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Hieronym Łaski and a Name Day Festivities in the Castle of Csaba? Polish–Hungarian Relations in Békés County in the Fifteenth–Sixteenth Centuries

**Hieronim Łaski i imieninowe przyjęcie na
zamku w Csabie? Stosunki polsko-węgierskie
w komitacie Békés w XV–XVI wieku**

Abstract

Békés County lies far from Poland, yet several connections existed between these regions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In January 1444 King Władysław Warneńczyk of the Jagiełło dynasty granted an estate to a nobleman from Békés County. Hungarians from the southern part of the Great Plain studied in Poland, and Polish warriors appeared in the region of the castle of Gyula in 1529. It is also possible that Hieronim Łaski, the well-known Polish politician in the service of King John Szapolyai, was invited to the little castle of Csaba – present-day Békéscsaba. A letter issued by King Ferdinand in 1531 provides additional insight into the negotiation between King John and King Ferdinand, conducted with the mediation of King Sigismund of Poland in that year. The original of this letter is preserved in Kassa, while a contemporary copy survives

in Békéscsaba. King Sigismund's intercession in the matter of Gyula is a further chapter in the Polish–Brandenburg–Hungarian relations.

Keywords: Polish–Hungarian relations, medieval and early modern history, Békés County; Władysław Warneńczyk, George Hohenzollern, Hieronym Łaski, John I King of Hungary, Sigismund I King of Poland, castle of Gyula, castellum Chaba.

Abstrakt

Komitat Békés położony jest w znacznej odległości od Polski, jednak w XV i XVI wieku istniały między tymi regionami liczne powiązania. W styczniu 1444 r. król Władysław Warneńczyk z dynastii Jagiellonów nadał dobra jednemu ze szlachciców z komitatu Békés. Węgrzy z południowej części Wielkiej Niziny studiowali w Polsce, a w 1529 r. w okolicach zamku w Gyuli pojawili się polscy wojownicy. Niewykluczone również, że Hieronim Łaski, znany polski polityk w służbie króla Jana Zapolyi, został zaproszony do niewielkiego zamku w Csabie, czyli dzisiejszej Békéscsaby. List wydany przez króla Ferdynanda w 1531 r. dostarcza dodatkowych informacji o negocjacjach prowadzonych wówczas między królem Janem a królem Ferdynandem, przy mediacji króla Zygmunta I Starego. Oryginał tego dokumentu przechowywany jest w Koszycach, natomiast jego współczesna kopia zachowała się w Békéscsaby. Wstawienictwo króla Zygmunta w sprawie Gyuli stanowi kolejny rozdział w dziejach polsko-brandenbursko-węgierskich relacji.

Słowa kluczowe: stosunki polsko-węgierskie, historia średniowieczna i nowożytna, komitat Békés, Władysław Warneńczyk, Jerzy Hohenzollern, Hieronim Łaski, Jan I król Węgier; Zygmunt I król Polski, zamek w Gyuli, castellum Chaba.

Looking at the map¹ we can observe that Békés County – a district of the Hungarian Kingdom – lies far from Poland. However, we find some evidence of Polish – Hungarian connections related to Békés County. Why did Hungarians come to Poland from the Hungarian Great Plain, and why did Polish warriors arrive at the region of Békés County? Was Hieronym Łaski – a Polish politician – present at a name day-celebration in the area of the present-day Békéscsaba? I give an outline about these Polish – Hungarian relations based on sources from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

1 <https://tti.abtk.hu/terkepek/15-sz-varak-es-varkastelyok> (access: 05.12.2025)

Ábránfy and the campaign of King Władysław in 1444

In 1443–1444 King Władysław Jagiełło² and John Hunyadi (in Hungarian Hunyadi János) led a military campaign against the Ottoman Empire. Their aim was to reach Adrianople, present-day Edirne. During the winter season the Christian forces were unable to advance as far as the city, but they captured Nis and Sophia, penetrating deeply into the territory of the Ottoman Empire.³ On their way back to Hungary, in Serbia, in Krusevac, in January 1444 King Władysław issued a charter. He donated an estate called *Kygyos* – located in Temes County – to three lords: Thomas Ábránfy of Gerla, George – son of Sebastian – and Ladislaus of Thold, who were companions of John Hunyadi (*Thomas filius Abrahe de Gerla, Georgius filius Sebastiani, Ladislaus de Thold*).⁴ Where was Gerla, mentioned in the name of Thomas Ábránfy? Two settlements bearing the name Gerla existed in the centre of the medieval Hungary, one in Zaránd and another in Békés County. Gerla served as a kind of seat of the Ábránfy family; they founded a monastery there and probably maintained a castle as well. The settlement still exists today as a district of the city Békéscsaba.⁵

2 Władysław III (Władysław Warneńczyk) as king of Poland and Władysław I (Ulászló) as king of Hungary. He was a member of the Jagiełło family.

3 Ottokár Székely, “Hunyadi János első török hadjáratai (1441–1444),” *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 20–22 (1919–1921): 61–62; Lajos Elekes, *Hunyadi* (Budapest: Múvelt Nép Könyvkiadó, 1952), 210; Ferenc Sebők, “John Hunyadi as a Military Leader,” in *Extincta est lucerna orbis. John Hunyadi and his Time*, eds. Ana Dumitran, Lóránd Mádly and Alexandru Simon (Cluj–Napoca: IDC Press, 2009), 401–405, 402–403; Liviu Cîmpeanu, “John Hunyadi (ca. 1395–1456). An Outline of His Political and Military Career According to the Latest Research,” *Journal of Balkan and Black Sea Studies* 7 (2024): 19–56. He quoted: Tamás Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis to Mohács. A History of Ottoman-Hungarian Warfare, 1389–1526* (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2018), 105–120.

