sup>1172</sup>	The market town of Gyöngyös, the estate of Bene with its appurtenances (Heves)	2.000	Stephen Pohárnok and Detre Berzevici	DL 12725
23-06-1435	The market town of Gyöngyös, the estate of Bene with its appurtenances (Heves)	2.100 <sup>1173</sup>	Peter Rozgonyi Bishop of Eger and Stephen Rozgonyi <i>ispán</i> of Temes County	DL 12725
25-06-1435	The castle of Tátika (Zala)	2.000	baron Ivanka, the queen's master of the doorkeepers and George, counts of Krbava	DL 200436
27-06-1435	The castle of Đurđevac (Körös)	13.000	Matko Talovac <i>ispán</i> of Keve and of the royal salt chambers	DF 34067
before 03-10-1435 <sup>1174</sup>	The manor house ( <i>curia allodiale</i> ) of Homoraw and the village of Vrakuňa (Pozsony) <sup>1175</sup>	1.300	John of Reichenau, artillery master	DL 12759
03-10-1435	<i>The manor house (curia allodiale) of Homoraw and the village of Vrakuňa (Pozsony)</i>	1.265	<i>John of Reichenau, artillery master</i>	<i>DL 12759</i>
13-10-1435	The castle of Tátika (Zala)	1.100 <sup>1176</sup>	Ladislaus Petó Gersei and Peter Zalai, the <i>ispánok</i> of Vas County	DL 200437

<sup>1171</sup> This is the royal order of instituting the pledgees into the village.

<sup>1172</sup> The town and the estate was pledged further to the Rozgonyies in 1435, and in that charter this earlier pledging is mentioned.

<sup>1173</sup> The 2.100 florins was the fee that the Rozgonyi brothers paid for the authorization of redeeming the market town and the estate from Stephen Pohárnok and Detre Berzevici. For the redemption itself the Rozgonyies had to pay 2.000 florins in addition.

<sup>1174</sup> In 1435 Sigismund turned again to John of Reichenau for money, and in that charter it is mentioned that the manor house and the village had been given in pledge earlier for this amount of money.

<sup>1175</sup> *Homoraw* was located between the settlements of Komárov and Most pri Bratislave. DL 105414.

<sup>1176</sup> Besides this sum lent to the ruler, Gersei and Zalai had to pay 2.000 florins in addition to the counts of Krbava, Ivanka and George for redeeming the castle from them.

24-10-1435	The market town of Bzenica with the custom (Nytira)	500	Michael Hoffer <i>de Novadomo</i> , the castellan of Éleskő	DL 94472
08-12-1435	<i>The castle of Bosanska Krupa (Zagreb)</i> <sup>1177</sup>	1.100	<i>baron Frederick II of Celje, the count of Zagorje</i> <sup>1178</sup>	DL 12785
before 04-03-1436 <sup>1179</sup>	The villages of Patak and Dejtár, (Nógrád)	2.580	Peter Reichel Mahálfalvi	DF 248255
04-03-1436	The villages of Patak and Dejtár, (Nógrád)	1.000 <sup>1180</sup>	George Pálóci, Archbishop of Esztergom	DF 248255
before 22-05-1436 <sup>1181</sup>	The village of Sommerein (Moson) and the royal estates situated in Donnerskirchen and Purbach (Sopron)	3.604 <sup>1182</sup>	Nicholas Butgesel (Gutgesel)	DF 287126, Történelmi Tár 1855,144
22-05-1436	The yearly tax of Sopron (Sopron)	<sup>1183</sup>	Walpurga, the widow of Nicholas Gutgesel	Történelmi Tár 1855,144
23-05-1436	The village of Sommerein (Moson) and the royal estates situated in Donnerskirchen and Purbach (Sopron)	3.000 <sup>1184</sup>	duke Albert V of Austria, Margrave of Moravia	DF 287126
before 04-06-1436 <sup>1185</sup>	The village of Jahodníky (Turóc)		Nicholas Balicki	DL 63255
04-06-1436	The village of Jahodníky (Turóc)	400 <sup>1186</sup>	Ladislaus Necpáli, the <i>ispán</i> of Trencsén	DL 63255

<sup>1177</sup> In 1429 Sigismund promised to donate the castle to Frederick, but even in the list of the royal possessions from the end of 1437, Bosanska Krupa is under the section of the pledged castles. DL 33939. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 128, 202.

<sup>1178</sup> Frederick became a baron only in 1440 when he filled the position of the ban of Croatia. In 1435 he bore the baronial title after his father who was ban of Croatia-Slavonia. Engel, *Archontológia*, 21,25.

<sup>1179</sup> In 1436 the king pledged the villages to George Pálóci, who first had to redeem them from Peter Reichel. This is the source of information of this earlier pledging.

<sup>1180</sup> This was only the fee that Pálóci paid for the authorization of redeeming the villages. In order to be instituted into the villages Pálóci first had to redeem them from Peter Reichel for 2.580 florins.

<sup>1181</sup> The Austrian duke, Albert V received the estates in pledge in 1436, before this, they were held in pledge by Butgesel. When he received precisely and for how much money are unknown.

<sup>1182</sup> In 22 May 1436 Sigismund took back the estates from Butgesel's widow, and swapped them for the yearly tax of Sopron. The sum of this earlier pledging is mentioned in this document.

