

MOHÁCS 1526–2026  
RECONSTRUCTION AND REMEMBRANCE

ISABELLA JAGIELLON,  
QUEEN OF HUNGARY  
(1539–1559)

Edited by  
ÁGNES MÁTÉ AND TERÉZ OBORNI

STUDIES



# Contents

Introduction .....	9
WEDDING	
PÉTER MOLNÁR	
The Coronation of Queen Isabella – March 2, 1539 .....	23
ÁGNES MÁTÉ	
A Literary Image of Renaissance Queenship: The Marriage of Isabella Jagiellon .....	43
GYÖRGY PALOTÁS	
Literary Tradition in the Cracovian Epithalamia in 1539 .....	61
MEMORY	
KAROLINA MROZIEWICZ	
The Sixteenth-Century Depictions of Isabella Jagiellon and Their Reception in Poland and Hungary .....	77
GÁBOR PETNEHÁZI – PÉTER KASZA	
“ <i>Sic fata volunt</i> ” – The Narrative Memory of the Tragedy of Queen Isabella and the Peril of Buda .....	103
SUSANNA NIIRANEN	
Continuing Family Bonds after Death: Catherine and Isabella .....	131

## FOREIGN CONNECTIONS

ZOLTÁN KORPÁS – JÁNOS B. SZABÓ

“If They Came as a Legation, They Are Many, If They Are Soldiers,  
They Are Few” – The Military Background of the 1551 Attempt  
to Unite Hungary . . . . . 147

MÓNIKA F. MOLNÁR

Isabella and Her Italian Connections . . . . . 163

STANISLAVA KUZMOVÁ

Back to the Family – Isabella in Poland, 1552–1556 . . . . . 173

SZYMON BRZEZIŃSKI

The Diplomacy of Isabella Jagiellon:  
The Struggle to Become a Political Subject . . . . . 195

## GOVERNANCE

TERÉZ OBORNI

“*Georgius Monachus contra Reginam*” – Queen Isabella and Her Reign  
Over the eastern Kingdom of Hungary (1541–1551) . . . . . 209

ZSOLT BOGDÁNDI

Establishing New Institutions during the Reign of Queen Isabella  
(1556–1559): the Royal Table and the Places of Authentication . . . . . 235

EMŐKE GÁLFI

Queen Isabella’s Urban Policy during the Second Period  
of Her Reign . . . . . 247

LIVIU CÎMPEANU

The Royal Habsburg Arsenal in Sibiu (Hermannstadt, Nagyszeben)  
under the Rule of Queen Isabella . . . . . 257

## LORDS OF THE QUEEN’S REIGN

MIHÁLY BALÁZS

Giorgio Biandrata (1516–1588) – A Physician between Politics  
and Theology in Early Modern East Central Europe . . . . . 277

KLÁRA JAKÓ

Queen Isabella’s “Most Trusted Man”: János Szalánczy . . . . . 305

SZABOLCS VARGA	
Péter Petrovics (1487–1557) in the Service of Queen Isabella . . . . .	327
Index of Personal Names . . . . .	347
Index of Place Names . . . . .	357

Szabolcs Varga\*

## PÉTER PETROVICS (1487–1557) IN THE SERVICE OF QUEEN ISABELLA<sup>1</sup>

Although the Szapolyais ruled over a part of the Kingdom of Hungary for a half century, very few people witnessed the momentous events in family history during this period. Among them was King John's close relative, Péter Petrovics de Suraklin, who entered the service of the monarch in 1514 and later served his son, John II, and his wife, Isabella, as well. Although the precise relationship between the Szapolyi and Petrovics families is unknown, John and Péter were likely cousins. The primary characteristic of Petrovics's four-decade career was his unbroken loyalty toward the Szapolyai dynasty. According to the sixteenth-century historiographer Ferenc Forgách, there was no man alive at that time whose loyalty was more steadfast and whose love of the homeland more profound than Péter Petrovics.<sup>2</sup> This study will examine Petrovics's post-1540 career with the objective of gaining a greater understanding of the role he played in Hungarian political events during this period.<sup>3</sup>

### THE GUARDIAN

In the 1530s, Péter Petrovics began to fill increasingly important positions in King John's administration. In 1533, he was appointed to serve as the *ispán* (count) of Temes and the captain general of Lower Parts of Hungary, while in

---

\* Research fellow at the Institute of History, Department of Early Modern History, Research Centre for the Humanities, Budapest. szavarga@gmail.com.

1 This study was completed as part of the "Mohács 1526–2016: Reconstruction and Remembrance" project of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences "Excellence Cooperation Program" (KEP-1/2017). I would like to thank Teréz Oborni for the assistance she provided during the writing of this study.