4 The copy is preserved in: Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, Diplomatikai Fotógyűjteménye (HU MNL OL DF) 248684.; Original: Esztergom Primate Archives, *Acta radicalia* T 52; Edited by Tibor Almási, as an appendix of the article by Miklós Halmágyi, “A gyulai vár kapujánál. Szerémi György anekdotájának valóságelemei,” *Aetas* 37 (2022): 117–118; János Karácsonyi, *Békésvármegye története*, vol. I (Gyula: Békésvármegye Községe, 1896), 51.

5 Karácsonyi, *Békésvármegye története*, vol. I–III (Gyula: Békésvármegye Községe, 1896); Dénes Jankovich-B., “A magyar honfoglalástól a török kiűzéséig,” in *Békéscsaba története*, I., eds. Dénes Jankovich-B., Gyula Erdmann (Békéscsaba: Békéscsaba Megyei Jogú Város, 1991), 147–206; Dénes Jankovich-B., “Gerla,” in *Magyarország régészeti topográfiája*, vol. IV/3. *Békés és Békéscsaba környéke* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1998), 244–245; Miklós Halmágyi, “Gerla: apátság a Fehér-Körös vidékén: Egy rejtélyes évszám és két azonos nevű helynév nyomában,” *Deliberationes* 2 (2023): 17–33.

Hungarian students in Kraków

Another member of the Ábránfy family, John Ábránfy, also maintained connections with Poland. For a period of his life, he lived in Kraków, in the Bursa Hungarorum, and thus belonged to the group of Hungarians who studied in Kraków.⁶ In 1520 he was mentioned as the parish priest of Gyula.⁷ Ambrosius de Thurkewy studied in Kraków as well. He lived in the Bursa Hungarorum also and achieved the baccalaureate grade. Later, he served as priest of Ványa (Dévaványa) and joined the crusaders' rebellion in the spring of 1514.⁸

The 'great count' of King John

Polish warriors arrived at the region of Gyula in Békés County at the beginning of 1529 or as early as 1528. At this time, two kings ruled in Hungary: King John of Szapolya (in Hungarian Szapolyai János) and Ferdinand of Habsburg.⁹ The town and the castle of Gyula belonged to

6 Károly Schrauf, *Regestrum Bursae Hungarorum Cracoviensis* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Irodalomtörténeti Bizottsága, 1893), 17; Karácsonyi, *Békésvármegye* III, 15.

7 HU-MNL-OL-DL 38062; Endre Veress, *Gyula Város oklevéltára* (Budapest: Gyula M. Város, 1938), 80–81; Karácsonyi, *Békésvármegye* III, 15.

8 Lajos Györfly, "Ki volt Ványai Ambrus?," *Jászkunság* 21 (1975): 71–73; the name "Ambrosius de Thurkewy" was mentioned by György Székely, quoted by Lajos Györfly, with the following dates: "Krakkó; Jaggel: Könyvtár, 2751. sz. kézirat f. 4."; Ambrosius Mathei de Thartewy started his study in 1501, became a baccalaureate. Péter Haraszti Szabó, Borbála Kelényi and László Szögi, *Magyarországi diákok a prágai és krakkói egyetemeken 1348–1525. Students from Hungary at the Universities of Prague and Krakow 1348–1525*, vol. II (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Levéltára és az MTA – ELTE Egyetemtörténeti Kutatócsoport, 2017), 333. (Nr. 3315.) Year: 1501. According to a theory Ambrosius Mathei de Thartewy is identical with Ambrosius Johannis de Agria, who promoted in 1502. *Magyarországi diákok* p. 305. (Nr. 3023.) Year: 1495. According to George of Smyrna "Ambrosius de Wanya.... Et erat bacularius Ikrakouiensis" György Szerémi, *II. Lajos és János királyok házi káplánja Emlékirata Magyarország romlásáról, 1484–1543.* = Georgii Sirmiensis, *Eipstola de perdicione regni Hungarorum*, ed. Gusztáv Wenzel (Pest: 1857), 59; Hungarian translation: György Szerémi, *Magyarország romlásáról*, translated by László Erdélyi, improved by László Juhász, introduction and notes by György Székely (Budapest: Magyar Helikon, 1961), 63, 297. About the rebel of 1514: *Keresztesekből lázadók*, eds. Norbert C. Tóth, Tibor Neumann (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2015).

9 About problems of this age: "Nekünk mégis Mohács kell..." *II. Lajos rejtélyes halála és különböző temetése*, eds. Farkas Gábor Farkas, Zsolt Szebelédi and Bernadett Varga (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, 2016); Ferdinand was probably crowned on 3rd of

George Hohenzollern, the Margrave of Brandenbur, who supported Kind Ferdinand. István Ábránfy, the lord of the small castle of Csaba supported King John. In the autumn of 1528 King John arrived back from Poland, marched into the southern part of Hungary and attempted to seize the city of Temesvár (present-day Timișoara), but without success. After this failure he moved to the castle of Lipa.¹⁰

Marckhart, the 'buxen meyster' of Gyula, wrote a letter in German to George Hohenzollern, the lord of the castle of Gyula and the supporter of King Ferdinand. According to Marckhart, King John spent some time in the region of Temesvár; however, the citizens of Temesvár took up their firearms and killed several of his soldier. The 'poor King John' had to withdraw from the region. The letter mentioned the 'grauß graf' ('great count') of King John, who moved onto the estate of George Hohenzollern, the addressee of the letter. According to Marckhart, *Heberemfi Ystwan* (Stephan Ábránfy) invited the great count (*grauß graff*) of King John together with the Turks to his small castle (*schloslin*) for the cup of Saint Stephan (*Sant Istwan becher*).¹¹ The small castle was located one mile from the castle of Gyula, where the letter was written. The *schloslin* may be identical with the *castellum* of Csaba, as several sources indicate that the castle of Csaba lay approximately one mile from Gyula.¹² The

November 1527, about this topic see: Tivadar Ortway, *Mária, II. Lajos magyar király neje* (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1914), chapter XX.