<sup>1183</sup> Following the king's request, the widow gave back the village of Sommerein, the estates of Donnerskirchen and Purbach previously pledged to her and her husband for 3.604 florins. King Sigismund paid back 400 florins out of this sum, and for the remaining 3.204 florins he put in pledge the yearly tax of Sopron until he would commission Leonard Noffry or someone else to redeem it.

<sup>1184</sup> Plus 1.500 pounds of Viennese penny.

<sup>1185</sup> In 1436 Ladislaus Necpáli got authorization of redeeming the village from Nicholas Balicki, further details of the transaction are unknown.

<sup>1186</sup> This is only the authorization fee for redeeming the village from Nicholas Balicki. Necpáli had to pay an undisclosed sum to Balicki for the redemption itself.

			County and the castellan of Trencsén	
08-06-1436	<i>The castle of Voćin (Körös) and the castellum of Mykola (Valkó)</i>	3.333	<i>baron Ladislaus Garai, the ban of Macsó</i>	DL 37598
09-06-1436	The village of Dubovec (Körös)		John of Torizella, John Gradel	DL 103578
22-06-1436	<i>The castle of Bernolákovo, the market towns of Bernolákovo and Senec, the village of Mierovo, and half of the Červeník estate; a royal house in Bratislava, and a part of Bratislava's custom (Pozsony)</i> <sup>1187</sup>	1.640	<i>barons Stephen and George Rozgonyi; Simon Rozgonyi, the Bishop of Veszprém</i>	DL 12919
26-06-1436	The castle of Blatnica (Turóc)	2.300	Pongrác Szentmiklósi	DL 94474
around 27-06-1436 <sup>1188</sup>	The village of Malý Šariš (Sáros)	1.800 <sup>1189</sup>	Peter and Nicholas Tarkői and their mother	DL 57643
before 1437 <sup>1190</sup>	The village of <i>Nemecse</i> (Pozsony)		Michael Kisfaludi, inhabitant of Trnava	DF 254604, DL 38765
around 27-04-1437 <sup>1191</sup>	The castellum of Nitrianska Blatnica with the oppidum (Nyitra)		royal councilor and <i>familiaris</i> Michael Szendi, and his sons,	DL 57188
around 15-05-1437 <sup>1192</sup>	The village of Malý Šariš (Sáros)	<sup>1193</sup>	Stephen Sós Sóvári, <i>ispán</i> of Sáros County, and knight of the court	DL 57667
25-06-1437	<i>The village of Zavar (Pozsony) and (Nyitra)</i> <sup>1194</sup>	100 <sup>1195</sup>	<i>Gregory Majtényi</i>	DL 73107
23-08-1437	Rmanj castle, the district of Lapac and the court of justice pertaining to the castle ( <i>sedium iudicatus</i> ) <sup>1196</sup>	5.000	Catherine Widow of John Frankopan and her son	DL 88445

<sup>1187</sup> The custom and royal house are new additions to Bernolákovo and to the other royal possession which were previously pledged to them.

<sup>1188</sup> This is the royal order of instituting the Tarkőis into the village.

<sup>1189</sup> A year later the village was redeemed from the Tarkőis, from here it is known the value of the pledging.

<sup>1190</sup> This charter is about redeeming the village from pledge. The details of the transaction itself are not known.

<sup>1191</sup> This is only the royal order of instituting Michael and his relatives into the *castellum*.

<sup>1192</sup> This is only the royal order of instituting into the village.

<sup>1193</sup> The village was held in pledge by the Tarkői family for 1.800 florins. Sóvári paid this sum to redeem the village, but it is not known whether he had to pay to the king also for the authorization of redemption. DL 57668.

<sup>1194</sup> Zavar is mentioned here as village (*possessio*), whereas two years earlier it was mentioned as a market town (*oppidum*). DL 73105.

<sup>1195</sup> This is a loan contracted on an earlier pledging. DL 73105.

<sup>1196</sup> The castle and the district were put in pledge earlier through Matko Talovac. In this charter the ruler confirms the earlier pledging and pledges them again for 5.000 florins.



before 29-08-1437 <sup>1197</sup>	The estate of Mére (Somogy)		Stephen Aranyi, the <i>ispán</i> of Nógrád County	Fejér X/7 852
29-08-1437	The estate of Mére (Somogy)	1.000	Gregory Nempti, guardian ( <i>custos</i> ) of Pécs	Fejér X/7 852
around 30-08-1437 <sup>1198</sup>	The village of Zánka (Zala)		baron Stephen Rozgonyi senior, the <i>ispán</i> of Temes County	DL 13137, 13898
21-09-1437	<i>The district of Comiat</i>	1.250	<i>John Hunyadi and his brother, called also John</i>	DL 13088
23-10-1437	The castle of Döbrököz (Tolna)	3.000	baron Stephen Rozgonyi senior, the <i>ispán</i> of Temes County <sup>1199</sup> and his <i>familiaris</i> Stephen Bátfai	DL 24530
28-10-1437	The castle of Gelnica, the gold, silver and copper mining chambers ( <i>cameras</i> ) of Smolník, Gelnica, Ruda, Telki, Zlatá Idka, Jasov, Tichá Voda, Čenčice	2.600 <sup>1200</sup>	Eberhard Cliber	DF 249918
30-10-1437	The castle of Šintava with its appurtenances situated in Pozsony and Nyitra Counties	3.350	baron Stephen Rozgonyi, the <i>ispán</i> of Pozsony	DL 13100
31-10-1437	<i>The castle of Tátika (Zala)</i>	100	<i>Peter (Pető) and Ladislaus Gersei, the ispánok of Zala and Vas Counties</i>	DL 13103

<sup>1197</sup> This transaction is mentioned in the charter of pledging Mére to Gregory Nempti, but without providing details about the date and its sum.