2 "*Hoc sane viro neque in fide constator, neque patriae amantior esse potuit quisquam.*" Ghymeszi Forgách Ferencz nagyváradi püspök Magyar históriája 1540–1572 (Monumenta Hungariae Historica II; Scriptorum 16), published by Fidél Majer, introduced by Ferencz Toldy. Pest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1866, 168.

3 For a previous biographical summary, see Varga Szabolcs, 'Petrovics Péter', in József Szentpéteri (ed.), *Szürke eminenciások a magyar történelemben*. Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 2003, 54–55.

1540 he led a punitive expedition against the rebellious voivode of Transylvania, István Maylád, and was present at King John's deathbed in Szászsebes (Sebeș, Romania) the same year. According to historiographical tradition, King John at this time selected Péter Petrovics and Friar George to serve as guardians for his son and made those of his counselors who were present swear that they would support his flesh-and-blood successor and preserve the kingdom for him.<sup>4</sup> Ferenc Forgách, who wrote about this event three decades later, attributed the king's decision to appoint Petrovics as guardian to the fact that he was a blood relative and that his age and childlessness made him reliable.<sup>5</sup>

Sixteenth-century historiographer Giovanni Michèle Bruto described King John's appointment of the custodians somewhat differently. Bruto wrote a history of the Kingdom of Hungary at the behest of Prince of Transylvania and later King of Poland Stephen Báthory, examining events that had taken place in the realm from a strongly pro-Szapolyai perspective. According to Bruto, Friar George was initially the only guardian and Isabella appointed Bálint Török and Péter Petrovics to serve alongside him in this capacity – Török as a result of his military virtues and Petrovics as a result of his faithful counsel.<sup>6</sup> Since the year between the death of King John in July 1540 and the fall of Buda the following summer represents one of the peaks of Petrovics's political career, the sources regarding this period are worth examining more thoroughly.

While both Friar George and Péter Petrovics were in Szászsebes when King John died in this town, Bálint Török was still in Fogaras (Făgăraș, Romania) at this time. Thus Friar George and Petrovics were the ones who informed King Sigismund of Poland that King John had died and asked him to provide political and military assistance to his grandson's Hungarian kingdom. They were aware that under the prevailing circumstances the main tasks would be to delay the attack of the Habsburg monarch and to gain the Sublime Porte's recognition of the infant heir to the throne. Friar George and Petrovics therefore urged the king of Poland to act in support of their effort to reach these objectives in Vienna and Constantinople and to persuade King Francis I of France to back his

4 “...quae mala cum humanis remediis vix levare posse videret, Tutores constituit Petrum Petrovithium sibi sanguine junctum, et Georgium Eremitam Episcopum Váradensem; obtestatusque est singulos Proceres per antiquum Hungarici nominis decus, ut sui sanguinis potius quam externae gentis Regem in Pannonia regnare paterentur.” Wolffgangi de Bethlen *Historia de rebus Transsylvanicis*. vol. 1, Cibinii: Martini Hochmeister, 1782, 321.

5 “*Petrus autem, quem sanguine attingebat, et ob aetatem jam proveciorem et perpetuam orbitatem suspicione omni vacabat.*” Forgách, *De statu reipublicae Hungaricae*, 2.

6 “*At apud Reginam ita summa rerum penes Georgium erat, ut summo in honore duo essent, quorum alter nobilitate, alter praetera regia affinitate conspiciebatur: Valentinus Terek, praeter nobilitatum, cum primis rei militaris clarus, et Petrus Petruicius, cum magni usus et consilii homo, tum fidei et virtutis spectatae, quam ad extremum usque diem magna cum constantiae laude, in tutelae administratione retinuit, Georgio datus, collega.*” Brutus János Mihály m. kir. történetíró *Magyar Históriaja 1490–1552* (Monumenta Hungariae Historica II; Scriptorum 14), edited by Ferencz Toldy and Iván Nagy. Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1876, 42.

grandson as well.<sup>7</sup> Although Bethlen claimed that in response King Sigismund encouraged Friar George and Petrovics to defend the kingdom of the successor to the throne, this does not conform completely to the facts. In a letter dated August 13, 1540, Sigismund rejected the request for military support and did not even address the diplomatic questions, promising only to send an envoy to his daughter, Isabella.<sup>8</sup> On August 17, King Sigismund wrote a letter to Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain Charles in which he asked the House of Habsburg sovereign to support Isabella. On the same date the king of Poland sent a letter to Ferdinand in which he warned him not to attack his daughter's country.<sup>9</sup> Friar George and Petrovics were likely unaware of Sigismund's correspondence with Charles and Ferdinand and because the letter they had received from the king of Poland had not provided them with reassurance, the custodians of the heir to the throne sent another letter to Kraków on September 5, this time from Csáklya (Cetea, Romania), near Nagyenyed (Aiud, Romania). In this letter, Friar George and Petrovics warned that military action from Ferdinand would prompt the sultan to order an immediate invasion of his grandson's realm.<sup>10</sup>