- 10 George Hohenzollern married Beatrice of Frangepan in 1509. Beatrice was the widow of John Corvin, who was the illegit son of King Mathias Corvin. Beatrice of Frangepan died soon, and King Wladislaw II donated the castle of Gyula and its estates to her widower, George Hohenzollern. In this donation-letter issued 22 March 1510, the king mentioned Beatrice as 'qoundam', that means deceased. Hungarian sources use to mention George Hohenzollern as Margrave of Brandenburg, 'Marchio Brandenburgensis'. Veress, *Gyula Város oklevéltára*, 50–51, 56–58; Csaba Németh, *Adományok, viszályok, egyezkedések. A gyulai és a csabai uradalom története a 15–16. században* (Lecture given in Békéscsaba, 11 June 2025). About problems of this age: Géza Pálffy: *A tizenhatodik század története* (Budapest: Pannonica Kiadó, 2000), 83–87; With criticism: Richard Botlik, "Az 1531. évi krakkói alku", *Századok* 137 (2003): 580, 587–590; George Szerémi wrote about these events, but some of his dates are incorrect. Sirmiensis, *Eipstola*, 173–246; Szerémi, *Magyarország romlásáról*, 137–183. About the places of residence of King John: András Péter Szabó, "Szapolyai János magyar király (1526–1540) és Várad," "Országunknak fő végháza, Várad..." *Várad és Partium a 16–18. században*, eds. Teréz Oborni, Balázs Viktor Rác (Nagyvárad: Editura Collegium Varadinum, Varadinum Kulturális Alapítvány, 2025), 255–285.
- 11 The original manuscript is preserved in Nürnberg, in the *Brandenburger Litteralien* collection. A microfilm copy is available in Budapest: HU-MNL-OL-MF-10673-B-0510-1. A part of this letter was edited by Veress, *Gyula Város oklevéltára*, 146 (Nr. 165). The same issue occurs on page 11, footnote 38.
- 12 Veress, *Gyula Város oklevéltára*, 146; Georgius Pray, *Epistolae procerum regni Hungariae*. III. 1554–1711 (Pozsony: 1806), 90–93; Lajos Haan, *Békésvármegye hajdana*.

phrase ‘Cup of Saint Stephan’ refers to the feast of Saint Stephan, the first Christian martyr, which is celebrated on 26 December. The lord of the castle, Stephan Ábránfy, surely wished to celebrate his name day and invited guests to drink together with him on 26 December 1528.

Hieronym Łaski and Polish warriors in Békés County

Who was this *grauf graff* (great count) of King John I? In sources from the fifteenth century and early sixteenth century the expression ‘*grauf graf*’ was used to denote the count palatine of Hungary (nádorispán, briefly: nádor).¹³ From 1526 until 1530 Stephan Báthori was held the office palatine, however, he supported King Ferdinand I.¹⁴ In 1525–1526 Stephen Verböczy also held the office of the palatine, but he was removed in 1526, although King John intended to reinstate him.¹⁵ He was a supporter of King John, it is possible that he was the person referred to as the ‘great count’ in the German letter. However, a more probable interpretation also exists.

King John issued a letter in Lipa on 29 December 1528. According to this document, the king sent Turkish and Serbian warriors, as well as hussars into the region of Gyula, and he dispatched these troops “from”

(Oklevéltári rész.) *Diplomatarium Békessense* (Pest: 1870), 162–163; Gyula Kristó, *Békésmegye története a honfoglalástól a török világ végéig* (Békéscsaba: 1981), 119; Karácsonyi, *Békésvármegye* III, 127; Miklós Halmágyi, “A csabai kastély írott forrásai,” in *Elődök és erődök közös hullámhosszon*, ed. Emilia Martyn (Békéscsaba: Munkácsy Mihály Múzeum, 2024), 16–21; Further letter of Mackhart Koncz, Veress, Gyula Várook, 142 (Nr. 160).

- 13 Referred to palatine Laurencius of Hédervár: “gross grav her Larenz von Haydenreichs Tuern,” *Aus den Denkwürdigkeiten der Helene Kottanerin* (Peilzig: 1846), 40; Referred to palatine László of Gara: “Gross Graf her Lasla von Gara,” 1459. febr. 22. Kassa. Béla Iványi, *Bártfa szabad királyi város levéltára. 1319–1526* (Budapest: 1910), 169–170 (1079. sz.). About the election of Emeric of Perény in 1504: “das Pereni Emrich des landes gross groff mit eyntrechtiger stymme worden ist,…” DF 216675. See: Norbert C. Tóth, *A Magyar Királyság nádora. A nádori és helytartói intézmény története (1342–1562)* (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2020), 84, 87, 102; Bertrandon de la Broquière used the term ‘grant conte’: *Le Voyage d’Outremer de Bertrandon de la Broquière*, publié et annoté par CH. Schefer (Paris: 1892), 237–239.
- 14 „Dominus Palatinus post coronationem vocatus est ad regem, et litteris admonitus, ut decima quinta die litterarum apud ipsum sit, si venerit ad regem, relinquetur in officio Palatinus, si manebit penes reginam, et fractionem Ferdinandi, erit inimicus regi, et omnes alii etiam factiosi.” Norbert C. Tóth, “Egy legenda nyomában. Szapolyai János és ecsedi Bátori István viszonya 1526 előtt,” *Századok* 146 (2012): 462; Pray, *Epistolae procerum regni Hungariae*, vol I, 290.
- 15 Tóth, *A Magyar Királyság nádora* 116–117. Quoted the following document: DL 47701.

