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Family background of Elisabeth Szilágyi



ABSTRACT

To date, there has not been a scientific biographical monograph on Elisabeth (Erzsébet) Szilágyi of Horogszeg in Hungarian historiography, researchers have generally dealt with her life only tangentially. As a result, there is no known treatise that focuses exclusively on the kinship of the Hunyadi era's grand dame. However, the full exploration of Elisabeth's life justifies a more comprehensive treatment of this topic.

In this study, I would like to give an insight into the family background of Elisabeth Szilágyi. Through a literature review of the subject, I will present her lineage, starting from her first known ancestors, and especially her parents' life. In my analysis, I will also examine the geographical and social origins of his parents' families. Furthermore, I will briefly summarise what we know about Elisabeth's siblings and their lineage. In addition, my thesis aims to point out uncertainties which, in my opinion, can be further explored in the future to gain a more thorough understanding of Elisabeth's family background.

KEYWORDS

Genealogy, family origin, lineage, Bellyénis, Szilágyis of Horogszeg

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1. ELISABETH'S ANCESTORS

1.1 Catherine Bellyéni

The mother of Elisabeth Szilágyi of Horogszeg was Catherine, daughter of Michael (Mihály) Bellyéni's son, Stephen (István).¹ We have little certain information about the history of the Bellyéni family, for example, the question of their origin is not clear. In this context, several theories have been put forward in Hungarian historiography. According to one of them, the family originated in the county of Bač (Bács): this was the view of Vilmos Fraknói, Lajos Elekes, Géza Entz and Márton Gyöngyössi.² In contrast, András Kubinyi placed the cradle of the Bellyénis in the county of Bodrog.³ Again, Mór Wertner had a different opinion, according to whom Elisabeth Szilágyi's maternal ancestors can be identified either with the Belyénis of the county of Srem (Szerém) or with the Bellényi family of Bel(l)ény in the county of Gömör, which was also present in the county of Heves.⁴ Finally, based on the digital map database of Pál Engel, the village of Belinc in the county of Nyitra, formerly known as Bellyén, could also be considered.⁵ This county can be excluded because there was no settlement in Heves with a name similar to the surname Bellyéni. The other two counties in northern Hungary – Gömör and Nyitra – cannot be dismissed with absolute certainty, but the family's ties to southern Hungary (estates and marriages) cast doubt on them. Thus, in my opinion, it is advisable to look for the possible origin of the Bellyénis in the counties of Bač, Bodrog or Srem. In Bodrog there was also no place with a name that resembles the family name.⁶ According to Vilmos Fraknói, the seat of the Bellyénis was Bellyefalva in the county of Bač (presumably based on the relative similarity between the

¹ To this day, the family tree of the Bellyénis has not been edited. The genealogical order, which can be seen above is known from the document of the chapter of Bač issued on 22 July 1410 and from the document of country judge Simon Rozgonyi dated 7 September 1410, in which he transcribed it. These sources give the sound form of the surname as *'de Balyen'* (ZsO II/2. No. 7781.; DL 9661.) or *'de Belyen'* (ZsO II/2. No. 7907.; DL 9661.). However, in the diploma issued by George (György) Lackfi, the ban of Mačva (Macsó) on 8 September 1392, the forms *'de Bylien'* and *'de Belien'* (ZsO I. No. 2618., DL 42520.) are used. Besides, there are also several different versions of the family name in the scientific literature. István Kaprinai wrote it as *'de Bellen'* (KAPRINAI 1771. 196. note 2.), Mór Wertner as *'Belyéni'* (WERTNER 1900. 38–39.), and Enikő Rüz-Fogarasi as *'Bellényi'* (RÜSZ-FOGARASI 2009. 194.). Nevertheless, Dezső Csánki (CSÁNKI 1894. 175.), Vilmos Fraknói (FRAKNÓI 1913. 11.), Bálint Hóman (HÓMAN 1940. 177.), Lajos Elekes (ELEKES 1952. 91. note 47., 92.), Géza Entz (ENTZ 1957. 229.), Zsuzsa Teke (TEKE 1997. 27.), András Kubinyi (KUBINYI 2001. 14.) and Márton Gyöngyössi (GYÖNGYÖSSI 2014. 18.) all wrote the family name as *'Bellyéni'*. Since the latter version has become the standard one in Hungarian historiography, in my thesis I will use the form Bellyéni.

² FRAKNÓI 1913. 11.; ELEKES 1952. 92.; GYÖNGYÖSSI 2014. 18.

³ KUBINYI 2001. 14.

⁴ WERTNER 1900. 38–39., 38. note 4. For Bellény in Gömör county see: CSÁNKI 1890. 131.; GYÖRFFY 1987b. 486–487.; for Bellyén in Szerém county: CSÁNKI 1894. 241.; and for both: ENGEL 2020.

⁵ ENGEL 2020.

⁶ ENGEL 2020.; CSÁNKI 1894. 188–212.; GYÖRFFY 1987a. 704–732.

prefix “Bellye-” in the name of the settlement and the sound form of the surname Bellyéni), but he did not provide any reference for his claim.⁷ In 1410, the then-married Catherine Bellyéni got involved in a lawsuit with the Keresztúri family from the county of Bač, because they had usurped from her the Bellyéni estates in the same county – including Bellyefalva – which, after the family’s death on the sons’ side, had been the marriage dowry of Catherine as the only surviving direct descendant.⁸ The possession of the Bellyénis in Bač does not necessarily prove that their ancestral nest was also here. In addition, the name Bellyefalva appears in sources about the trial as “*Bellyefalua*”, “*Welefalua*”, “*Vellefalua*” and “*Veľefalua*”,⁹ so the derivation of the surname Bellyéni from this is not correct. All this leads me to believe that, that this county cannot be considered the place of origin of the family either. Consequently, it seems that the source of the surname could be the name of the already mentioned village of Bellény/Bellyén in the county of Srem, which is the most similar to it. Thus, I think it is possible, that the Bellyén family, who came from here, settled and acquired estates in the neighbouring county of Bač. However, further research is needed to determine the origin of the family more precisely, and it is worthwhile to include sources of other families with the same surname.

The social identity of the Bellyénis is also disputed. While Géza Entz referred to them as a lesser noble family,¹⁰ András Kubinyi and Márton Gyöngyössy listed them among the more prestigious noble families of the South.¹¹ In her popularizing summary, Zsuzsa Teke also described them as middle noble,¹² while Bálint Hóman claimed that at the end of the 14th century, Elisabeth Szilágyi’s parents had risen from the ranks of the middle nobility.¹³ Although the size of their initial land holdings is currently unknown, the nine places named in the land lawsuit of 1410,¹⁴ which were the patrimony of Catherine Bellyéni, clearly indicate their status of the middle nobility.

The coat of arms of the Bellyéni family was also unknown for a long time. It was discovered by Géza Entz in the 1950s, on the inside of the lion-decorated fountain of the royal palace of Visegrád, and he thought that it probably depicted the head of an ox.¹⁵

To date, historians have not been able to identify any other female ancestors of Elisabeth Szilágyi apart from her mother. However, in a litigation delayer diploma issued by George Lackfi,¹⁶ the ban of Mačva, on 8 September 1392, a certain “*Catherine, wife of master Stephen Bylien (Belien), son of Michael Bylien (Belien)*” appears, who postponed the dispute with the

⁷ FRAKNÓI 1913. 12.