<sup>1198</sup> This is only the royal order of instituting Rozgonyi into the village.

<sup>1199</sup> Rozgonyi's predecessor, Filippo Scolari as the *ispán* of Temes County was counted among the barons of the country from 1405 onwards. Rozgonyi, while filling Scolari's position as the head of the county's administration, also inherited the baronial title. Engel, *Rövid életrajzok*, 433.

<sup>1200</sup> Cliber was entitled to collect the revenues only for two years, thus 1.300 florins each year. Besides this, Cliber could collect 200 florins in addition for his salary, again only for two years. If the chambers would yield more than 1.500 florins in a year, then the surplus would be the king's, but Eberhard could administer it. In case if these would yield less than 1.500 florins then Cliber could held the pledges for more than two years, till his loan would be paid back. Moreover, the king authorized him to lease them or to pledge them further if the chamber would not produce sufficient revenues to cover his salary.

11-11-1437	The market town of Modra and the villages of Igram and Horné Orešany (Pozsony)	684 <sup>1201</sup>	Michael Ország, royal treasurer and his brother John, judge of the Cumans, and the <i>ispán</i> of Csongrád, Arad, Zaránd	DL 13111
08-11-1437	The village of Mesterfalva, and the custom collected at Bana village (Győr)	2.374	John Berényi Kakas <i>literatus</i>	DF 249243
26-11-1437	<i>The castle of Đurđevac (Körös)</i>	7.000 <sup>1202</sup>	<i>Matko Talovac, the ban of Croatia-Slavonia</i>	DF 231190
03-12-1437	The villages of Pásztó, Sakáloš, Mikola, (Hont) Szakolya and Jenő (Nógrád) <sup>1203</sup>	13.000	baron Peter Cseh Lévai, Transylvanian Voivode	DL 88127
04-12-1437	The villages of Mostová, Matúškovo, Čierny Brod (Pozsony) and Poluvsie (Nyitra)	1.200	barons Stephen and George Rozgonyi, the <i>ispánok</i> of Pozsony County	DL 13124, 13126
1437 <sup>1204</sup>	The castle of Branč (Nyitra)		Pongrác Szentmiklósi	DL 13137 <sup>1205</sup>
1437 <sup>1206</sup>	The castle of Beckov (Pozsony)		Catherine of Stiboricz the daughter of Stibor of Stiboricz jr.	DL 13137
1437	The castle of Medvedgrad (Zágráb)		Cilli family	DL 13137
1437 <sup>1207</sup>	The castle of Koprivnica (Körös)		Ulrich II of Celje	DL 13137
1437	The castle of Šurany (Nyitra)		Conrad Schellendorf	DL 13137

<sup>1201</sup> The whole sum of the pledging is 7.000 florins that consisted of: 6.316 florins for which the pledges had to be redeemed from Paul Wolfurt, and the remaining 684 florins were the salary of Michael Ország which the king owed to pay to him.

<sup>1202</sup> 20.000 florins altogether with the initial pledging of 27 June 1435.

<sup>1203</sup> These villages were the appurtenances of Salgó castle which Sigismund first seized from Nicholas Salgói for money counterfeit, and later ordered to be demolished. Engel, *Salgai Miklós*, 415. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 146.

<sup>1204</sup> Only the list of the royal possessions from 1437 informs about this pledging. Branč was in Stibor of Stiboricz Jr's possession till his death. He died in 1434, therefore the pledging should have occurred sometime between 1434 and 1437. Engel, *Archontológia*, 277.

<sup>1205</sup> The toponyms of the list of the royal demesne from 1437 (DL 13137) are identified on the basis of Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 198-202.

<sup>1206</sup> The pledging should have occurred after Stibor Jr's death (1434). According to his last will, he wanted Catherine to inherit Beckov, however in 1435, when a decision was reached about Stiboricz's inheritance, Catherine's rights to the castle were denied. The pretext of this was that allegedly Stibor senior failed to institute himself in the castle in time, thus Beckov was not lawfully his possession. Dvořáková, *A lovag és királya*, 387, 402-403. Probably a solution for this judicially insecure situation was that Catherine could have kept the castle but only as a pledge.

<sup>1207</sup> Pál Engel dates the pledging to 1436, but he does it without any references. Engel, *Archontológia*, 351.