Lazky.¹⁶ This Lazky must be identical with Hieronym Łaski, the well-known Polish diplomat and politician in the service of King John. On 15 January 1529 Hieronym Łaski wrote a letter to the citizens of Gyula from Faydass. He requested 500 golden forints from them. At the end of his letter, he used the title Palatinus Syradiensis, that is the Palatine of Sieradz.¹⁷

In the German letter by Marckhart we find the phrase *grauß graff*, which could be used to denote the palatine of Hungary. Although Łaski was a palatine in Poland, this alone does not explain the reference. Marckhart wrote that the Turks were invited into the castle of Ábrányf, and according to the letter of King John, Łaski himself commanded the Turkish contingents. On this basis, it is plausible that Hieronym Łaski was the “great count” (*grauß graff*) who was invited for the name day celebration into the castle of Chaba.

Polish warriors were also present in the region of Gyula. Peter Sado-brich, the castellan of the castle of Gyula, wrote a Latin letter to its owner, George Hohenzollern, on 20 May 1529. In this letter he reported that Turkish, Polish, Serbian and Hungarian troops operated daily in the vicinity of the castle, all of them supporting King John. He also listed the fortresses in the Gyula region that were held by King John’s adherents, among these he mentioned *Chyaba*, located one mile (*unum milliare*) from Gyula. Sadobrich therefore advised George Hohenzollern to consider selling or exchanging the castle of Gyula.¹⁸

16 „Ceterum de Lazky cum certa parte Turcorum Hwzaronumque et armatorum ac rascianorum nostrorum similiter expedivimus ad partes Gýwle.” Archív mesta Košice, Magistrát mesta Košice, 1239–1923, Supplementum Schramianum, Box nr. 110, Nro. 19213. Year: 1528. (I express my thank to Gábor Szeghy for providing me with the photo of this dokument); The remaind ducument is a contemporary copy. Béla Pettkó, “Adalékok János király uralkodásának történetéhez: Kassa város levéltárából,” *Történelmi Tár* 6 (1883): 303; Veress, *Gyula Város oklevéltára*, 139; Norbert C. Tóth, *Két király szolgálatában. Kiskállói Vitéz János (†1458) pályaképe* (Budapest: HUN-REN–MNL–SZTE Magyar Medievisztikai Kutatócsoport, 2024), 155–156.

17 Veress, *Gyula Város oklevéltára*, 144–145.

18 “Thwrci, Poloni, Rascisni et Hungari omnia die et sine intermissione sunt in pertinentia huius castris et in vicinata” Brandenburger Literalien 1040/10; MNL-OL-X 1460. I express my thanks to Krisztina Arany, the colleagues of the the National Archives of Hungary for providing me the digitalized version; Karácsonyi gives an outline of this letter without mentioning the Polish warriors. Karácsonyi, *Békésvármegye* I. 107; Endre Veress gives a short excerpt of the letter, without mentioning the Polish relations and the castle of Chaba: Veress, *Gyula Város oklevéltára*, 151 (Nr. 177). About Polish warriors in Hungary: László Szokola, *Magyar katonák lengyel földön és lengyel katonák magyar földön a 16. század első felében* (online lecture given on 16 March 2021).

King Sigismund I of Poland and a letter in Békéscsaba

Another important contribution to the Polish–Hungarian relations is a letter that refers to King Sigismund I of Poland as an arbiter in the disputes between king Ferdinand I and John Szapolya. The original of this letter was preserved in Kassa (present-day Košice in Slovakia),¹⁹ while a contemporary copy was kept in the Lutheran Archive of Békéscsaba.²⁰

The document was issued by King Ferdinand I from his castle in Prague on 24 May 1531. According to the inscription on the back, the letter was addressed to the citizens of Kassa. It refers to a year-long armistice (*inducie annue*), which began on 1 May 1531 and had been concluded between King Ferdinand I and John of Szapolya (*Johannis Scepusiensis*) with the assent of the Ottoman Sultan (*imperator Turcarum*). King Ferdinand I instructed the citizens that, if they had suffered any injuries between 22 April and 1 May, they were to report them to the king himself and his ambassador delegated to Sigismund, King of Poland. Sigismund was to adjudicate these matters, as a month-long negotiations began on 17 May 1531 in the presence of the Polish king.

What can we know about this year-long armistice? We know from other sources that the negotiators of King Ferdinand I and King John I attempted to reach peace gradually. Hieronym Łaski – King John’s envoy – and Willhelm Roggendorf – King Ferdinand’s negotiator – met in Visegrád (Hungary) on 16 January 1531, and agreed on an eight-day armistice.²¹ A few days later, on 19 January 1531, a three-month armistice was concluded near Visegrád.²² Shortly afterwards, a one-year armistice was agreed upon, which began on 1 May 1531, and lasted until the end of April 1532.²³

19 Archív mesta Kosice, Magistrát mesta Kosice, Schwartzbachiana No. 1507. (box 6.) I express my thanks to András Péter Szabó, who drew my attention to this manuscript.

20 Békéscsabai Evangélikus Egyházközség Levéltára, 8.a. 1. I express my thanks to Mr. György Sitz, who drew my attention to this document and provided me with a copy, and to Mr. Kornél Füzesi, archivist of the Lutheran Archive, for making this research possible. I also wish to thank András Péter Szabó for his consultation on this subject.

21 Péter Kasza, “...hogy az lengyel király általa lenne köztek valami békisség”, *Az 1530. évi poznańi tárgyalások anatómiája. Történelmi Szemle* 55 (2013): 271–289. Here: 287–288. What he quotes: ÖStA HHStA UA Fasc. 17. Konv. A fol. 41.

22 Kasza, “...hogy az lengyel király általa,” 287–288. What he quotes: ÖStA HHStA UA Fasc. 17. Konv. A fol. 46–49. The three-month long and the year-long armistices were mentioned by László Bárdossy, however, he did not provide their exact dates. László Bárdossy, *Magyar politika a mohácsi vész után* (Budapest: Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda, 1943), 96.