⁸ Information about the lawsuit can be found in the documents of the chapter of Bač issued on 30 May and 22 July of this year, and in the document of the country judge Simon Rozgonyi of 7 September, which transcribed them: CD X/5. No. 34.; ZsO II/2. Nos 7639., 7781., 7907.; DL 9661. See also: FRAKNÓI 1913. 11–13.; GYÖNGYÖSSY 2014. 18.; CSÁNKI 1894. 144–145, 154, 175.

⁹ ZsO II/2. Nos 7781., 7907.; DL 9661.; CSÁNKI 1894. 144.

¹⁰ ENTZ 1957. 229.

¹¹ KUBINYI 2001. 14.; GYÖNGYÖSSY 2014. 18.

¹² TEKE 1997. 27.

¹³ HÓMAN 1940. 177.

¹⁴ Keresztúr, Bellyefalva, Erdőmegy, Kerek, Dál, Csörög, Verőfény, Boldogasszonyteleke and Kamarás. At the end of the trial, the first eight of these were divided between Catherine and the Keresztúris. Of these, the noblewoman eventually received a third of the estate of Keresztúr and half of the other seven, see sources and literature cited in note 9.

¹⁵ ENTZ 1957. 229.; GYÖNGYÖSSY 2014. 18. note 23.

¹⁶ ENGEL 1996. I. 28.

members of the Keresztúri family from the county of Bač.¹⁷ I do not rule out the possibility that Catherine is the mother of Catherine Bellyéni, i.e., the maternal grandmother of Elisabeth Szilágyi. This seems to be supported by the fact that the index of the first volume of the Zsigmond-era documentary archives, which contains the document in regist form, indicates that the family in question is called “*Belyéni*”.¹⁸ In addition, the names of Michael and his son, Stephen in the source correspond to the names of Catherine Belyéni’s grandfather and father. Although the Keresztúri family is referred to in several places in the literature as being related to Catherine Bellyéni (side-branch), this is not confirmed by written sources in any case,¹⁹ and there is no reference to their blood relationship in the documents of the 1410 trial.²⁰ In any case, if the Bellyénis and the Keresztúris were indeed related, we can assume that the surname of Catherine mentioned in 1392 was Keresztúri. However, this assumption is difficult to prove because of the rather scarce resources.

As our sources on Catherine Bellyéni are very few, we know very little about her life. Her presence in the available sources can be traced between 1410 and 1438. The date of her birth is unknown, and, based on the documents that have been discovered so far, we can only approximate it within a broad range of years. It is of some help to find out when he married Ladislás (László) Szilágyi. Vilmos Fraknói gave two dates for the wedding: first the end of 1409, then 1410.²¹ Lajos Elekes and Márton Gyöngyössi also placed the wedding at almost the same time, in the winter of 1409/1410.²² King Sigismund (Zsigmond) of Luxemburg’s charter on 24 February 1409, which was issued to Ladislás Szilágyi and others, does not mention that Ladislás was married.²³ In the above-mentioned document of the chapter of Bač issued on 30 May 1410 concerning his land dispute with the Keresztúris, in which her name appears for the first time, Catherine is already mentioned as Ladislás’s wife.²⁴ From this document, we also learn that Ladislás Szilágyi, on behalf of his wife and through his representative, lodged a protest in front of the chapter of Bač on the day after the feast of the Holy Trinity, i.e. on 19 May of the same year, against Ladislás Keresztúri and his mother for their above-mentioned usurpation of property. The sources are silent about the motive behind this action, but it can be assumed that the Keresztúris wanted to prevent Catherine from taking the Bellyéni estates, which they also claimed, with her as a dowry to her marriage. If this line of reasoning is correct, the marriage can be dated shortly before 19 May 1410, probably in the spring of that year. Given that in the 14th and 15th centuries, the minimum legal age for girls to marry was 12,²⁵ Catherine must have been at least 12 years old when she married in 1410, so her birth would have been no later than

¹⁷ ZsO I. No. 2618.

¹⁸ ZsO I. 702.

¹⁹ FRAKNÓI 1913. 12.; ELEKES 1952. 92.; GYÖNGYÖSSY 2014. 18. Bálint Hóman directly claimed that Catherine Bellyéni’s maternal ancestors were the Keresztúri family, whose seat was Keresztúr in the county of Bač: HÓMAN 1940. 177.

²⁰ CD X/5. No. 34; ZsO II/2 Nos 7639., 7781., 7907.; DL 9661.

²¹ FRAKNÓI 1913. 12, 15. note 2.

²² ELEKES 1952. 90–92.; GYÖNGYÖSSY 2014. 18.

²³ ZsO II/2. No. 6606.; MHH I. No. 1.

²⁴ Although Catherine’s surname is not yet mentioned in this document, from the other two documents cited above it is clear that it is Catherine Bellyéni, see the sources cited in note 9.

²⁵ HOMOKI-NAGY 2001. 25, 2007. 94–95; BÓDINÉ BELIZNAI – ZLINSZKY 2007. 145.

1398. The earliest date is presumably given by the already cited litigation delayer diploma of 1392, in which her name does not yet appear, i.e., she was probably born sometime after its issue (assuming that it does indeed include her parents). Based on all this, the presumed date of birth of Catherine Bellyéni can be dated between 1392 and 1398.

The time of death of Elisabeth Szilágyi's mother is also a mystery. The last document in which she is referred to as a living person is the charter of the chapter of Bač dated 26 April 1438, which states that she was a widow.²⁶ After that, we hear no more of her, so she died sometime after that, at an unknown date.

1.2 Ladislas Szilágyi of Horogszeg

Elisabeth Szilágyi's father was Ladislas, son of Nicholas (Miklós) Bernolti, son of Loránd.²⁷ Like the Bellyénis, the origin of the Szilágyis of Horogszeg is also questionable, and to answer this question, many different theories have been put forward in Hungarian and foreign historiography.²⁸ One of these is the group of conceptions that can be summarised as the Garázda theory, which has in common that the Szilágyi family originated from a clan common with the Garázda family of Mecsenice/Keresztúr, but they describe the genesis of the family in different ways in terms of geography and ethnicity.²⁹ Iván Nagy and Mór Wertner considered the Szilágyis to be of Hungarian mother tongue, but while Nagy believed that they were descended from the Garázda clan, which had estates in Bulgaria, Wertner considered the family to be derived from the Tétény clan, which had estates in the county of Kőrös.³⁰ In contrast, Vilmos Fraknói and the Serbian Melina Rokai believed that the Szilágyis were descended from the Bosnian ethnic Garázda *genus*, originating from the Bosnian town of Goražde.³¹ But the credibility of these views is called into question by several factors. The Garázda theory is mostly based on outdated literature and references to misunderstood or (probably) never existing sources, or in many cases on unsupported claims, and is not justified by any documentary evidence. In light of all this, this theory can now be considered an outdated and false conception.³²

Another set of views on the origin of the Szilágyis is the Szilágyság theory. In today's Hungarian historiography, this is the officially accepted theory, which places the cradle of the family in the historical region of Szilágyság, consisting of the territory of the former counties of Middle Solnoc (Közép-Szolnok) and Crasna (Kraszna). The starting points for this idea are the three surnames that appear in the names of various members of the family – Szilágyi, Bernolti (Bernóti) and Szentkirályi –, which, by researching their origins, leads to insights that – apparently – refer to the Szilágyság origin. Based on the similarity between the name of the region and the name of the family, Ferenc Budai placed the Szilágyis in this area, and Vilmos Fraknói

²⁶ DF 233 529.