Interestingly, although those in the court of King John clearly discerned the future threat, they made little progress in the accomplishment of concrete tasks. King John's funeral procession had only completed 30 kilometers of the trip to Székesfehérvár in the month and a half following his death. Initially, those organizing the procession believed that they should wait for the rebellion in Transylvania to be quelled before proceeding toward Hungary. However, news arriving from Vienna and Buda prompted them to resume the trip to Székesfehérvár despite the uprising.<sup>11</sup> After arriving to the latter city, King John was buried at the Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary according to the longstanding custom. Queen Isabella did not attend the funeral. The procession then continued on to Buda, where the crown prince was elected king with the regnal name and number John II at a diet convened at Rákos Field near Pest. According to Bethlen, the diet appointed a triumvirate to serve alongside Queen Isabella, thus making Bálint Török the infant king's third guardian alongside Friar George and Petrovics. The diet declared that the three guardians "should decide on all issues with a common will, though with the qualification that Petrovics, whom a blood relationship of some kind connects

7 Bethlen, *Historia*, 325–329; Péter Tóth (ed.), *A lengyel királyi kancellária Libri Legationum sorozatának magyar vonatkozású iratai II. 1526–1541*. Miskolc: Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén Megyei Levéltár, 2003, 298–300 (no. 142).

8 Tóth (ed.), *Libri Legationum*, 302–303 (no. 145).

9 *Ibid.*, 308–309 (no. 151.), 309 (no. 152).

10 "*Si enim Ferdinandus et eius factio regnum hoc invaserint, Thurca procul dubio ediverso irrumpet, sicque nos in medio conterimur, penitusque opprimemur.*" *Ibid.*, 314 (no. 158).

11 Sándor Szilágyi (ed.), *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. 1 (*Monumenta Hungariae Historica III; Monumenta Comititalia Regni Transylvaniae 2*). Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1875, 6.

to the royal scion, be the director of internal affairs, George stand at the head of the state treasury and Bálint deal primarily with military affairs.<sup>12</sup>

Events unfolded quickly over the subsequent weeks and five centers of power emerged that all exercised an influence over the destiny of the Kingdom of Hungary. Ferdinand Habsburg soon made it obvious that compliance with the stipulations of the Treaty of Várad – that is, unification of the kingdom under his rule – represented his main objective. King Sigismund soon abandoned the idea of supporting his daughter and grandson and already by September 15 signaled to Ferdinand that he would accept him as the king of Hungary,<sup>13</sup> while on October 5 he informed Charles V of this fact as well.<sup>14</sup> Sigismund's objective was to ensure that his family members would be permitted to seek refuge in Kassa (Košice, Slovakia) and would receive suitable compensation for surrendering their rule over the kingdom. Isabella was in Buda pondering her next move, vacillating between the options of hasty departure from the city and assertion of her son's claim to the throne. Isabella's Hungarian counselors can be regarded as a separate group. These men believed that it would be possible to preserve the political practice established during the reign of King John I of keeping both the Habsburgs and the Ottomans at a distance and that through preservation of the Kingdom of Hungary they could continue to maintain equilibrium between the great powers in the Carpathian Basin. Initially they appeared to be successful in this endeavor: on October 17, 1540, István Werbőczy and János Eszéki sent a message to Buda stating that Süleyman would accept John II as the king of Hungary.<sup>15</sup> Werbőczy and Eszéki could not have known that the sultan had already decided in favor of military intervention and had intentionally misled them with regard to his recognition of John II.<sup>16</sup>

The attempt of Leonhard von Vels–led Habsburg forces to quickly take Buda in order to turn the fortunes of war in their favor served to complicate the situation. Already on October 5, Vels asked Isabella to inform him immediately if she wanted to leave the royal palace.<sup>17</sup> In the meantime, he was holding continual negotiations with Friar George and Isabella's other counselors in an effort to persuade them to relinquish the castle. Péter Petrovics also participated in talks conducted in Óbuda on October 22 and 23 and may have even led the Hungarian delegation in the name of the queen. However, the following day Petrovics was unable to take part in the negotiations as a result of illness and Tamás, the *custos* of Székesfehérvár, replaced him.<sup>18</sup> These talks were naturally

12 “...quos communi suffragio arbitros omnium consiliorum esse voluerunt; cum hac tamen limitatione, ut Petrovithius, ceu aliqua cognatione stirpi Regiae annexus, intimorum consiliorum sit rector: Georgius aerario publico praesit: Valentino vero potissimum rei militaris cura incumbat.” Bethlen, *Historia*, 345.