1437	The market town of Solymos (Heves) <sup>1208</sup>		Peter Rozgonyi Bishop of Eger	DL 13137
1437	The market town of Debrő (Heves)		Peter Rozgonyi Bishop of Eger	DL 13137
1437	The village of Pecica and the villages of the deceased Michael Kerekegyházi (Arad)		baron Ladislaus Garai, the ban of Macsó	DL 13137
1437	The village of Jagodnjak (Baranya)		Ladislaus Maróti	DL 13137
1437	The village of Donja Motičina (Baranya)	<sup>1209</sup>	Ladislaus Maróti	DL 13137
1437	The village of Ugra (Heves) <sup>1210</sup>		Stephen and Nicholas Pelsőci	DL 13137
1437	The village of Nitrianska Blatnica (Nyitra)		Michael Szendi	DL 13137
1437 <sup>1211</sup>	The village of Petrova Ves (Nyitra)		Nicholas (Nikolajko) of Stiboricz	DL 13137
1437	The village of Velké Kostolány (Nyitra)		Friedrich Grunberg	DL 13137
1437	The villages of Martonvására (Fejér) and Agárd (Nógrád)		John “Black” Berzevici	DL 13137, 13523
1437	The village of Malé Teriakovce (Kis-Hont)		Stephen Pohárnok Berzevici	DL 13137, 68986
1437	The village of <i>Jost</i> <sup>1212</sup>		baron George Hédervári, former master of horse	DL 13137
1437	The villages of Gbelce, Bátorove Kosihy, Nová Vieska (Esztergom)		Ladislaus Ludányi	DL 13137

<sup>1208</sup> In 1430 it was donated to him, not pledged. Fejér X/7, 203. Csánki, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza* I, 69.

<sup>1209</sup> 5.000 florins could have been the sum of the transaction because in 1469 the Matucsina family redeemed the settlement for this sum. Dezső Csánki, “Ajnárd-fiak és Matucsinaiak” [The Ajnárd sons and the Matucsina family] *Századok* 27, no. 1 (1893): 225. Csánki, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza* II, 506, 553-554.

<sup>1210</sup> A data from 1438 contradicts the information of the list of the royal possessions. In March 1438 King Albert donated Ugra with some other estates to the Nánai Kompolt family, and the deed of donation claims that prior to this act, the estates had been in the possession of the Ugrai family and devolved on the king after the Ugrais’ extinction on male line. DL 13160. Csánki, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza* I, 81.

<sup>1211</sup> Nicholas Stiboricz had had no interest in Hungary until his cousin Stibor of Stiboricz Jr. did not choose him as one of his possible heirs in his last will written in 1431. The pledging presumably happened after this event, however, a court decision from 1435 prescribed that his estates should have to been confiscated due to treason. Nonetheless, according to the list of the royal possessions in 1437 he still held Petrova Ves in pledge from the king. Dvořáková, *Lengyelek*, 394-395.

<sup>1212</sup> Jost is an unidentified settlement, Pál Engel proposed that probably Jose was standing in the original document and due to copying error it became Jost. Engel identified the Latin toponym of Jose with the estates of Józsa Szerecsen Kristallóci situated in Kőrös County. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 200.

1437	The village of Bana with the custom and <i>Beed predium</i> (Komárom) <sup>1213</sup>	1.100 <sup>1214</sup>	Jeromos Kolos Némai	DL 13137, 92894
1437 <sup>1215</sup>	The villages of Tura and Hévizvölgye with their appurtenances <sup>1216</sup> (Pest)	5.000 <sup>1217</sup>	Đurađ Branković, despot of Serbia <sup>1218</sup>	DL 13137, 13404
1437 <sup>1219</sup>	The village of Lovászpataona with the <i>predia</i> of Szerecsen, Udvarnok, and Szerdahely (Veszprém)	2.250	Csupor Demetrius, bishop of Knin and his relatives	DL 13137, 92894

### Pledgings that have never materialized

23-10-1394	The castle of Steničnjak (Zágráb) <sup>1220</sup>	3.000	Mikcs Prodavizi	DL 34040
06-05-1430	The castles of Sokol, Lábvár, Vrlika, Knin, Osztrovica, Csóka, Rmanj, the <i>castellum</i> of Ripács, the towns of Bihács and Scardona together with the Vlachs of Croatia, the <i>comitatus</i> of Lika and Poljica <sup>1221</sup>		Hermann II of Celje	DF 258343, 287113

<sup>1213</sup> *Unum tributum.*

<sup>1214</sup> The sum of the pledging is known from a charter of King Albert from 1438, by which the king swapped estates with Némai.

<sup>1215</sup> The list of the royal possessions is the reference point for the date.

<sup>1216</sup> For the list of appurtenances see: DL 13520.

<sup>1217</sup> The sum is known from King Albert's charter from 1439, when he donated the villages to Stephen Rozgonyi senior, who first had to redeem the villages for 5.000 florins.

<sup>1218</sup> *Apud despotum impignoraticie.*

<sup>1219</sup> Information about this pledging is provided by a charter of King Albert from 1438, when he took back the village of Bana from Jeromos Kolos Némai and swapped it for Lovászpataona. However, already in 1425, the Csupor family had Lovászpataona under their command, but the king swapped it for some other estates. ZsO XII. 1425. Nonetheless, in 1435 and 1436 it was mentioned under the Csupors' authority again. Csánki, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza III*, 214-215, 278.

<sup>1220</sup> The castle was pledged by King Louis I to Stephen Frankopan, and Prodavizi obtained authorization for redeeming it from Stephen Frankopan's widow. However, Prodavizi failed to redeem the castle, in 1401 it was still held in pledge by the widow. DL 34052. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 158. According to the charter of the pledging, Prodavizi handed over the 3.000 florins to the king (*integraliter amministravit seu assignavit*), but it is unknown how he was recompensed after he failed to take the castle in pledge.

<sup>1221</sup> This was only an authorization for redeeming these estates from the Frankopans, but a year later it was still held in pledge by them. DL 88057.