²⁷ ZsO II/1. No. 3846. For the latest version of the family tree of the Szilágyis of Horogszeg, see ENGEL 2001a. Szilágyi (horogszegi).

²⁸ For more on this topic see CSIFÓ 2023. *passim*.

²⁹ CSIFÓ 2023. 15.

³⁰ CSIFÓ 2023. 16–17.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² CSIFÓ 2023. 17–20.

(after abandoning the Bosnian theory) placed them in the region of Alsóbaksa and Nagydoba in the valley of the Szilágyi River in the county of Middle Solnoc.³³ The first name Bernolti appears twice in the Szilágyi family, in 1406 and 1456: in the former case, it is applied to Ladislás Szilágyi's father, Nicholas and his five brothers, while in the latter (after his death) it is applied to Ladislás himself.³⁴ In two documents issued in 1370, in Kene, in the Szilágyság part of the county of Solnoc, the name of Paul (Pál) Bernóti, deputy count of the county of Solnoc (originating from the county of Zarand/Zaránd) also appears. Although they didn't consider Pál to be a relative of the Szilágyis, János Karácsonyi, Gyula Dudás and József Teleki concluded from the above-mentioned sources, that the family used the name Bernóti in Szilágyság – after one of their estates – and only took the new name from the region after moving away from there.³⁵ Nevertheless, in the above-quoted charter of 1406, Loránd's other son, Ladislás and his successor Gregory (Gergely) are mentioned by the surname Szentkirályi. As there were two settlements in the territory of Szilágyság with the name Szentkirály, this also seems to indicate the local origin of the family.³⁶ In addition to this, Mór Petri claims (without citation) that Gáspár Heltai's chronicle proves that the Szilágyis of Horogszeg originated from this region, more precisely from Szilágysomlyó in the county of Crasna.³⁷ Finally, András Kubinyi and Pál Engel also considered the family to be of Szilágyság origin.³⁸ However, certain circumstances make this theory doubtful. On the one hand, it is also based on literature that is now partly obsolete and on statements that cannot be justified by written sources. On the other hand, the surnames Szilágyi, Bernóti, and Szentkirályi do not exclusively point to the genesis of the family in Szilágyság because the possible localities from whose names they derive could be outside the borders of the region.³⁹

Starting from the idea above, the three surnames indicate further possible research directions in the investigation of the origin of the Szilágyis of Horogszeg. Six counties can be considered based on places called Szilágy: Fejér, Pest, Timiș (Temes), Tolna, Baranya and Zarand.⁴⁰ As in the first three cases there is nothing else to say apart from the similarity between the names, the circle can be narrowed down to the counties of Tolna, Baranya and Zarand.⁴¹ According to the place name Bernót, there are three (at most four) counties: Zarand, Bihar and Küküllő (and possibly Heves). In this case, the most likely seems to be the county of Zarand, since besides Bernót there was a settlement called Szilágy, and the name is phonologically the same as the surname Bernót.⁴² In the case of the place name Szentkirály, since it was very widespread in

³³ CSIFÓ 2023. 20.

³⁴ CSIFÓ 2023. 21.

³⁵ CSIFÓ 2023. 20–21.

³⁶ CSIFÓ 2023. 22.

³⁷ PETRI 1902. 535. However, in Heltai's writing, there is no mention of Szilágysomlyó at all: HELTAI 1981. Regarding the origin of the Szilágyis, the chronicler merely writes that "Mrs. Elizabeth (...) came from Szilágy": Ibid. 203. (Translation from me – Cs.T.)

³⁸ KUBINYI 2001. 13; ENGEL 1996. II. 231.

³⁹ CSIFÓ 2023. 22.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ CSIFÓ 2023. 22–23.

⁴² CSIFÓ 2023. 25., *ibid.* note 79.

Hungary, we have to consider many more administrative units, 22 in total.⁴³ Considering that the family was connected at several points to the southern parts of the country, we can reduce this number to 7: to the counties of Bač, Baranya, Bodrog, Cenad (Csanád), Srem, Timiș and Torontál.⁴⁴ The two most probable of these are Baranya and Bodrog: the former because there is also a settlement called Szilágy, and the latter because Ladislás Szilágyi's cousin Gregory, who was called Szentkirályi in January 1406 (then Szilágyi five months later), married Ankó, daughter of the Cobor family from this county, probably in the summer of that year, and thus acquired land there through dowry.⁴⁵

As we will see later, Ladislás Szilágyi was a *familiaris* of John (János) Maróti, the ban of Mačva.⁴⁶ It could give us further help in tracing the origins of the Szilágyis to answer the question of how Ladislás came to be in the service of the baron of the South. As an analogy, we can cite another *familiaris* of the ban, Szilágyi's fellow warrior, Nicholas Garázda of Keresztúr, as an example.⁴⁷ On 19 November 1403, Nicholas appears as a man of Maróti in the county of Tolna, of which he later became deputy count.⁴⁸ It is important to note here that the title of count of six counties in southern Hungary – Bač, Baranya, Bodrog, Tolna, Valkó and Srem – was linked to the office of the ban of Mačva, of which the first five were headed by Maróti at this time.⁴⁹ Tamás Pálosfalvi has revealed that Nicholas Garázda was part-owner of the village of Lak in the county of Tolna, and it was from there that he most probably came into the service of Maróti.⁵⁰ Based on this parallel, I find it conceivable that the Szilágyi family (or at least Ladislás) may have had some connection with a county under Maróti's jurisdiction. Considering that in Tolna and Baranya, there are settlements named Szilágy, these two counties are the most likely.⁵¹

Another possible approach could be to analyse the correlation between John Maróti's estates and the places of origin of his *familiars*.⁵² In 1403, the king granted the ban to the estate of Gyula in the county of Békés, whose territory extended to the neighbouring county of Zarand. It is important to emphasise that in Zarand we find both Szilágy and Bernót, three of the latter. If we were to look for the ancestors of the Szilágyi family of Horogszeg in the Bernóti family from the county of Zarand and assume that Ladislás Szilágyi owned one of the local Bernóts, it is possible that he came from there to serve Maróti, who owned Gyula. However, several factors make this doubtful. On the one hand, the lord was granted Gyula on 5 November, while Ladislás is named as a member of the baron's family a week and a half earlier, on 26 October.⁵³ On the

⁴³ ENGEL 2020.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ ZsO II/1. Nos. 4361., 4830.; DUDÁS 1894. 24, 28.; ENGEL 2020. There were two villages in Bodrog called Szentkirályi (Répás- and Kisszentkirályi), but Dezső Csánki classified them as belonging to Bač county: CSÁNKI 1894. 162.

⁴⁶ KUBINYI 2001. 13.; ENGEL 1996. II. 232. Maróti held the office of the ban of Mačva four times – 1397, 1398–1402, 1402–1410, 1427–1428: ENGEL 1996. I. 29–30.