13 “Nos enim serenissimo domino Romanorum regi regnum Hungariae ex animo favemus, neque nepotem in eo nostrum regnare cupimus.” Tóth (ed.), *Libri Legationum*, 322 (no. 161).

14 *Ibid.*, 334–335 (no. 166).

15 *Ibid.*, 335–336 (no. 168).

16 Pál Fodor, *Magyarország és a török hódítás*. Budapest: Argumentum, 1991, 68–69.

17 Tóth (ed.), *Libri Legationum*, 333–334 (no. 165).

18 *Ibid.*, 336–339 (no. 169), 339 (no. 170).

unsuccessful and Petrovics and his colleagues presented King Sigismund with the unvarnished truth regarding the reasons for their failure. According to them, every border castle in the country had fallen into the hands of the sultan, who had declared that he would not accept a foreigner on the throne of Hungary, only a Hungarian – namely the son of the late King John. Petrovics and his colleagues believed that if Isabella left Buda and surrendered the city to the Habsburgs, the sultan would destroy the entire country.<sup>19</sup>

It is difficult to discern Péter Petrovics's own considerations in the decision of the counselors. During the initial months, Petrovics apparently acted jointly with Friar George and, subsequently, Bálint Török as well. It is perhaps not by accident that in late 1540 Sigismund asked not them, but István Werbőczy to defend Isabella.<sup>20</sup> We know that on one occasion Petrovics stood up for Isabella against Friar George. Already in October, Ferdinand sent Nicholas, Count of Salm, to meet with the queen in order to request that she comply with the conditions of the Treaty of Várad. However, Friar George wanted to make this decision instead of Isabella and did not want to permit Nicholas to see the queen. However, "Petrovics was of a different opinion" and the Count of Salm was finally allowed to enter the palace.<sup>21</sup>

Péter Petrovics played an important role in the events of 1541 as a result of his kinship with the Szapolyais, his position as guardian for the infant king, his military strength and his relationship with Ottoman commanders. According to contemporaries, Petrovics took 1,000 Serbian soldiers to Buda and eventually spent the winter with them alongside Mehmed Bey in Kalocsa.<sup>22</sup> Although this was untrue, in late February of 1541 Petrovics indeed asked Mehmed to release Christians captured and taken away from Vác.<sup>23</sup> It is likewise not far from the truth that in addition to Bálint Török and the commanders of the Danube war barges, Petrovics also provided military support to the Ottoman troops attempting to relieve Buda.<sup>24</sup>

Petrovics was apparently convinced that the country – that is, the kingdom of the Szapolyais – could be saved only by driving back the Habsburgs and gaining the support of the sultan and acted in accordance with this principle over the following weeks. Petrovics became increasingly wary of the Polish emissaries in Hungary and during the spring of 1541 even he began to insist that Isabella

19 "Si enim maiestas reginalis abierit et Buda tradatur Germanis, Thurca illico concordiam cum adversariis initam protendet, omneque regnum statim depopulabitur et desolatum reddet ac nos in nihilum rediget." *Ibid.*, 381–383 (no. 182).

20 *Ibid.*, 396–397 (no. 188).

21 Bethlen, *Historia*, 353.

22 József Bessenyei (ed.), *1504–1566 Memoria rerum*. Budapest: Magyar Helikon, 1981, 51.

23 "Petrowicz ad eliberandos eos, qui ex oppido Waczow sunt abducti, ad exercitum Mehmethbek est profectus." Tóth (ed.), *Libri Legationum*, 429 (no. 199).

24 Ernst Dieter Petritsch, *Regesten der osmanischen Dokumente im Österreichischen Staatsarchiv, Band 1. (1480–1574)* (Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs. Ergänzungsband 10/1). Wien: Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, 1991, 62 (reg. 130).

must be separated from them.<sup>25</sup> In April of this year, Petrovics and Friar George signed a letter addressed to the Transylvanian estates declaring that the sultan would allow only the Szapolyais to rule the Kingdom of Hungary and urging the estates to refrain from considering the possibility of other candidates.<sup>26</sup> Petrovics played an important role in the effort to retain possession of Buda. His soldiers uncovered the betrayal of the citizens of the city in June 1541 and in August of the same year he and Bálint Török were among the Hungarians who went out on horseback to meet Süleyman. Thus Petrovics was involved in the delivery to the Ottomans of 400 German prisoners whom Janissaries immediately executed.<sup>27</sup>