10-11-1435	The castles of Fiľakovo (Nógrád) and Jelšava with their appurtenances (oppida Fiľakovo and Jelšava, etc.) and the tax of the town of Gemer (Gömör) <sup>1222</sup>	3.300 <sup>1223</sup>	barons John and Stephen Perényi <sup>1224</sup>	DL 12770
23-09-1437	The castle of Döbrököz (Tolna) <sup>1225</sup>	3.000	Thomas Újvári	DL 88125
08-12-1437	The castle of Cserép; the villages of Kövesd and Keresztes (Borsod) <sup>1226</sup>	4.000	Just Frankussói and Henning Czernin, knights of the court	DL 63135
31-05-1424	Stupčanica castle		George Bazini	DL 11514
1437	The castle of Šarišský (Sáros) <sup>1227</sup>	900	Nicholas Perényi	DL 57677

<sup>1222</sup> According to the phrasing of the charter the Perényis handed over 3.300 florins to the king (*dederunt, accommodarunt et realiter concesserunt*). Nonetheless, they did not manage to take the castles in pledge. According to the list of royal domains Jelšava was held in pledge by the Bebek family in 1437, and Fiľakovo was pledged to the Perényis only in 1438 by Queen Elisabeth. Engel, *Királyi hatalom* 112, 118-119, 202. Engel, *Archontológia*, 313.

<sup>1223</sup> This was only the sum they paid for the authorization of redeeming the castles from the pledgees, the Pelsőcies. For the redemption itself the two Perényies had to pay 7.707 florins.

<sup>1224</sup> They were the sons of the deceased Emeric Perényi, former cup-bearer, hence the baronial title of the sons.

<sup>1225</sup> The castle was held as a *honor* by Stephen Bátfai and the opportunity was offered to Újvári to take it in pledge. However, a month later Sigismund pledged it Stephen Bátfai and his lord, Stephen Rozgonyi senior.

<sup>1226</sup> This transaction was concluded only a day before Sigismund's death, and maybe that was the reason why the knights could not institute themselves into the castle and the villages. A few months later, the castle was in Queen Elisabeth's possession. Engel, *Királyi hatalom*, 102.

<sup>1227</sup> From 1435 the castles was under the authority of George and Stephen Sívári Sóós, and according to the list of royal estates, they held in *pro honore* also in 1437, thus Perényi could not take it in pledge. For more see: Ibid, 146-147.

## Gazetteer of place names

Identification of the toponyms is based on: Engel, *Magyarország a középkor végén*, Csánki, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza*, Csánki, *Körösmegye a XV-ik században*, Házi, *Pozsony vármegye középkori földrajza*, Herczegh, *Sopron vármegye a Hunyadiak korában*.

First the variant of the place name given by the charters are listed, then (if there is) the modern Hungarian name, and at the end the current official name and the country's name in parenthesis. For example: Vörösvár (toponym of the charter) Vágvörösvár (the modern Hungarian name) Červeník (the current official name). Settlements that are in modern day Hungary, and their modern and medieval names are identical, are not listed here.

Acsa = vanished, around Tövisköz (Hun.)  
 Adea = Kót = Kolt = Ágya (Rom.)  
 Agárd = Ósagárd (Hun.)  
 Alsóigazó = vanished, around Apadia (Rom.)  
 Arcalia = Árokalja (Rom.)  
 Bana = Bána (Hun.)  
 Banská Bystrica = Besztercebánya (Slova.)  
 Bardejov = Bártfa (Slova.)  
 Bárdudvarnok = Bárd (Hun.)  
 Batăr = Bátor = Feketebátor (Rom.)  
 Bátorove Kosihy = Bátorkesz = Bátorkeszi (Slova.)  
 Beckov = Bolondóc (Slova.)  
 Béd = Bőd (vanished) its exact location is unknown  
 Bednja = Bednya (Cro.)  
 Belá = Béla = Turócbéla (Slova.)  
 Belgrad = Nándorfehérvár (Serb.)  
 Beloczfalva = somewhere under the current territory of Cermei (Rom.)  
 Bene (vanished) = Bene puszta (Hun.)  
 Berechiu = Belénszeg (Rom.)  
 Berechiu = Papfalva (Rom.)  
 Berechiu = Tolmács (Rom.)  
 Bernolákovo = Cseklész (Čeklís) (Slova.)  
 Bernstein = Borostyánkő (Aust.)  
 Besztegnyő = probably under the current territory of Şomoşcheş (Rom.)  
 Biely Kameň = Szentgyörgy (Pozsony) (Slova.)  
 Bihác = Bihács (BH)  
 Bili Brig = Dobóc (Cro.)  
 Blatné = Sárfő (Pozsony) = Pozsonysárfő (Slova.)  
 Blatnica (Slova.)  
 Bogdanovci = Mikola (Cro.)  
 Boghiş = Bagos (Szilágybagos) (Rom.)  
 Boleta = vanished, maybe around Kisdorog (Hun.)  
 Borovo = Boró (Cro.)  
 Bosanska Krupa = Krupa (BH)  
 Bozsor = Traian Vuia (Rom.)