⁴⁷ CSIFÓ 2023. 23–24.

⁴⁸ PÁLOSFALVI 2013. 12.

⁴⁹ ENGEL 1996. I. 100, 104, 116, 207, 222., 2001. 132. Only the title of count of the county of Srem was not held by him: ENGEL 1996. I. 199.

⁵⁰ PÁLOSFALVI 2013. 12.

⁵¹ CSIFÓ 2023. 23–24.

⁵² CSIFÓ 2023. 24.

⁵³ ZsO II/1. Nos. 2668., 2713.

other hand, Gyula did not include a settlement called Bernót.⁵⁴ Finally, no written source is currently known that proves Ladislás Szilágyi (or any of his relatives) owned property in Zarand, either in Bernót or elsewhere. However, it is also important to note that a family member did not have to be legally from one of his lord's estates or from the county he governed. We can cite the case of Nicholas Újlaki, another ban of Mačva, about whom András Kubinyi has shown that the place of origin of the members of his family did not fall exclusively within the Újlaki sphere of influence.⁵⁵ On this basis, the possibility that the Szilágyis originated in the county of Zarand cannot be ruled out.⁵⁶

In addition to the above, it may also be useful to investigate the identity of currently unidentified persons with the surname Szilágyi, whose first names are identical to those of the Szilágyi family of Horogszeg. At least 10 such persons can be found in the sources. Among them is a certain Michael Szilágyi, the castellan of Nicholas Kompolti in Nána, mentioned in an undated proscription list from the mid-15th century, which according to László Bártfai Szabó is dated in the middle of the 15th century.⁵⁷ Bártfai believed that Michael belonged to the Szilágyi family of Horogszeg, whose *'original estates were known to be in Heves county of, which were exchanged in 1408 for the Horogszeg estate of the Garázda family'* (translation from me – Cs.T.).⁵⁸ Bártfai also mentions a person called Gregory Szilágyi, who, according to a letter of command of King Albert in September 1438, was the castellan of the Bishop of Eger, Peter (Péter) Rozgonyi, in Szarvaskő.⁵⁹ Although we shall see below that the Szilágyis did indeed have interests in the county of Heves, there is no evidence that these were their original holdings. Furthermore, Horogszeg did not originally belong to the Garázdas either, as it was given to them together with the Szilágyis by the king in 1408.⁶⁰ Despite all this, it is possible that Michael and Gregory (or at least one of them) were indeed members of the Szilágyi family of Horogszeg (among Ladislás Szilágyi's brothers there was Michael and Gregory, his cousin was also called Gregory, and his most famous son was called Michael),⁶¹ but this has not yet been proven.

Researchers are also divided on the social affiliation of the Szilágyis of Horogszeg. Although Lajos Elekes regarded the family as belonging to the wealthier, middle-class nobility, he noted that if they originated from Szilágyság, their ancestors must have been of lower noble status.⁶² András Kubinyi was of a partly similar opinion, according to whom Ladislás Szilágyi had worked his way up from a family of lesser noble origin to the more prestigious noble class through his service as a *familiaris*.⁶³ At the same time, Vilmos Fraknói, Bálint Hóman, Elemér Mályusz and Zsuzsa Teke unanimously described the family as middle noble.⁶⁴ Hóman also

⁵⁴ VERESS 1938. No. 7.

⁵⁵ KUBINYI 1973. 25.

⁵⁶ CSIFÓ 2023. 24.

⁵⁷ BÁRTFAI SZABÓ 1905. I. 10., II. 69.

⁵⁸ BÁRTFAI SZABÓ 1905. II. 69.

⁵⁹ Ibid. note 1.; ENGEL 1996. I. 422.

⁶⁰ ZSO II. No. 6496; KUBINYI 2001. 14.

⁶¹ See the Szilágyi family tree mentioned in note 27.

⁶² ELEKES 1952. 91.

⁶³ KUBINYI 2001. 14.

⁶⁴ FRAKNÓI 1913. 6; HÓMAN 1940. 177; MÁLYUSZ 1984. 130.; TEKE 1997. 27.

claimed that once they were granted a coat of arms, they became magnates.⁶⁵ Although Michael Szilágyi's titles of the ban of Mačva in 1456/1457–1458 and 1460, and the ban of Slavonia in the latter year, did indeed later give the family the status of barons,⁶⁶ they had not yet become magnates when they received their titles in 1409.⁶⁷ In any case, our current knowledge does not allow us to identify the initial social status of the family.

Elisabeth Szilágyi's father, Ladislás, can be traced in written sources between 1403–1436.⁶⁸ His date of birth is unknown. He first appears in King Sigismund's charter issued on 26 October 1403, from which we learn that under the banner of John Maróti, the ban of Mačva, he fought valiantly for the monarch in the Slavonian campaign against the usurper Ladislás of Naples. As a reward, on the baron's recommendation, the King donated to him the estates of John Cobor – Coborszentmihály, Halmos and Jánosi in the county of Bodrog – who had been declared unfaithful.⁶⁹ On 24 June 1404, he appears as the deputy count of the county of Valkó under the government of Maróti, a position which, except for Pál Engel,⁷⁰ has not been recorded in the scientific literature. On 1 May 1405, we find Ladislás as the deputy count of the county of Bač, also belonging to the province of Mačva, who then confessed to the local chapter that he had made his brothers Albert, Dominic (Domokos), Gregory, Michael and Sebastian (Sebestyén), as well as his cousin Gregory, son of Ladislás Szentkirályi, mentioned above, his class partners in the county of Bodrog estates, donated to him two years earlier.⁷¹ In the charters of 1404 and 1405, Ladislás Szilágyi is given the title of *magister*, i.e. master.⁷² Vilmos Fraknói assumed that this was a reference to Ladislás's higher level of legal qualification, which, given that he could not find his name in foreign university registers, he believed he must have obtained in Pécs.⁷³ Indeed, Ladislás's name does not appear in the rolls of students of any foreign university.⁷⁴ However, he is not listed among the students of the University of Pécs either, and the extremely scarce number of written sources about this institution⁷⁵ makes it almost impossible to determine whether Elisabeth's father attended the university. At the same time, Ágnes Kurcz explained that even in the 14th century, the title of the master did not denote higher education in medieval Hungary (although it did imply a certain level of learning and skill), but rather social superiority, excellence, authority, the noble rank itself, and the position of the military commander.⁷⁶ From the middle of the 13th century until the beginning of the 15th century, the title was also given to the secular nobles

⁶⁵ HÓMAN 1940. 177.

⁶⁶ ENGEL 1996. I. 31; C. TÓTH et al. 2017. 104.

⁶⁷ ZSO II/2. No. 6606.; TELEKI OkIV. No. 268.

⁶⁸ ENGEL 1996. II. 232.

⁶⁹ ZSO II/1. No. 2668.; KUBINYI 2001. 13.; MÁLYUSZ 1984. 137.

⁷⁰ ENGEL 1996. I. 222.

⁷¹ KUBINYI 2001. 13.; ENGEL 1996. I. 100.; ZSO II/1. No. 3846.; DL 9151. Beyond that, all that is known about the five brothers is that later, together with Ladislás (and the Garázdas), they received the estate of Horogszeg (see below). We don't know about their marriages and children.