23 Botlik, “Az 1531. évi krakkói alku,” 595; Kasza, “...hogy az lengyel király általa,” 271–289.

King Ferdinand issued a letter to King Sigismund on 27 April 1531. In it, Ferdinand informed Sigismund that John Szapolya's Polish diplomat, Hieronym Łaski, had returned from the Ottoman Sultan. Łaski brought the message that the Sultan had approved the year-long armistice between Ferdinand and John Szapolya. Ferdinand then sent his negotiators – Willhelm Roggendorf, Leonard von Fels, Sigmund von Dietrichstein and Sigmund von Herbertstein – to Łaski in order to prepare the Latin text of the agreement.²⁴

King Sigismund of Poland replied to King Ferdinand on 18 May 1531, expressing his satisfaction with the conclusion of the year-long armistice.²⁵ These sources are consistent with the contents of Ferdinand's letter preserved in Kassa and with its contemporary copy kept in Békéscsaba. After the negotiations and the armistice of 1531, a formal peace between King Ferdinand and John was not concluded until 1538, but this peace proved to be short-lived in Hungary.²⁶

The letter of King Ferdinand preserved in Kassa – along with the contemporary copy in Békéscsaba – does not mention the details of the armistice; however, these details appear in a text available in the thirteenth volume of the *Acta Tomiciana*. This text refers to the three-month armistice that was in force from 22 January until 22 April. The year-long armistice lasted from 1 May until the end of the following April.²⁷ According to the agreement, two delegates of King Ferdinand and two delegates of King John were required to meet in Esztergom on the Feast of Saint John the Baptist, that is 24 June. Their task was to adjudicate

24 *Acta Tomiciana*, Tomus XIII, ed. Stanisław Górski (Poznań: 1915), 116 (Nr. 120.) <https://www.wbc.poznan.pl/dlibra/publication/32737/edition/49965/content> (access: 08.12.2025)

25 *Acta Tomiciana*, Tomus XIII, 157–158 (Nr. 163.)

26 Páffy, *A tizenhatodik század története*, 91–92; Teréz Oborni, *A váradi béke, 1538* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-jiVT6XWzI0> (access: 08.12.2025). Ignác Acsády, *Magyarország három részre osztásának története (1526–1608)* (Budapest, Atheneum: 1897), VII. fejezet <https://www.arcanum.com/hu/online-kiadvanyok/MagyarNemzetTortenete-a-magyar-nemzet-tortenete-9A23/szilagyi-sandor-a-magyar-nemzet-tortenete-21F2/magyarorszag-harom-reszre-oszlasanak-tortenete-15261608-4795/elso-konyv-a-ke-t-kiraly-kora-15261540-47A7/vii-fejezet-fegyveres-beketargyalasok-a-varadi-beke-4877/> (access: 08.12.2025); *Monumenta Hungariae Historica, Diplomataria II. (Magyar történelmi okmánytár a brüsszeli levéltárból és a burgundi könyvtárból II)*, ed. Mihály Hatvani (Pest: 1858), 3–17.

27 „Anno domini millesimo quingentesimo tricesimo primo. Articuli induciam per unius anni intergri revolutione, a prima videlicet die mensis Maji jam praeterita usque ad ultimam Aprilis proxime venturam utraque die inclusa observandum, editi et firmati.” Articuli *Acta Tomiciana*, Tomus XIII, 155–156. Here: 155 (Nr. 161.) <https://www.wbc.poznan.pl/dlibra/publication/32737/edition/49965/content> (access: 08.12.2025). Botlik, „Az 1531. évi krakkói alku”, 595.

cases in the matters of robberies that happened during the ‘former’ and ‘present’ armistice.²⁸

The letter preserved in Kassa – together with its contemporary copy in Békéscsaba – adds new information to the history of negotiations between Ferdinand and King John: it mentioned the opportunity of the citizens of Kassa to report their insults in the frame of a one-month negotiation started on 17 May 1531 in the court of the Polish king.

The original of King Ferdinand’s letter is in Kassa, however, the copy in Békéscsaba was written in the same age. This document bears a watermark resembling an arrow, which probably refers to the constellation of Sagittarius. A study by Gerhard Piccard on watermarks provides parallels to this motif. These examples are known from the Polish – Lithuanian region and date from between 1525 and 1533.²⁹

The contemporary copy in Békéscsaba offers noteworthy information regarding King Ferdinand’s letter. Two distinct notes are visible on the reverse of the document. One of them, written in the centre of the back in the same hand as the letter itself, states that the letter was addressed to the citizens of Kassa. Another note at the top of the sheet, written in a different hand, states that King Ferdinand wanted to conclude an agreement with John of Szapolya through the mediation of the Polish King, and that the citizens of Bártfa (Bartfeld, Bardejov) were to report their grievances. It also contains the number ‘Nr. 49’ and a date – ‘4 May 1774, Barthfeld’. According to this note on the letterhead, the copy must once have belonged to the archives of Bártfa (Bartfeld), a town in the northern part of the old Hungarian Kingdom, in present-day Slovakia (Slovak: Bardejov). Kassa (Košice) and Bártfa (Bardejov) were members of a five-town alliance. King Ferdinand’s letter was originally sent to Kassa, where it was copied; this copy was then presumably forwarded to

28 „Ordinentur quattuor commissarii, viri boni et probi, ita quod quivis principum duos ordinet, qui convenient in Strigonio ad festum divi Joannis Baptistae cum pleno utriusque principis mandato et omnibus quaerentibus justitiam ratione deprædationum tempore indutiarum sive prætaritarum sive præsentium decernant citationem et vocent ad præsentiam eorum illum, contra quem queritur et simpliciter audiant et procedant ad diffinitivam sententiam juxta prudentiam et conscientiam illorum, non obstante ordine juris regni.” *Acta Tomiciana*, Tomus XIII, 155–156. Here: 155 (Nr. 161.)