On August 29, Petrovics's name appeared on the list of the sultan's guests as well. As a relative of John Sigismund, it was his duty to bring him before the sultan. However, the child king began to cry as he waited in the sultan's tent, thus he remained in the arms of his nanny throughout the visit. Petrovics was then among those whom the sultan asked to remain after dinner. For the next week, Petrovics, along with István Werbőczy, Friar George, Bálint Török and Orbán Batthyány, held talks regarding the political situation in Hungary and during this time their lives were not out of danger.<sup>28</sup> However, in the end Petrovics emerged victorious from these negotiations: not only was his life spared, but the sultan appointed him to serve as the sanjakbey of Temesköz (the region lying between the Danube, Tisza and Maros [Mureş] rivers). Petrovics was therefore able to retain his baronial office, though from then on only through the grace of the Sublime Porte.<sup>29</sup> It is, however, characteristic of manipulative Ottoman political tactics that Petrovics received his appointment only after leaving Buda on September 5 and until that date had feared that he would be recalled and imprisoned.<sup>30</sup> The world had changed immensely for Petrovics in hardly a year's time. He had gone from being a knight banneret of the Kingdom of Hungary to a dignitary of the Ottoman Empire and he bore as much responsibility for the loss of Buda as Friar George.

### THE SANJAKBEY OF TEMES

Due to a lack of precise sources, we can only surmise what took place in the sultan's tent in the days following the fall of Buda. Bálint Török remained in captivity and István Werbőczy died a few weeks later, thus in addition to Orbán Batthyány the two men who came out of the negotiations on top – Péter

25 Tamás Bornemisza, 'Emléközet', in István Bitskey (ed.), *Magyar Emlékirók 16–18. század*. Budapest: Szépirodalmi Kiadó, 1982, 72.

26 Szilágyi (ed.), *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. 1, 22–23.

27 Bessenyei (ed.), *1504–1566 Memoria rerum*, 56 and 60.

28 Emil Hargittay (ed.), *Régi Magyar Levelestár (XVI–XVII. század)*, vol. 1. Budapest: Magvető Kiadó, 1981, 72–75; Fodor, *Magyarország*, 105–107.

29 "*Monachum Episcopum Váradiensem, quem ipse Joannes Rex constituerat suorum Tutorem, in eo munere confirmavit, addita ei Regni administrandi auctoritate; Petrovithium vero Tömösváriensem Praefectum constituit.*" Szilágyi (ed.), *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. 1, 77–78.

30 Hargittay (ed.), *Levelestár*, 84; Fodor, *Magyarország*, 110.

Petrovics and Friar George – were aware of the complete truth, although each one of them later described the sultan’s command differently. According to the author of *Memoria rerum*, Süleyman sent the following message to Isabella: “I gave your son Transylvania, Lippa (Lipova, Romania), Solymos (Șoimuș, Romania), Lugos (Lugoj, Romania), Karánsebes (Caranșebes, Romania), Temesvár (Timișoara, Romania) along with all those whom Friar George and Péter Petrovics could persuade beyond the Tisza after King John. I also ordained that Friar George beside me be tutor and guardian for you and your child just as King John was for you. Péter Petrovics should look after military affairs and defend you by force of arms from all enemies who would harm you as the king’s son grows up.”<sup>31</sup> This indeed signified a return to the situation that had existed under King John in which Friar George had been responsible for civilian administration and Petrovics for the defense of the realm.

Friar George spoke differently at the diet held in Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mureș, Romania) at the end of January 1542. Friar George presented the following interpretation of the sultan’s command to the assembled nobles: “The Transtisza part of Hungary and Transylvania belong to the son of King John – with the exception of four places Várad (Oradea, Romania), Temesvár, Fogaras and Kassa, though Friar George will govern these two countries until he [John Sigismund] grows up. Transylvania and the part of the Kingdom of Hungary will pay 10,000 gold forints to the felicitous Porte in return for the Michaelmas tax even in the event that not even a single fillér is left afterwards. Várad, Fogaras and Kassa will belong to the Friar and Petrovics will have Temesvár as a sanjak.”<sup>32</sup>

This also served the premise for Farkas Bethlen, who claimed that Friar George received the duty of governing the kingdom, while Petrovics was accorded the captaincy of Temesvár.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, Bethlen believed that in April 1542 Queen Isabella redistributed the spheres of authority in order to prevent rivalry among the guardians. The blood relative Petrovics received Lippa and Temesvár along with Serbian-inhabited lands stretching to the Danube, while Friar George was given control over the area between the Tisza and Körös rivers, Lénárd Czeczey was accorded Kassa and the surrounding area and

31 “Fiadnak attam Erdélyt, Lippát, Solymost, Lugost, Karánsebest és Temesvárt mind azokkal igyetemben, kiket az fráter Gyergy és Péter Petrowyth Tiszán túl János király után birtanak. Hattam is, hogy az fráter Gyergy legen tenéked és az gyermekednek énutánam, a miképen János király tinektek vót, tutora és gondviselője. Péter Petrowyth pedig az hadi dologra vigyázzon, és oltalmazzon titeket fegyverrel minden ellensigtől, ki titeket bántana, míg az király fia megnövekedik.” Bessenyei (ed.), 1504–1566 *Memoria rerum*, 72.