⁷² DF 285 258.; ZSO II/1. No. 3846.; DL 9151.

⁷³ FRAKNÓI 1913. 6. and note ibid.

⁷⁴ TÜSKÉS 2008.; HARASZTI SZABÓ – KELÉNYI – SZÖGI 2017.; HARASZTI SZABÓ – KELÉNYI 2019.

⁷⁵ PETROVICS 2005. 36–37.

⁷⁶ KURCZ 1988. 51. note 84.

who were not counted among the barons but belonged to the knights, including the counts and the castellans.⁷⁷ On this basis, Ladislav probably earned the title of master through his valour in the Slavonic battles and his offices as a deputy count.

In 1405, John Maróti appointed Ladislav Szilágyi and his comrade Nicholas Garázda of Keresztúr as castellans of the northern Bosnian fortress of Srebernik, which he had conquered the previous year, and they held their posts until 29 December 1408.⁷⁸ As a reward for their loyal and efficient military service here, they were jointly granted Balázsfalva in the county of Dăbâca (Doboka) and Szentimre in the county of Alba (Fehér) by Sigismund of Luxemburg on 9 December 1407.⁷⁹ On 29 December 1408, the King gave the estate of Horogszeg and its appurtenances in the county of Timiș to Ladislav Szilágyi and Nicholas Garázda and their relatives in exchange for the possession of Ecséd, Fajzat, Réde and Szücsi in the county of Heves and Csécse in the county of Nógrád.⁸⁰ Finally, as a reward for their loyalty to the king and their merits, on 24 February 1409, the King of Hungary granted the Szilágyis and the Garázdas of Keresztúr noble coat of arms, depicting a black wild goat rising from flames in a silver field, holding a pine tree in its forelegs and chewing its branches.⁸¹ According to the text of the armorial, the recipients also received the privilege from Sigismund, that if any of them rose to military (or knightly) dignity, they could change the silver field of the coat of arms into gold.⁸² This was the first time that the king had sanctioned this method of changing the coat of arms in advance.⁸³

Through the dowry of his wife, Catherine Bellyéni, Ladislav Szilágyi also received a share of the Bellyéni family's estates in the county of Bač.⁸⁴ As to why he married Catherine, there are various views among researchers. According to András Kubinyi, Ladislav may have married Catherine as a result of his acquisition of the estates in the county of Bodrog.⁸⁵ Given that the Bellyénis probably did not come from Bodrog and, as can be seen, did not have their estates there either, this view can be excluded. Márton Gyöngyössy believes that Catherine was chosen by Ladislav because the Szilágyis, who had gained lands and ascended to power in the counties of Bač and Bodrog, had an interest in marrying into the local noble elite.⁸⁶ It was noted that Ladislav Szilágyi had been the deputy count of the county of Bač for years before his marriage, i.e., he already belonged to its leading nobility, but before his marriage had not owned any estates there. Consequently, for Ladislav, marrying Catherine, who by then had been orphaned and had inherited her family's estate, seem a great opportunity to gain land. At the same time, it is also worth considering that John Maróti was count of the county of Bač, which suggests

⁷⁷ ENGEL 1987. 115., 1994a. 414–415., 1994b. 422.

⁷⁸ ENGEL 1996 I. 435, 2001b. 197.

⁷⁹ ZSO II/2. No. 5837.; KUBINYI 2001. 13.

⁸⁰ ZSO II/2. No. 6496.; KUBINYI 2001. 14. Later, Horogszeg was counted as part of the county of Cenad several times: CSÁNKI 1890. 697.

⁸¹ See note 24.; BERTÉNYI 2007. 57. András Kubinyi erroneously dated the donation of the coat of arms to 1408: KUBINYI 2001. 14.

⁸² BERTÉNYI 2007. 58.

⁸³ SCHÖNHERR 1894. 10.

⁸⁴ See note 15.

⁸⁵ KUBINYI 2001. 14.

⁸⁶ GYÖNGYÖSSY 2014. 18.

that Ladislas Szilágyi's marriage may have been mediated by the ban of Mačva.

After John Maróti, Ladislas Szilágyi became a family member of the Serbian despot Stephen Lazarević, of whom he appears as a legal administrator in the market towns of Szatmár and Németi on 23 October 1426.⁸⁷ How Ladislas came to be part of the family of the despot, we cannot explain. As regards the legal service, one might again speculate that Ladislas Szilágyi studied law at a higher level, but as we have already observed, this cannot be proved. It is conceivable, however, that he may have acquired the necessary knowledge of judicial law by performing the judicial duties that were essentially part and parcel of his former positions as a deputy count in the service of Maróti.

In addition to the above, we know of two incidents of overbearing in the life of Ladislas Szilágyi: one in 1424, the other in 1429. In the first case, the people of Tapsoni Antimus' son Nicholas, a landowner in the county of Cenad, caused damage to the estates of Ladislas and Stephen Keresztúri in the county of Bač.⁸⁸ In the latter case, Ladislas himself committed a crime of overbearing by arbitrarily seizing the lands of the serfs of the neighbouring villages of Hollós and Kunszóllós and annexing them to his estate of Horogszeg.⁸⁹

The last document about Ladislas Szilágyi of Horogszeg in his lifetime is dated 4 April 1436.⁹⁰ As we have already seen earlier, on 26 April 1438, he is referred to as late.⁹¹ We can therefore place the death of Elisabeth Szilágyi's father between these two dates.

2. ELISABETH'S BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Out of the marriage of Catherine Bellyéni and Ladislas Szilágyi of Horogszeg, a total of six children was born: three daughters – Elisabeth, Sophia (Zsófia) and Ursula (Orsolya) – and three sons – Oswald (Osvát), Michael and Ladislas Jr.⁹² The place of their birth is unknown,⁹³ and due to the scarcity of sources, we can only date them to a broad range of years. The starting point is the time of the marriage of their parents, presumably in the spring of 1410, and the endpoint is their first appearance in written records. For the boys, this is 4 April 1436,⁹⁴ while for the girls it is two years later, 26 April 1438.⁹⁵

⁸⁷ ZsO XIII. No. 1246.; TEKE 1997. 27.

⁸⁸ DL 87979.; ELEKES 1952. 92.

⁸⁹ TEMES I. No. 413.; FRAKNÓI 1913. 13.; ELEKES 1952. 92.

⁹⁰ DF 233 443.

⁹¹ See note 26.

⁹² See the family tree mentioned in note 27.; RÜSZ-FOGARASI 2009. 194; KUBINYI 2001. 14. Vilmos Fraknói, Zsuzsa Teke, and Péter E. Kovács write about only four children: FRAKNÓI 1913. 13.; TEKE 1997. 27.; E. KOVÁCS 2008. 13.

⁹³ Of course, the most reasonable possibility would be the family's manorial seat, Horogszeg, but we cannot prove this for either of them.

⁹⁴ See note 90.

⁹⁵ See note 26.

2.1. Sophia Szilágyi of Horogszeg

At the first mention of Sophia in 1438 she was still unmarried, while one of her sisters, Elisabeth, was already named as the wife of John Hunyadi.⁹⁶ This suggests that Elisabeth was the first of the three daughters to marry, so she was certainly the eldest of the sisters.⁹⁷ This suggests that Sofia was probably younger.