29 Kraków, 1525; Kraków, Petrikau, 1527; Piotrków Trybunalski, 1527; Korczyn, 1529; Wilno, 1533. Gerhard Piccard, *Die Wasserzeichenkartei im Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart*, Band 9/1–2: Wasserzeichen Werkzeug und Waffen (Stuttgart: 1980), s. 45. s. 111 (Abteilung 9), pictures 985–989. I express my thanks to Krisztina Rábai who drew my attention to the book of Piccard and to these parallels. The question arises where these documents were written and where the paper for these documents was produced.

Bártfa (Bartfeld).³⁰ How did the document reach Békéscsaba? It was discovered among the papers of Adolf Stark (1834–1910), a grape grower in Békéscsaba. Stark had been born in Bartfeld and later settled in Békéscsaba.³¹ The document probably came into the possession of the family Stark, and Adolf Stark took it with him when he moved to Békéscsaba.

Sigismund I, a protector of Gyula?

Emeric Czibak (Hungarian: Czibak Imre), a supporter of King John, began the siege of Gyula on 17 July 1529. Czibak soon occupied the town and then commenced the siege of the castle. In January 1530 the defenders of the castle agreed to a seventy-five-day armistice.³² George Hohenzollern informed the defenders of Gyula that he had placed the castle under the protection of King Sigismund of Poland. He wrote about this in his letter to the defenders of Gyula on 4 December 1529.³³ During the armistice George Hohenzollern proposed to King John that Gyula should be placed under the authority of King Sigismund until it could be determined who was the lawful king of Hungary. Once the question of the lawful king had been settled, he – Hohenzollern – would support the legitimate ruler.³⁴ However, the defenders of Gyula received no assistance and capitulated in March 1530, whereupon Emeric Czibak, a supporter of King John occupied the castle.³⁵

30 István H. Németh, *Várospolitika és gazdaságpolitika a 16–17. századi Magyarországon*. vol. 1 (Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltár–Gondolat, 2004), 77, 83–103. I express my thanks to András Péter Szabó for providing me with this information.

31 Stark was the producer of a grape variety known as the 'Pearl of Csaba'. About his life: Gyula Dedinszky, *Stark Adolf szőlőnemesítő élete és munkássága (1834–1910): a kiváló szőlőnemesítő 150. születésnapjára megjelent tanulmány*, ed. Pál Kozma, jegyzetekkel ellátta és az utószót a második kiadáshoz írta Ágnes Szalay (Békéscsaba: Csabagyöngye Kulturális Központ, 2021), 17, 13, 68; György Sicz, *Stark Adolf (1834–1910) élete és munkássága a sajtó tükrében: in memoriam Dedinszky Gyula* (Békéscsaba: Sicz György, 2021).

32 Rudolf Sörös, "Szemtanú elbeszélése Gyula várának 1529. évi ostromáról," in *A Békésvármegyei Régészeti és Mivelődéstörténelmi Társulat Évkönyve 17* (Gyula: Békésvármegyei Régészeti és Mivelődéstörténelmi Társulat, 1892–1893), 19–32; Karácsonyi, *Békésvármegye I.*, 109–112.

33 Bayern, Archivverwaltung, Staatsarchiv Nürnberg, Brandenburg Lit. 117/3. HU–MNL–OL–MF 9426 B 0560. Veress, *Gyula Város oklevéltára*, 154–155.

34 Bayern, Archivverwaltung, Staatsarchiv Nürnberg, Brandenburg Lit. 1036/22. Summarized by Veress, *Gyula Város oklevéltára*, 157.

35 Sörös, "Szemtanú elbeszélése," 19–32; Karácsonyi, *Békésvármegye I.*, 109–112.

George Hohenzollern wished to regain his castle. Sigismund, King of Poland, was Hohenzollern's uncle and – since 1539 – father-in-law of King John, making him a suitable figure to mediate in this matter. A lengthy process followed, and several sources survive on this subject.³⁶ King John wrote a courteous letter to his father-in-law on 16 April 1540, mentioning the castles of Hunyad and Gyula, yet he did not return them to George Hohenzollern.³⁷

Conclusion

Although Békés County in Hungary lies far from Poland, numerous connections existed between these regions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. King Władysław Jagiełło granted an estate to a nobleman from Békés County. Hungarians from the southern part of the Great Hungarian Plain studied in Poland, and Polish warriors stayed for a time in the vicinity of the castle of Gyula in 1529. It is also possible that Hieronym Łaski, the renowned Polish politician in the service of King John Szapolyai, received the small castle of Chaba. A letter preserved in Békéscsaba provides additional information on the negotiations between King John and King Ferdinand, conducted with the assistance of King Sigismund of Poland in 1531. King Sigismund's intervention in the matter of Gyula forms yet another chapter in the history of Polish–Brandenburg–Hungarian relations.

36 King John to Albert Hohenzollern, Buda, 3 May 1530, Bayern, Archivverwaltung, Staatsarchiv Nürnberg, Brandenburg Lit. 1097/1; King John to King Sigismund 16 May 1530, Br. Lit. 1097/2–6; King John to George Hohenzollern, Diószeg, 12 April, 1540, Br. Lit. 1082/8. HU–MNL–OL–MF 9426 B 0388–0391; Veress, *Gyula Város oklevéltára*, 160–162, 166; Karácsonyi *Békésvármegye* I, 112–113; King John wrote to King Sigismund on 16 April 1540 in Diószeg, and mentioned that he received a letter of Sigismund. Bayern, Archivverwaltung, Staatsarchiv Nürnberg, Brandenburg Lit. Nr. 1117/10. HU MNL OL MF 9426 B 0573; King Sigismund mentioned the issue of the castles in Hungary in his letter to his nephew, 2 July 1540. The letter did not mention the names of these castles. Sigismund mentioned the agreement that was recently closed between King John and Ferdinand, but Sigismund did not know the content of this agreement. Bayern, Archivverwaltung, Staatsarchiv Nürnberg, Brandenburg Lit. Nr. 1117/10. HU MNL OL MF 9426 B 0572; John Szapolyai married the daughter of Sigismund I in 1539. Pálffy, *A tizenhatodik*, 92.