32 Szilágyi (ed.), *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. 1, 34; “Quod Castrum Themessvár cum suis pertinenciis Petro Petrowith Sua Majestas ad possidendum Szancsaksággol (sic) dedit.” Bessenyei (ed.), 1504–1566 *Memoria rerum*, 78; Fodor, *Magyarország*, 106–107.

33 “Monachum Episcopum Váradiensem, quem ipse Joannes Rex constituerat suorum Tutorem, in eo munere confirmavit, addita ei Regni administrandi auctoritate; Petrovithium vero Tömösváriensem Praefectum constituit...” Bethlen, *Historia*, 390.

the queen maintained her rule in Transylvania.<sup>34</sup> Regardless of what actually occurred, Friar George's ambitions and political successes soon overshadowed the original designs and in a period of just a few years he pushed the queen and her entourage – along with Petrovics – into the background and with nearly absolute power laid the foundations for the new state.<sup>35</sup>

Péter Petrovics may have had mixed feelings about his appointment to the positions of *ispán* (*comes*) of Temes and captain general. Petrovics likely performed the duties proceeding from these offices according to the traditions of the Kingdom of Hungary. He consequently participated in the talks connected to the Treaty of Gyula and convened the Torda diet on January 10, 1542.<sup>36</sup> However, the Sublime Porte continuously warned Petrovics that he had become a vassal whose only duty was to carry out orders from the sultan. In this regard it is worthwhile to consider two circumstances to which the authors of scholarly literature have paid little attention. The first of these circumstances is the strategic situation surrounding the area lying between the Danube, Tisza and Maros rivers (the *Temesköz*). This region bordered the Ottoman Empire at the Danube and from here it was possible to maintain control over shipping routes on the Danube and Tisza rivers. Since possession of the *Temesköz* entailed supremacy over the entire central portion of the Carpathian Basin, the person who conducted civilian and military administration in this region exercised a very important function. The Sublime Porte presumably trusted Petrovics and did not fear that he would engage in political machinations that would place the territory in danger. This confidence proved to be warranted: Petrovics remained loyal to King John's political legacy – and thus to the Ottoman Empire – until the end of his life. The second circumstance is also connected to the appointment of Petrovics to the post of *sanjakbey*. Carrying out his duties in this office put Petrovics into nearly daily contact with various Ottoman military leaders and permitted him to gain new acquaintances in Constantinople as well. Correspondence and the sending of envoys enabled both Petrovics and Friar George to establish substantive contacts with members of the Ottoman élite. Petrovics may have therefore been the only person in Transylvania who was in a position to easily transmit information to the Turks and in the form of the militarized Serbian population living in territory under his authority had access to substantial military power that could be used against both internal and external enemies. At the same time, Petrovics's presence and position made the survival of the Hungarian world possible in a province in which the Hungarian ethnicity and nobility were rapidly dwindling. It is not an exaggeration to state that of the territories belonging to the former realm of King John, "the Serbs

34 "*...quo omnem, dissidii fomitem in Regni inter Tutores tolleret, ita Regni administrationem inter illos partita est: Petrovithium, Regiam stirpem cognatione attingentem, foris summae rerum cum imperio, Lippae, Temesváriano, totique Rascianorum (qui antiquitus Maesi aut Scordisci et Lardani dicebantur) regioni usque ad Danubium praefecit.*" Bethlen, *Historia*, 408; Fodor, *Magyarország*, 113.

35 See Teréz Oborni's study in the present book.

36 The summons to the diet was signed "*Petrus Petrowyth, Comes Themensiensis parciunqque Inferiorum Capitaneus generalis.*" Szilágyi (ed.), *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. 1, 75.

and the Temes borderlands remained loyal through the person and strength of Petrovics.<sup>37</sup>