Böszörmény = Hajduböszörmény (Hun.)  
 Branč (Podbranč) = Berencs (Berencsváralja) (Slova.)  
 Brčko = Barkaszád (BH)  
 Brzotín = Berzéte (Slova.)  
 Bužane = Busán (Cro.)  
 Bystrica (Považský hrad) = Beszterce (Slova.)  
 Bzenica = Szénásfalu (Szénesfalu) (Slova.)  
 Čakovec = Csáktornya (Cro.)  
 Cămărașu = Pusztakamarás (Rom.)  
 Căpâlnaș = Szád = Szádia (Rom.)  
 Carevdar (Carovdar) = Cerovaborda = Ceraborda (Cro.)  
 Čataj = Csataj (Slova.)  
 Čavlovica = Mecszenicze (Cro.)  
 Čenčice = Zunkendorf (Czykendorf) = Csontfalu (Slova.)  
 Cermei = Hodos (Zaránd) = Bánhodos (Rom.)  
 Červeník = Vörösvár = Vágvörösvár (Slova.)  
 Červený Kameň = Vöröskő (Slova.)  
 Cheresig = Körösszeg (Rom.)  
 Chintelnic = Kentelke (Rom.)  
 Chynorany = Henyeren (Slova.)  
 Čierny Brod = Felvízkelet = Vízkelet (Slova.)  
 Comiat = Komjáti (Rom.)  
 Čovka, Veliki Stenjani = Csóka (BH)  
 Csabda = Csabja (vanished) (Hun.)  
 Csátfalva = vanished, probably it was incorporated into Batăr (Rom.)  
 Dâmbău = Küküllődombó = Dombó (Rom.)  
 Debrő = Aldebrő/Feldebrő (Hun.)  
 Dechtice = Dejte (Slova.)  
 Derékegyház = vanished, south-east from Szentes (Hun.)  
 Devín = Dévény (Slova.)  
 Diósjenő = Jenő (Hun.)  
 Dobrá Voda = Jókő (Slova.)  
 Donja Motičina = Matucsina = Alsómatucsina (Cro.)  
 Donnerskirchen = Csákány; Fertőfehéregyháza (Aust.)  
 Drenovac = Darnóc (Cro.)  
 Dubovc = Dubovec, or maye around Kloštar Ivanić (Cro.)  
 Đurđevac = Szentgyörgy (Kőrös) (Cro.)  
 Fârdea = Turd = Törd (Rom.)  
 Felsőigazó = vanished, around Apadia (Rom.)  
 Fil'akovo = Fülek (Slova.)  
 Forna-Szentmiklós = Forna = Fornapuszta (Hun.)  
 Földvár = Dunaföldvár (Hun.)  
 Fughiu = Fugyi (Rom.)  
 Garešnica = Berivojszentiván (Cro.)  
 Garignica (vanished) = around Berek (Cro.)  
 Gbelce = Köbölkút (Slova.)

Gelnica = Gölnic (Slova.)  
 Gemer = Gömör = Sajógömör (Slova.)  
 Gesztes = Várgesztes (Hun.)  
 Grabovác (vanished) = its exact location is unknown, somewhere in the Tuzla region (BH)  
 Gradec = Zagreb = Zágráb (Cro.)  
 Hajnáčka (Hajnacžka) = Ajnácskő (Slova.)  
 Halmajugra = Ugra = Hevesugra (Hun.)  
 Hamuliakovo = Nagygutor = Gutor (Slova.)  
 Hanigovce = Újvár (Sáros County) (Slova.)  
 Haraszti = Dunaharaszti (Hun.)  
 Hévizvölgye = Galgahévíz (Hun.)  
 Hniezdne = Gnézda (Slova.)  
 Hodejov = Gede (Slova.)  
 Hodoş = Hódos (Rom.)  
 Horné Orešany = Némethdiós = Felsődiós (Slova.)  
 Hrabovo = Petri (Slova.)  
 Hričov = Hricsó (Slova.)  
 Hrušov = Hruszó (Slova.)  
 Igram = Igrám (Slova.)  
 Iván (vanished) = Pusztaközépiván = Nádujfalu (Hun.)  
 Jagodnjak = Csemény (Cro.)  
 Jahodníky = Epres (Slova.)  
 Jarovce = Radendorf (Slova.)  
 Jasov = Jászó (Slova.)  
 Jelšava = Jolsva (Slova.)  
 Jobbágy = Jobbágyi (Hun.)  
 Keresztes = Mezőkeresztes (Hun.)  
 Kesző = maybe Mezőkeszi = Poľný Kesov (Slova.)  
 Kisapar = Aparhant (Hun.)  
 Kittsee = Köpcsény (Aut.)  
 Knin (Cro.)  
 Komárno = Komárom (Slova.)  
 Komárov = Szunyogdi (Slova.) Most pri Bratislave  
 Koprivnica = Kőkapronca (Cro.)  
 Koprivnica = Kővár (Kőrös) = Kőkapronca (Cro.)  
 Korlátka = Korlátkő (Slova.)  
 Koson = Kaszony = Mezőkaszony (Ukr.)  
 Košťany nad Turcom = Kostyán (Slova.)  
 Kovarce = Kovarc (Slova.)  
 Kozara = around Kozarac (BH.)  
 Kökényes = vanished (Hun.)  
 Kremnica = Körmöcbánya (Slova.)  
 Križevci = Kőrös (Cro.)  
 Kružná = Kőrös (Gömör County) = Berzétékőrös (Slova.)  
 Lab = Lábvár (Cro.)  
 Lednica = Lednic (Slova.)