37 Bayern, Archivverwaltung, Staatsarchiv Nürnberg, Brandenburg Lit. Nr. 1117/10. HU MNL OL MF 9426 B 0573; Karácsonyi *Békésvármegye* I, 113–114, 117, 125.

Appendix

1. Marckhart's letter to George Hohenzollern, 20 January 1529³⁸

Durchläuchtiger hochgeborner fürst gnediger her euern fuestlichen [!] gnaden seynt alle zeyt meyn arm willig dienst zuvor an bereyt e[uer] f[ürstlichen] gnaden gesunt und glücklich lang's regiment ist mir eyne freude zu hören gnediger f[ürst] und her. Die stat hat dem Hans kunig mer dan drithalb dawssset guldig geben dar er vor Demaswar ist gelegen, haben sie gedan wie frwm leut die von Demaswar und seynt herawß under sich gefallen, haben etlich buxen genwmen vnd etlich erschlagen; da hat das arm kunigli ab mossen zien. Dar nach hat er seyn grauß graffen mit seym folck vff euer f[ürstlichen] gnaden grund gelassen, die alle eyngenumen vnd die in sunder heyt an geschnitten; auch ist der Heberemf Ystwan stecz bey in gewesen vnd hat die durcken vnd den grauss graffen vff Sant Istwan becher geladen zu seynen schoslin eyne meyl von vns; und ist jr geschucz zu Gettsches beliben vnd seynt nit mer dan eyne wen bolenlecken darbey gewesen; mit LX man heten wir das mögen nemen; dan mir wisden das bey zeyt und namen nit; ich halt sie forch, sie mostens wider geben; g[nediger] f[ürst] und her. Der Schomede Ferencz hat eyne banier vor seynen hawß gehabt, und lasen awß rufen, man sol zu dem Hans kunig zien; awch hat er etlich ballen dach wß schifch lassen laden hat die bey der nacht weden dar von furen. Hat uns der richder an gesagt haben mir im daß dach genwmen er wolt daß wider awß haben genwmen; vff burg sie wolten im haben geben; do verbot ich eß vf euer f[ürstlichen] g[naden], und wolt sie nit geben lassen; an euer furlich gnaden wissen da begert er eyne recht; da meyten die oberten man kunt jm daß recht nit ab schlaen; da sag ich es wer nit der sit da eyner mit seynen erbheren rechen solt; meyn g[nadiger] her ist eyne gerechter furst, hast du recht getan er nimmt dier nichtß; hab auch daß dem berneckert gen hunig geschreib; hat er mir wider schreiben ich sol sie nit awß geben; in keynley weyn, weder vff burg noch ander weg an euer f[ürstlichen] g[naden] wissen oder seyn; het ich nit so hart gehalten man het sie im langast wider geben; er wolt mir eyne gutte; Ich

38 The original manuscript is preserved in Nürnberg, in the *Brandenburger Litteralien* collection. A microfilm copy is available in Budapest: HU-MNL-OL-MF-10673-B-0510-1. I would like to express my gratitude to the colleagues of the Mihály Kurecskó and the National Archives of Hungary for providing the digitalized version, and to János Szabados and Zsuzsanna Cziráki for their assistance in the transcription and interpretation of the letter. A partial edition of the document was previously published by Endre Veress: *Gyula Város oklevéltára* (Budapest, 1938), 146 (Nr. 165).

haben getan, ich solt awch verwilligen; den waß die husseren nemen daß geben die obersten wider; nit weyß ich wor winb gnediger f[ürst] und her; ich kan jeß nit Wolf fawen; eß weren besser durchen fawen dan wolf; nit mer dan Gottes will unß mit gnaden gescheg. Datwm Julia an sant Fabian Sebastian tag 29.

Cwnrat Marckhart

2. King Ferdinand's letter to the citizens of Kassa, 24 May 1531³⁹

Ferdinandus divina fauente clementia Romanorum rex semper augustus

(2) ac Germanie, Hungarie, Bohemie etc rex, infans Hispaniarum, archidux Austrie etc.

(3) Prudentes et circumspecti fideles dilecti! Ex prioribus litteris nostris vos nunc tandem abunde cognovisse credimus quibus⁴⁰ modis (4) et conditionis inducie annue a prima presentis mensis Maii die inchoande cum speciali et expresso imperatoris Tur-(5) carum⁴¹ assensu iam utrinque inire acceptate et publicate fuerint. Cum autem nostro et Johannis Scepusiensis nomine utriusque (6) nostrum oratores et comissarii super omnibus iis, que intermediis diebus a XXII mensis Aprilis proxime elapsi (7) die usque⁴² ad primam huius alteri parti per alteram in hoc regno nostro violenter adempta, occupata vel armis (8) ablata fuere,⁴³ et que dicti oratores et comissarii nostri omnino restituenda et rectificanda censuere in Serenissimum principem (9) dominum Sigismundum regem Polonie magnum ducem Litvanie ac Russie Prussieque fratrem et sororium nostrum charissi-(10) mum, compromiserint.⁴⁴ Nempe quod in tempore unius mensis a XVII presentis mensis computando partes coram Serenitate (11) sua compareant, et post comparitionem in uno mense, omnia, que quevis partium illius causa producere habet (12) producat,

39 Original: Archív mesta Kosice, Magistrát mesta Kosice, Schwartzbachiana No. 1507. (box 6.). Contemporary copy: Békéscsabai Evangélikus Egyházközség Levéltára, 8.a. 1. I express my thanks to András Péter Szabó, who drew my attention to the Kassa manuscript and assisted me with the transcription.

40 The copy preserved in Békéscsaba mentions 'quibus' at the beginning of line 4.

41 The copy preserved in Békéscsaba mentions 'imperatoris' at the end of line 4, and 'Turcarum' at the beginning of line 5.