Already in 1542, Péter Petrovics was forced to confront several serious issues, which he resolved to the satisfaction of the Ottomans. Petrovics dutifully forwarded letters that he received from the Habsburgs to the Sublime Porte, thus placing Habsburg diplomacy in an unpleasant position.<sup>38</sup> During this year, he several times received orders to mobilize his military forces and consolidate them with those of the beylerbeys and the Romanian voivodes on their way to relieve Buda.<sup>39</sup> Based on orders that the sultan issued over the subsequent years, it appears that Petrovics – just as Friar George – became a submissive functionary in the Ottoman administration. In December 1544, the sultan transmitted the same command to Petru voievod of Moldavia, Friar George and Petrovics in which he instructed them to seize Radu, the defiant voivode of Wallachia, if he attempted to flee.<sup>40</sup> In early 1545, Petrovics was compelled to collect 2,500 *müd*<sup>41</sup> of flour and send it to warehouses in Belgrade and to transport barley to Buda at the expense of the Transylvanian tax.<sup>42</sup>

In connection to the resettled village of Pancsova (Pančevo, Serbia), there are several documents that shed light upon the little-known internal conditions in the Temesköz region at this time. In 1545, Péter Petrovics filed a complaint charging that the residents of Pancsova had illegally founded the village. The bey of Szendrő (Smederovo, Serbia), who was in charge of investigating this affair, decided that the village should be qualified as a *hass* estate, thus removing it from the territory of the Temesköz. However Petrovics managed through his emissary to have this matter reexamined.<sup>43</sup> It turned out that in 1543 many Christians had escaped from Kalocsa and Bácska (Bačka) and more than 100 families that had fled from these regions settled in Pancsova, which was located on the northern bank of the Danube and was therefore part of the Temesköz. Since Pancsova had been founded without authorization it was decided at the Sublime Porte to eliminate the village and force its inhabitants to move back to

37 Szilágyi (ed.), *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. 1, 122.

38 In the course of Tranquillus Andronicus's talks at the Sublime Porte in late 1542, Süleyman Pasha charged that Ferdinand was attempting to incite the subjects of the Ottoman Empire to rebellion, though Friar George, Péter Petrovics and Orbán Batthyány had forwarded the relevant letters and stood alongside the Ottomans. "*Rex tuus non solum immisit in nos Hispanos et Italos, sed etiam nostros subditos literis et nuntiis contra nos sollicitat: regem videlicet Polonie, Moldavum, fratrem Georgium, Petrovich, Urbanum Bathiani. Hi autem omnes literas regias ad nos miserunt et volunt esse nobiscum.*" Karl Nehring (ed.), *Austro-Turcica 1541–1552. Diplomatiscche Akten des habsburgischen Gesandtschaftsverkehers mit den Hohen Pforte im Zeitalter Süleyman des Prächtigen* (Südosteuropäische Arbeiten 95). München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1995, 29.

39 Szilágyi (ed.), *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. 1, 97.

40 Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor, "Az ország ügye mindenek előtt való" *A szultáni tanács Magyarországra vonatkozó rendeletei (1544–1545, 1552)*. Budapest: História–MTA TTI, 2005, 39. A similar command was issued via Orudj Chavush on January 29, 1545. *Ibid.*, 94–95.

41 One *müd* is equal to 513.160 kilograms.

42 Dávid and Fodor, "Az ország ügye mindenek előtt való," 69–72, 97.

43 *Ibid.*, 55, 99, 100, 124–125.

their original homes.<sup>44</sup> In this way Petrovics managed to assert Christian legal practice within the Ottoman administrative milieu and preserve the integrity of the territory that had been placed under his authority.

This same situation arose with regard to the important commercial center of Becse (Bečej, Serbia) on the banks of the Tisza river. On March 29, 1545, the sultan first ordered Petrovics to relinquish the castle in Becse to the beylerbey of Buda on the grounds that the Ottomans had already conquered the town once and therefore it belonged to the lands of Islam. The evacuation order noted that this excellent river port and crossing on the west bank of the Tisza had come under Petrovics's control illegally and that it rightfully belonged to the sultan.<sup>45</sup> The scope of the sultan's demand was later expanded to include the surrender of the castle in Becskerek (Zrenjanin, Serbia),<sup>46</sup> though this town lay deep within the region of the Temesköz and could thus not be justified on legal grounds. In both instances, however, Petrovics was able to resist compliance with these demands and the castles in Becse and Becskerek were turned over to the Ottomans only in the autumn of 1551, after Petrovics had resigned from his offices and left the region. Therefore, responsibility for the loss of the Temesköz in 1552 did not rest with Petrovics, who indeed defended the territory that had been placed under his authority in accordance with Hungarian interests in spite of his appointment to serve as sanjakbey.