Lehnice = Lég (Slova.)  
 Létavértes = Léta (Hun.)  
 Levkuška = Lőkösháza (Slova.)  
 Lika (Cro.)  
 Likavka = Likava (Slova.)  
 Lipova Kosa = Lippa (BH)  
 Liptovský Hrádok = Újvár (Liptó County) (Slova.)  
 Litva = Lietava (Slova.)  
 Lockenhaus = Léka (Aust.)  
 Ľubietová = Libetbánya (Slova.)  
 Ludanice = Ludány (Slova.)  
 Mácsa = Galgamácsa (Hun.)  
 Mala/ Veľká Chocholná = Chocholna = Kis/ Nagytarajos (Slova.)  
 Malé Teriakovce = Törék = Orlajtörék (Slova.)  
 Male/Velké Ostratice = Sztrce = Kis-Sztrice /Nagy-Sztrice (Sándori) (Slova.)  
 Mali Kalnik = Kiskemlék (Cro.)  
 Malinovo = Éberhárd (Slova.)  
 Malý Šariš = Kissáros (Slova.)  
 Mănăștur = Monostor = Vizesmonostor (Rom.)  
 Martonvására = Martonvásár (Hun.)  
 Matúškovo = Taksony (Slova.)  
 Međimurje = Muraköz (Cro./Slove.)  
 Medvedgrad = Medvevár (Cro.)  
 Mére = Mérő = Kaposmérő (Hun.)  
 Mesterfalva = vanished, around Kisécs (Hun.)  
 Mezőkövesd = Kövesd (Hun.)  
 Mierovo = Béke (Slova.)  
 Miklušovce = Miklósvágása (Slova.)  
 Mintia = Németi (Rom.)  
 Močenok = Mocsonok (Slova.)  
 Modra = Modor (Slova.)  
 Moldava nad Bodvou = Szepsi (Slova.)  
 Most pri Bratislave = Prukk (Slova.)  
 Mostová = Kürt = Hidaskürt (Slova.)  
 Motvarjevci = Szentlászló (Slove.)  
 Mukachevo = Munkács (Ukr.)  
 Nădlac = Nagylak (Rom.)  
 Nagyesztergár = Esztergár (Hun.)  
 Nemčice = Nemcsics (Slova.)  
 Nemece = vanished, around Bohdanovce nad Trnavou (Slova.)  
 Nitra = Nyitra (Slova.)  
 Nitrianska Blatnica = Sárfő (Nyitra) = Nyitrasárfő (Slova.)  
 Nitrianska Streda = Szerdahely = Nyitraszerdahely (Slova.)  
 Nová Vieska = Kisújfalu (Slova.)  
 Obrovnica = Orbona (Cro.)  
 Olari = Varsány = Fazekasvarsány (Rom.)

Oponice = Appony (Slova.)  
 Orava = Árva (Slova.)  
 Ostrovany = Osztropatak (Slova.)  
 Ostrovica (Cro.)  
 Ostrý Kameň = Éleskő (Slova.)  
 Óvár = Mosonmagyaróvár (Hun.)  
 Ozalj (Cro.)  
 Ölyved = somewhere near to Chereluş (Rom.)  
 Palota = Tótpalota = Csanádpalota (Hun.)  
 Pama (Baumern) = Körtvélyes = Lajtakörtvélyes (Aut.)  
 Papi = situated between Arad and (Ó)Pécska = Pecica (Rom.)  
 Patona = Lovászpataka (Hun.)  
 Pecica = Marján = (Ó)Pécska (Rom.)  
 Peştişu (Mic/Mare) = Pestes (Alsó/Felső) (Rom.)  
 Peştişu Mare = Tamástelke (Rom.)  
 Petelea = Petele (Rom.)  
 Peteranec = Szentpéter (Cro.)  
 Petrova Ves = Péterfalva = Péterlak (Slova.)  
 Pezinok = Bazin (Slova.)  
 Pişchia = Sarád (Rom.)  
 Plavecký hrad = Detrekő (Slova.)  
 Pocluşa de Barcău = Poklostelek (Rom.)  
 Podolíneč = Podolin (Slova.)  
 Podolje = Bodolya = Nagybodolya (Cro.)  
 Poljica (Cro.)  
 Polusie = Poluzs = Erdórét (Slova.)  
 Potorjan (Cro.) = its exact location is unknown, maybe in the region of Donje Pazarište  
 Pozdišovce = Pazdics (Slova.)  
 Prešov = Eperjes (Slova.)  
 Purbach am Neusiedlersee = Purbach (Feketeváros) (Aust.)  
 Rača = Racsa (Cro.)  
 Rača = Récse (Slova.)  
 Rajec (Slova.)  
 Ratkovic = Garanpataka = Gradpataka (Cro.)  
 Ripač = Ripács (BH)  
 Rmanj (BH)  
 Rohoncz = Rohonca = Orahovica = deserted settlement around Velika (Cro.)  
 Ruda = Rudabánya (Hun.)  
 Rudná = Rudna = Rozsnyórudna (Slova.)  
 Rusovce = Oroszvár (Slova.)  
 Sajókaza = Kaza (Hun.)  
 Sakáloš = Szakálás = Ipolyszakállos (Slova.)  
 Salonta = Szalonta = Nagyszalonta (Rom.)  
 Sâmboleni = Szombattelke = Mezőszombattelke (Rom.)  
 Šamorín = Somorja (Slova.)  
 Sânpetru Mare = Füged (Rom.)