42 In the 'Békéscsaba-copy': 'die' at the end of the 6th line, 'usque' at the beginning of line 7.

43 In the 'Békéscsaba-copy': 'ablata' at the end of the 7th line, 'fuere' at the beginning of line 8.

44 In the 'Békéscsaba-copy': 'charissimum' at the end of the 9th line, 'compromiserint' at the beginning of line 10.

suaque Serenitas⁴⁵ in eodem mensis spatio arbitrari et diiudicare possit. Si autem aliqua partium sua producere (13) neglexerit, nichilominus Serenitas sua arbitretur et dijudicet. Cumque terminus ille omnem celeritatem in hac tractatione requirat,⁴⁶ (14) vosque etiam hec restitutio et rectificatio nonnichil concernat, neque quicquam per vos hac causa omitti debeat, iccirco⁴⁷ vos omni (15) studio requirimus, ut mox receptis presentibus homines vestros cum indice omnium eorum, que nobis et vobis ac unicuique (16) vestrum per partem⁴⁸ adversam prescriptis intermediis diebus vel etiam ante, aut post, et in hanc usque horam (17) in eodem regno adempta,⁴⁹ occupata et ablata fuere, tam ad nos et curiam nostram quam ad nuncium nostrum ad pre-(18) fatum Serenissimum Polonie⁵⁰ regem premissorum occasione specialiter destinatum, quam celerrime mittatis et dirigatis, qui (19) a nobis in comissis accepit⁵¹, ut nostro nomine vestra et aliorum fidelium nostrorum negotia, atque omnia, que tam publico (20) quam privato nomine vestro super bonis ablatis⁵², damnisque et iniuriis vobis illatis ad Serenitatem suam deferetis, intelligat (21) vosque nostri causa in iis, ut par est,⁵³ omni auxilio, consilio, opera et directione iuvet, et ea vobiscum super iis et (22) pro vobis agat atque⁵⁴ impetrare et obtinere studeat, que et⁵⁵ nobis et regno isti nostro saluti et utilitati communique quieti (23) et securitati ac induciarum harummodi stabilimento et confirmationi maiori conducere videbuntur. Nosque etiam per homines (24) vestros ad nos, ut premissum est, destinandos, iis intellectis, que prefinito tempore nobis et vobis in dicto regno nostro ablata (25) et occupata fuere, tanto fructuosius et commodius et nostram et vestram causam agere et perficere poterimus. Et si que (26) alia accidunt, que ulteriorem instantiam et assistentiam vestri causa ibidem faciendam

45 In the 'Békéscsaba-copy': 'producat' at the end of the 11th line, 'suaque Serenitas' at the beginning of line 12.

46 In the 'Békéscsaba-copy': 'tractatione' at the end of the 13th line, 'requirat' at the beginning of line 14.

47 In the classic Latin *idcirco*.

48 In the 'Békéscsaba-copy': 'vestrum' at the end of the 15th line, 'per partem' at the beginning of line 16.

49 In the 'Békéscsaba-copy': 'in eodem' at the end of the 16th line, 'regno' at the beginning of line 17.

50 In the 'Békéscsaba-copy': 'Polonie' at the beginning of line 18.

51 In the 'Békéscsaba-copy': 'accepit' at the beginning of line 19.

52 In the 'Békéscsaba-copy': 'super bonis ablatis' at the beginning of line 20.

53 In the 'Békéscsaba-copy': 'in iis, ut par est' at the beginning of line 21.

54 In the 'Békéscsaba-copy': 'atque' at the beginning of line 22.

55 In the 'Békéscsaba-copy': after *et* and before *nobis* stands *regno*, crossed out.

exegerint, eandem per nosmet et⁵⁶ (27) per dictum nuntium⁵⁷ nostrum apud Serenitatem suam et alios ubilibet omnique tempore clementi et prompto animo pro (28) vobis uti bonis fidelibusque subditis nostris faciemus et interponemus. Nichilque pretermitemus, quod ad consolandum (29) et assecurandum istius regni nostri statum facere cognoverimus. Id quod vobis notum et persuasum esse volumus. (30) Date in arce nostra Prage die XXIII mensis Maii anno Domini M D. XXXI, regnorum nostrorum romani primo (31) aliorum vero omnium quinto. Ferdinandus⁵⁸

Ad mandatum sacre
regie maiestatis proprium
Lo. Maius...⁵⁹

Backside of the original Kassa version:

Ferdinandi regis mandatum (2) notificans causas secundum (3) armistitiale conditionem respec- (4) tu ablatorum bonorum et damno- (5) rum acceptorum durante bello per (6) Serenissimum Poloniarum regem (7) revidendas et decidendas esse (8) conclusum cum Joanne Scepusien- (9) si. Datum 24 Maii 1531.

Nr. 1507.

Prudentibus et circumspectis Judici, juratis (2) caeterisque civibus civitatis nostre Cassoviensis (3) fidelibus nobis dilectis.

Backside of the Békéscsaba copy:

No. 49 (crossed out)
1774 4 Maii Bartphae

Ferdinandus ut ad unionem inter eum (2) et Joannem Scepusiensem coram rege (3) Poloniarum fiendam Bartphenses cum (4) explicatione suarum et regni jactu-(5) rarum etiam eo exmittendos jubet.

Prudentibus et Circumspectis judici (2) juratis, ceterisque civibus civitatis nostre

56 In the 'Békéscsaba-copy': After 'nosmet et' at the beginnig of the next line the 'et' conjunction is repeated.

57 In the 'Békéscsaba-copy' there is a crack on the paper by this word, but it is possible to read is in the Kassa version.

58 At the end of the 'Békéscsaba-copy': 'Ferdinandus manu propria'.

59 This words are not mentioned in the 'Békéscsaba copy'.

(3) Cassoviensis, fidelibus nobis dilectis.

Fasc. 1. No. 4.

VIII. (crossed out)

8. a. 1.

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