Sophia married John Geréb of Vingárt, a member of a prestigious noble family.⁹⁸ Her husband was vice-voivode of Transylvania between 1445 and 1450, a castellan of Görgény in 1440 and 1450, then governor of Transylvania in 1458, royal captain of Transylvania in 1459 and vice-governor of Transylvania in 1460.⁹⁹ The couple had five sons, Stephen, Lawrence (Lőrinc), Peter, Ladislas and Matthias (Mátyás).¹⁰⁰ Stephen died at the age of about thirty, and Lawrence is presumed to have died as a child.¹⁰¹ Peter was a capable commander of his cousin, King Matthias Corvinus, who held several baronial offices, including the office of vice-voivode of Transylvania between 1477 and 1479, and that of a master doorman in 1486–1494, and then of the office of palatine between 1500 and 1503.¹⁰² Ladislas entered the Church, serving as bishop of Transylvania from 1476 to 1501 and then archbishop of Kalocsa from 1501 until he died in 1502.¹⁰³ From 1483 to 1489, Matthias held the title of Dalmatian-Croatian-Slavonian ban.¹⁰⁴

Despite the few surviving documentary records about Sophia Szilágyi, we can say that she and her sister Elisabeth were mutually supporting each other. According to a diploma of the chapter of Transylvania issued on 7 March 1463, on behalf of and in defence of her sister, Sofia protested against the transfer of the estates of Sárpatak in the county of Turda (Torda) and Harangláb in the county of Küküllő, which were rightfully Elisabeth's, to counts of Bistriția (Beszterce), Michael Székely of Szentiván and Stephen Héderfájai by her nephew King Matthias I.¹⁰⁵ The king's letter of donation dated 9 November 1468 reports that Matthias, at the request of his aunt, her sons and his mother Elisabeth, gave back half of the market town of Györgye and its appurtenances in the county of Bač to the Geréb family of Vingárt, which had been taken from them earlier.¹⁰⁶

We can trace Sophia Szilágyi of Horogszeg in the sources up to a letter dated 12 January 1474 from Georg Hecht, a Transylvanian Saxon resident of Sibiu (Szeben), in which she is referred to as a widow.¹⁰⁷ After that, we have no more information about her, so she passed away after that date. According to Enikő Rűsz-Fogarasi, she died later that month.¹⁰⁸

⁹⁶ “*Elizabet consortis Iohannis de Hwnyad, Sophye et Ursule filiarum antefati Ladislai Zylagy*” (See note 26.)

⁹⁷ Cf. KUBINYI 2001. 14.

⁹⁸ ENGEL 2001a. Kacsics nem 6. tábla: Geréb (vingárti); KUBINYI 2001. 16.

⁹⁹ ENGEL 1996. I. 15., 321.; C. TÓTH et al. 2017. 84.

¹⁰⁰ ENGEL 2001a. Kacsics nem 6. tábla: Geréb (vingárti).

¹⁰¹ KUBINYI 2001. 16.

¹⁰² C. TÓTH et al. 2017. 81, 86, 109.

¹⁰³ C. TÓTH et al. 2017. 31, 38.

¹⁰⁴ C. TÓTH et al. 2017. 95.

¹⁰⁵ DL 37642.

¹⁰⁶ DL 16727.

¹⁰⁷ URKUNDENBUCH VII. No. 3980.

¹⁰⁸ Rűsz-FOGARASI 2009. 194.

2.2. Ursula Szilágyi of Horogszeg

Of all the Szilágyi family's daughters, Ursula has the least records. Like Sofia, she was not married when her name was first mentioned.¹⁰⁹ Later, however, before 1455, she married John Rozgonyi.¹¹⁰ Her husband came from one of the most prominent Hungarian noble families, the younger branch of the magnate Rozgonyi family, and was voivode of Transylvania from 1449 to 1458, and then judge royal between 1470 and 1471.¹¹¹ The couple had three children, Andrew (András), John and Apollonia (Apollónia).¹¹² Of the two sons, only John lived to adulthood, and their daughter married Benedict (Benedek) Csáki.¹¹³ Apollonia and her husband had a total of seven children, including Anne (Anna) and Nicholas.¹¹⁴ After the Geréb family of Vingárt died out, the two of them inherited the estate of Horogszeg, the property of their late great-grandfather, Ladislav Szilágyi of Horogszeg.¹¹⁵ Nicholas was bishop of Cenad from 1500 until he died in 1514 when he was impaled by George Székely Dózsa.¹¹⁶

In addition to Ursula Szilágyi's Rozgonyi marriage, older literature has also mentioned another matrimony. In the 18th century, István Kaprinai wrote that Ursula was married by her two brothers, Ladislav and Oswald, to a certain Désházi.¹¹⁷ This claim was taken up by Iván Nagy, who added that Ursula had a son named Stephen Désházi by this man, who died in 1530.¹¹⁸ In addition, József Podhradczky provided a grave inscription of a certain Anne Bánfi of Alsólindva, which survives from the 16th century.¹¹⁹ According to the text, Anne's parents, who died in 1533, were Margaret (Margit) Henning and John Bánfi from the neighbouring village of Alsólindvai, and her husband Stephen Désházi was the '*grandson of the great Ladislav Szilágyi of Horogszeg, the father of Elisabeth, the birth mother of the invincible King Matthias*' (translation from me – *Cs.T.*).¹²⁰ However, it is not clear from the epitaph which of Ladislav Szilágyi's children Stephen Désházi was descended from. In addition, John Bánfi (who was a member of the Bolondóc branch of the Bánfi family) did not have a daughter named Anne by either of his wives, including Margaret Henning.¹²¹ Finally, as far as we know at present, there is no archival source to support this descent of the Szilágyis of Horogszeg. Consequently, this alleged marriage of Ursula Szilágyi to Désházi cannot be confirmed by any authentic sources.

¹⁰⁹ See note 96.

¹¹⁰ Ibid; ENGEL 2001a. Szilágyi (horogszegi); KUBINYI 2007. 84.

¹¹¹ ENGEL 2001a. Básztyém nem 4. tábla: Rozgonyi (Lőrinc ága); KUBINYI 2001. 17., 2007. 84.; ENGEL 1996. I. 15.; C. TÓTH et al. 2017. 89.

¹¹² ENGEL 2001a. Básztyém nem 4. tábla: Rozgonyi (Lőrinc ága).

¹¹³ KUBINYI 2001. 17., 2007. 84.

¹¹⁴ ENGEL 2001a. Zsidó nem 4. tábla: Csáki.

¹¹⁵ KUBINYI 2001. 17.

¹¹⁶ KUBINYI 2001. 17., 2007. 84.; C. TÓTH et al. 2017. 34.

¹¹⁷ "Ursula, cuiquam Deshazio nuptum collocata e fratribus Osvaldus, ac Ladislav.": KAPRINAI 1771. 196. note 2.

¹¹⁸ NAGY 1863. 708.

¹¹⁹ PODHRADCZKY 1861. 238.

¹²⁰ "Consors vero Magnifici Domini Stephani Deshazy (...), Nepotis quondam Magnifici Ladislav Szilagyij de Horogszegh, Genitoris Dominae Elisabethae Matris invictissimi Principis Regis Matthiae." (Ibid.)