Sărata = Sófalva (Rom.)  
 Sărățel = Oroszfalva = Szeretfelva (Rom.)  
 Šarišský hrad = Sáros (Slova.)  
 Săsar = Szaszár = Zazár (Rom.)  
 Satchinez = Kenéz (Rom.)  
 Sazdice = Százd (Slova.)  
 Scharfeneck (Aut.)  
 Sedlice = Szedlice (Slova.)  
 Șemlacu Mare = Mezősomlyó (Rom.)  
 Senec = Szempcz = Szenc (Slova.)  
 Sered' = Szered (Slova.)  
 Šíd = Sid = Gömörsid (Slova.)  
 Siget in der Wart = Sziget = probably Órisziget (Aut.)  
 Șimand = Pél (Rom.)  
 Sîngeorge = Szentgyörgy (Krassó) (Rom.)  
 Šintava = Sempte (Slova.)  
 Sklabiňa = Szklabinya (Slova.)  
 Skradin = Scardona (Cro.)  
 Slovenská Ľupča = Lipcse (Slova.)  
 Smolník = Szomolnok (Slova.)  
 Șoimi (Peștiș) = Sólyomkő (Sólyomkőpestes) (Rom.)  
 Sokolac (Pset) = Sokol = Szokol (BH)  
 Solčany = Szolcsány (Slova.)  
 Solymos = Gyöngyössolyos (Hun.)  
 Sommerein (Lajtasomorja) (Aut.)  
 Somogyvámos = Kara (Hun.)  
 Șomoșcheș = Csermely = Kiscsermely (Rom.)  
 Șomoșcheș = Kárádráve = Karadrév (Rom.)  
 Șomoșcheș = Mazzagfalva (Rom.)  
 Șomoșcheș = Sámolykeszi = Somoskeszi (Rom.)  
 Spiš (region) = Szepesség (Slova.)  
 Spišský hrad = Szepesvár (Slova.)  
 Srebrenik = Szrebernik (BH)  
 Srijem = Pósahegy (Cro.)  
 Stadtschlaining = Szalónak (Városszalónak) (Aust.)  
 Stará Ľubovňa = Lubló (Slova.)  
 Starhrad = Óvár (Trencsén) (Slova.)  
 Steničnjak = Sztencsnyák (Cro.)  
 Strečno = Sztrecsény (Slova.)  
 Štrigova = Sztrigó = Stridóvár (Cro.)  
 Stropkov = Sztropkó (Slova.)  
 Stupčanica = Szaplónca (Cro.)  
 Súča = Szúcsa (Slova.)  
 Sučany = Szucsány (Slova.)  
 Suggya = somewhere under the current territory of Leucușești (Rom.)  
 Súľov-Hradná = Szulyó = Szulyóvárálja (Slova.)

Šurany = Surány (Slova.)  
 Šúrovce = Súr (Slova.)  
 Szakolya= Szokolya (Hun.)  
 Szomajom = Kaposfő (Hun.)  
 Szurdokpüspöki = Püspöki (Hun.)  
 Tamásháza = vanished, around Mezőhegyes (Hun.)  
 Tăuții de Sus/Jos = Tótfalu = Felső/Alsótótfalu (Rom.)  
 Telki = Telkibánya  
 Terjék = vanished (Hun.)  
 Tichá Voda = Stillbach = Lassúpatak (Slova.)  
 Tolkaj = Tokaj = Kaposszerdahely (Hun.)  
 Tolnavár = Tolna (Hun.)  
 Topoľčany = Tapolcsány (Slova.)  
 Topoľníky = Nyárasd = Nárasd (Slova.)  
 Torpa = Tarpa (Hun.)  
 Tövisgyház (vanished) (Rom.)  
 Trenčín = Trencsén (Slova.)  
 Trnava = Nagyszombat (Slova.)  
 Udvarnok (vanished) near to today's Patona (Hun.)  
 Valea Lungă = Hosszúaszó (Rom.)  
 Vámosmikola = Mikola (Hont County) (Hun.)  
 Vânători = Csígedszeg (Rom.)  
 Vânători = Királymezeje (Rom.)  
 Vânători = Vadász (Rom.)  
 Vărădia = Varadia (Rom.)  
 Veliki Kalnik = Nagykelel (Cro.)  
 Veľká Čalomija = Csalomia = Nagycsalomja (Slova.)  
 Veľké Kostolňany = Szentvid = Nagykosztolány (Slova.)  
 Veľký castle (Sielnica) = Nagyvár (Slova.)  
 Veseuş = Vesszős (Rom.)  
 Víglaš = Veglés (Slova.)  
 Vinica (Cro.)  
 Vinohragyiv = Szőlős = Nagyszőlős (Ukr.)  
 Virovitica = Verőce (Cro.)  
 Visznek (vanished) somewhere near to Chereluş (Rom.)  
 Voćin = Atyina (Cro.)  
 Vrakuňa = Vereknye (Slova.)  
 Vrbaški grad = Orbász (BH.)  
 Vrljica (Cro.)  
 Vršatec = Oroszlánkő (Slova.)  
 Vučjak Kamenski = Kővár (Pozsega) (Cro.)  
 Vukovar = Valkóvár = Vukovár (Cro.)  
 Zamárd = Zamárdi (Hun.)  
 Zavar (Slova.)  
 Žitný ostrov = Csallóköz (Slova.)  
 Zlatá Idka = Ida = Idabánya = Aranyida (Slova)

Žilkovce = Zsúk (Slova.)  
Zsidó = Vácegres (Hun.)