¹²¹ ENGEL 2001a. Hahót nem 5. tábla: Bánfi (bolondóci).

Ursula Szilágyi of Horogszeg lived a much shorter life than her sisters. The last mention of her in her lifetime is found in the charter of the palatine Ladislas Garai dated 18 October 1455.¹²² After that, however, she disappears from the documents, so her death probably occurred shortly afterwards. Nevertheless, her lineage has survived, as the members of the present-day Csáky family are descended from one of his grandsons, the brother of the executed bishop Nicholas Csáki, named Ladislas.¹²³ Thus, contrary to Iván Nagy's statement, we can conclude that not all branches of the Szilágyi family of Horogszeg have died out, but that descendants still live today through Ursula.¹²⁴

2.3. Oswald Szilágyi of Horogszeg

András Kubinyi believed that Oswald was the oldest of the Szilágyi brothers.¹²⁵ Tamás Pálosfalvi also considers him to be the first-born son, based on the fact that his marriage is the earliest we know of.¹²⁶

On 9 August 1440, King Wladislas (Ulászló) I ordered the chapter of Cenad to register the two Johns Hunyadi as the bans of Severin (Szörény) in the estate of Bozsar in the county of Timiș, which had been donated to them by the King for their loyal service. According to the text of the charter, one of the royal men appointed to witness the investiture was Oswald Szilágyi.¹²⁷ In 1446, we meet him in the service of his brother-in-law, John Hunyadi, as deputy count of the county of Timiș.¹²⁸

The wife of Oswald Szilágyi was Agatha (Ágota) Pósa of Szer, daughter of a prestigious noble family in the Lowlands, which we first learn about in 1448.¹²⁹ From this marriage, we know for sure about a daughter named Margaret, whose husband was Matthew (Mátyus) Maróti, master of the horse (1467–1468) and the ban of Mačva (1468–1476); no children are known from their marriage.¹³⁰ In 1470, Margaret received the estate of the market town of Aszuágy from her husband.¹³¹ In 1504, Margaret, by then a widow, passed this and all her other possessions on to the children of her late cousin Apollonia Rozgonyi, the Csáki brothers.¹³²

In the family of Oswald Szilágyi and Agatha Pósa of Szer, we can assume two other possible children besides Margaret, but the exact family relationship is doubtful due to the contradictions in the sources. One of them is a certain Francis (Ferenc), who is mentioned only once,

¹²² DL 15001.; KUBINYI 2001. 17.

¹²³ KUBINYI 2001. 165., 2007. 85.

¹²⁴ NAGY 1863. 708.

¹²⁵ KUBINYI 2001. 14.

¹²⁶ The historian – referring to András Kubinyi – claimed that Oswald appears as a married man already in 1446: PÁLOSFALVI 2017. 102. However, in the place he mentions, under the above date, Kubinyi does not refer to his marriage, but to his title of the deputy count of Timiș; KUBINYI 2001. 14. For the marriage details of his brothers, see the subsections on them.

¹²⁷ DL 37599.

¹²⁸ ENGEL 1996. I. 205.; PETROVICS 2006. 82–83.; KUBINYI 2001. 14.

¹²⁹ DL 93091.; KUBINYI 2001. 14.; ENGEL 2001a. Szilágyi (horogszegi).

¹³⁰ KUBINYI 2001. 14., 2007. 84.; C. TÓTH et al. 2017. 104, 118.

¹³¹ CSÁNKI 1893. 58.

¹³² Ibid.; KUBINYI 2001. 14.

on 30 June 1479, as Oswald's son¹³³ and who, according to András Kubinyi, may have died prematurely.¹³⁴ The other person is Justina (Jusztina), who is sometimes named as the daughter of Oswald, sometimes as the daughter of Francis, or sometimes as the daughter of one of Oswald's brothers, Ladislav Jr., but according to András Kubinyi, her father was probably Oswald.¹³⁵ Why he is also mentioned as the daughter of two other men is not yet clear.

Justina Szilágyi of Horogszeg married four times in her life. Her first marriage was to the prestigious lord of the Highland, Pongrác Wenceslas (or Ladislav in the sources) of Szentmiklós, in the interests of his cousin King Matthias I, who needed the support of this powerful noble dynasty to consolidate his power.¹³⁶ After Justina became a widow at around 1474,¹³⁷ Matthias, after restoring him to the throne in 1476, married his cousin to Vlad III Ţepeş, Voivode of Wallachia, to consolidate his alliance with him.¹³⁸ The marriage did not last long, as Vlad III was killed in a boyar conspiracy shortly after he regained power.¹³⁹ Justina's third and then fourth husbands were from two Transylvanian noble families who had been condemned to confiscation by the king for their involvement in the 1467 rebellion, but who were trying to recover their lost property, some of which had been given to Justina and her first husband, Wenceslas Pongrác, by Matthias. To prevent this, Justina married into these families, so that in 1479 she appears as the wife of Paul Suki, and after his death later that year, in 1481, as the wife of John Erdélyi of Somkerek.¹⁴⁰ Justina had no offspring from her four husbands.¹⁴¹

The last document published about Oswald Szilágyi of Horogszeg during his lifetime was dated 22 March 1448.¹⁴² Subsequently, on 12 September 1452, his wife Agatha was a widow,¹⁴³ so his death must have occurred sometime before that.¹⁴⁴

2.4. Michael Szilágyi of Horogszeg

Of the six Szilágyi children, two have achieved greater fame and notoriety, and of the boys, Michael has managed to do so. According to András Kubinyi, he was the second-born among the brothers.¹⁴⁵ Tamás Pálosfalvi also believed that he was much younger than his brother Oswald (just like his sister Elisabeth).¹⁴⁶ He believes that Michael's birth date is around 1430 or not much before.¹⁴⁷

¹³³ MAGYARI 1907. 98.; DL 27066, 244 549.

¹³⁴ KUBINYI 2001. 14.

¹³⁵ KUBINYI 2001. 14., 2007. 84. note 4.

¹³⁶ KUBINYI 2001. 14–15., 2007. 84.

¹³⁷ RÜSZ-FOGARASI 2009. 194.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*; KUBINYI 2001. 15., 2007. 84.

¹³⁹ RÜSZ-FOGARASI 2009. 194.

¹⁴⁰ RÜSZ-FOGARASI 2009. 194.; KUBINYI 2001. 14–15., 2007. 84.

¹⁴¹ KUBINYI 2001. 15.

¹⁴² DL 93091

¹⁴³ . DL 93207.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. KUBINYI 2001. 14.

¹⁴⁵ KUBINYI 2001. 15.

¹⁴⁶ PÁLOSFALVI 2017. 102.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*.

Pálosfalvi also found out that the names “Black Michael/Kara Mihál” (and their German and Slavic variants) used for Michael in historical literature are not Szilágyi, but Michael Csornai from the county of Timiș, who was the deputy ban of Severin, warlord and – presumably – a brother-in-law of John Hunyadi, who fought alongside him in the ill-fated battles of Varna (Várna) in 1444 and Kosovo (Rigómező) in 1448.¹⁴⁸ All this sheds completely new light on Michael Szilágyi’s career, which began with his position as deputy count of the county of Torontál in 1451, in the service of his brother-in-law John Hunyadi.¹⁴⁹ Between 1456 and 1458 he was captain of Belgrade (Nándorfehérvár), in which capacity he took part in the triumph on 22 July 1456.¹⁵⁰ In late November of that year, Michael was present in Timișoara (Temesvár) with his sister Elisabeth and his nephews, Ladislás and Matthias, when, after the murder of Cillei, King Ladislás V, under duress, promised Ladislás Hunyadi impunity for the murder of his great uncle.¹⁵¹ On 16 March 1457, however, the monarch executed Ladislás and imprisoned Matthias, whereupon Michael and his sister Elisabeth started an armed uprising.¹⁵² Following the battles that ended with the unexpected death of the king on 23 November 1457, Michael and Elisabeth signed the treaty with the Garai couple in Szeged on 12 January 1458, which laid the foundation for the election of Matthias Hunyadi as king.¹⁵³

Since 1457, Michael Szilágyi had also held the office of the ban of Mačva, making him one of the barons of the kingdom. At the Diet in January 1458, at the head of an army of 15,000 men, which proclaimed Matthias king, he was elected governor.¹⁵⁴ In March, his nephew sought to show his gratitude to him with a series of donations for his help in freeing him from captivity and making him king.¹⁵⁵ Despite this, Matthias quickly ousted him from power and also defied the commitments made by the Szilágyi siblings in the treaty of Szeged, so the relationship between the king and his uncle quickly deteriorated.¹⁵⁶ Michael joined Matthias’s opposition, which forced the king to hold several conciliatory meetings with him during 1458–1459, and on one occasion he had him imprisoned in the castle of Širia (Világosvár).¹⁵⁷

Michael Szilágyi of Horógszeg married Margaret Báthori of Ecsed around 1457/1458, their marriage remained childless.¹⁵⁸ Towards the end of his life, in 1460, he was again the ban of Mačva, and in that year he also held the titles of governor of Transylvania, ban of Slavonia and captain of the Lower Parts.¹⁵⁹ He is last mentioned among the living in the charter of the convent of Cluj Monastery (Kolozsmonostor) on 15 December 1460.¹⁶⁰ At the end of that year, he

¹⁴⁸ PÁLOSEFALVI 2017. 97–101.

¹⁴⁹ PÁLOSEFALVI 2017. 96, 100–101.

¹⁵⁰ C. TÓTH et al. 2017. 144.; FRANKÓI 1913. 29–32.

¹⁵¹ PÁLOSEFALVI 2015. 402.; TEKE 1997. 31–32.; FRANKÓI 1913. 40.

¹⁵² ENGEL – KRISTÓ – KUBINYI 2005. 212. (The relevant part is the work of Pál Engel.)

¹⁵³ PÁLOSEFALVI 2013. 347; ENGEL 2001b. 248.

¹⁵⁴ C. TÓTH et al. 2017. 104; ENGEL 2001b. 249.

¹⁵⁵ FRANKÓI 1913. 76–77.

¹⁵⁶ PÁLOSEFALVI 2013. 350.

¹⁵⁷ PÁLOSEFALVI 2013. 362.; ENGEL 2001b. 250.

¹⁵⁸ C. TÓTH 2007. 182.

¹⁵⁹ C. TÓTH et al. 2017. 104.

¹⁶⁰ KMJKV I. No. 1493. According to Pál Engel, he is traceable in the sources until 6 October 1460: ENGEL 2001a. Szilágyi (horógszegi).

set out on a campaign against the Turks to the southern borders but was captured by the enemy and beheaded in Istanbul.¹⁶¹ On 24 March 1461, he is referred to as late.¹⁶² This puts his death between these two dates.¹⁶³

2.5. Ladislás Szilágyi Jr. of Horogszeg

Of the three Szilágyi brothers, we know the least about Ladislás. According to András Kubinyi, he was the youngest of the boys.¹⁶⁴ Although Aeneas Sylvius had already mentioned him as a separate person, Vilmos Fraknói did not accept this, saying that there was no other source to prove it, so he considered Ladislás to be identical to Oswald.¹⁶⁵ We have previously observed that there is indeed a written historical record which confirms the existence of Ladislás Szilágyi Jr. We do not know about his marriage, and the question depends on whether Justina Szilágyi was his daughter.¹⁶⁶

The last mention of Ladislás in his life is found in a diploma issued on 16 January 1454 by the country judge Ladislás Pálóci, in which he orders the chapter of Bač to introduce him and his brother Michael to the estate of Kamarás in the county of Bač.¹⁶⁷ In 1455, near Belgrade, Ladislás Szilágyi Jr. of Horogszeg was murdered: he was killed in an ambush by the men of the Serbian despot George Branković.¹⁶⁸

SUMMARY

In researching the kinship of Elisabeth Szilágyi of Horogszeg, we can conclude that based on the sources known today, her family tree can be traced back to her great-grandfathers' generation. On her mother's side, she was descended from the Bellyéni family, which probably originated in the county of Srem but settled in the county of Bač. Apart from her mother, Catherine Bellyéni, no other female ancestor was known so far, but it is possible that the woman, who can be identified as Catherine Keresztúri, may have been her maternal grandmother, whose identity may also allow us to include the Keresztúri family from the county of Bač among Elisabeth's possible ancestors. On her father's side, Elisabeth was the daughter of the Szilágyi family of Horogszeg, which, according to the official point of view of today's Hungarian historiography, originated from Szilágyság. However, since the exact details of the question of origin are not known, it is not yet possible to confirm this conclusively. In any case, it can be stated that Elisabeth was the

¹⁶¹ FRAKNÓI 1913. 5, 105–106.

¹⁶² KAPRINAI 1771. 480–481.; FRAKNÓI 1913. 107. note 1.

¹⁶³ Cf. C. TÓTH 2007. 182., 2019. 65.; FRAKNÓI 1913. 5, 106.; Pál Engel dated Michael's death before 5 May 1461: ENGEL 2001a. Szilágyi (horogszegi).

¹⁶⁴ KUBINYI 2001. 14.

¹⁶⁵ FRAKNÓI 1913. 13. note 3.

¹⁶⁶ KUBINYI 2001. 15.

¹⁶⁷ DF 233 450. According to Enikő Rűsz-Fogarasi, his name is shown in the documents as alive until 1456, after which his death is recorded: RÜSZ-FOGARASI 2009. 194.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. PÁLOSEALVI 2015. 429.; KAPRINAI 1771. 196. note 2.

descendant of families with ties to southern Hungary. Her parents were probably married in the spring of 1410, and in addition to Elisabeth, five other children were born out of it. Through the marriage of the brothers and their children, the Szilágyis of Horogszeg were related (verifiably) to the families of Geréb of Vingárt, Rozgonyi, Pósaft of Szer, Maróti, Pongrác of Szentmiklós, Draculea, Suki, Erdélyi of Somkerek and Báthori of Ecsed.

However, the family background of Elisabeth Szilágyi is still not fully known. Therefore, issues such as a more precise determination of the geographical origins of the Bellyéni and Szilágyi families, the clear identification of the Bellyéni-Keresztúr kinship and, through the latter, of Elisabeth's maternal grandmother (and possibly other ancestors), the alleged Désházi marriage of Ursula Szilágyi, and finally the family relationship of Justina Szilágyi require further investigations.

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