#### FLIGHT AND RETURN

The conflict between Friar George and Queen Isabella in the eastern half of Hungary became increasingly intense during the second half of the 1540s. Péter Petrovics was the leading figure among the aristocrats who supported Isabella in this conflict. The death of King Sigismund of Poland on April 1, 1548, signified the loss of a powerful mainstay supporting the preservation of equilibrium in the part of Hungary under Szapolyai control. Talks between Ferdinand Habsburg and Friar George intensified in 1549 and resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Nyírbátor on September 8 of this year. In this treaty, Friar George promised to renounce claims to the throne in favor of Ferdinand, though failed to inform Queen Isabella of this pledge.<sup>47</sup> Péter Petrovics was the first to learn about these negotiations and informed both the queen and the sultan about them. During the summer of 1550, Süleyman therefore sent a *firman* to Transylvania via Mahmud Chavush in which he deprived Friar George of all his offices.<sup>48</sup> In early

44 *Ibid.*, 191–192.

45 *Ibid.*, 152–153, 157–158.

46 Szilágyi (ed.), *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. 1, 202.

47 Teréz Oborni, 'Isabella királyné erdélyi udvarának kezdetei (1541–1551)', *Történelmi Szemle* 51:1 (2009) 32–33.

48 Szilágyi (ed.), *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. 1, 307–311; Nehring (ed.), *Austro-Turcica*, 468–469 (no. 181). Petrovics to Rüstem Pasha, Gyulafehérvár, June–July 1550. In this letter Petrovics expressed appreciation for the favor that he had enjoyed until that time and warned that Friar George was causing a great deal of harm. Petrovics also stated that for this reason he was

September, another envoy arrived to Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia, Romania) and presented a golden flag to the king and an ornamented garment to Petrovics.<sup>49</sup> This envoy also appointed Petrovics to all of Friar George's former offices.<sup>50</sup> It appeared that Isabella and her supporters had triumphed in this struggle.

It is difficult to determine why the strife between Isabella and her followers and Friar George flared up again at precisely this time. Ferenc Forgách offers the surprising conclusion that Petrovics was behind the intensification of this conflict. According to Forgách, Petrovics feared that in the event of his death, John Sigismund's inheritance might be appropriated and thus urged that selected dignitaries be assigned the task of safeguarding the assets of the realm until the king reached adulthood.<sup>51</sup> Petrovics apparently did not have confidence in the ability of Isabella to preserve her son's inheritance. At the same time, Friar George feared that he would lose his political influence once the child king grew up and that the effort to unify Hungary under Habsburg rule would not succeed after all. Forgách maintained that these two concerns provoked the power struggle between Isabella and Friar George that ended in an armed conflict.

Péter Petrovics's actions and behavior in the years 1550–1551 were the subject of the greatest amount of criticism. Many of his contemporaries concluded that Petrovics would have been capable of regaining power for Isabella in September 1550, though had failed to do so as a result of his personal weaknesses.<sup>52</sup> Although Petrovics had occupied Alvinc (Vințu de Jos, Romania) and Branyicska (Brănișca, Romania) in the course of the summer, he was unable to prevent Friar George from assembling a suitable-sized army and laying siege to the queen's city, Gyulafehérvár, and thereby forcing her to abdicate. Isabella had been compelled to relinquish the throne despite the fact that during the summer the queen had been in continuous contact with Rüstem Pasha, the sultan's son-in-law through whom she sent gifts to the ruler of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>53</sup> Interestingly, in June 1550 the rumor circulated in Constantinople that Petrovics had died in Temesvár.<sup>54</sup>

---

grateful that Mahmud had been sent to him (*"quod magnificum dominum Mahmuth cum eiusmodi mandato huc mittere dignati sunt"*). For more on Mahmud, see Pál Ács, 'Tarjumans Mahmud and Murad: Austrian and Hungarian Renegades as Sultan's Interpreters', in Bodo Guthmüller and Wilhelm Kühlmann (eds.), *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance* (Frühe Neuzeit 54). Tübingen: De Gruyter, 2000, 307–317.

49 "...per eum Regi parvulo aureum vexillum, simul que Petrovithio vetes auro distinctas offert." Bethlen, *Historia*, 446.

50 Szilágyi (ed.), *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. 1, 263.

51 "Nam Petrus, dum perspiceret opes regni non in publicum, neque regis usum converti, sed ad augendam propriam potentiam distrahi; tum etiam ne morte eius, incerta familiarum fide, thesauri dissiparentur: volebat ut opes regni atque thesauri ab electis ad custodiam praesentissimus hominibus adulto regi cumularentur, conservanturque." Forgách, *De statu reipublicae Hungaricae*, 3.

52 *Ibid.*, 14; Szilágyi (ed.), *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*. vol. 1, 261.

53 Nehring (ed.), *Austro-Turcica*, 463–464 (no. 178), Petrovics to Rüstem, Temesvár, June 13, 1550. In this letter, Petrovics stated that he was sending four hunting falcons to Süleyman and two to Rüstem, whom he asked to intervene on his behalf with the sultan.

54 "Qua era venuta nova che Petrovith de Temeswar era morto; ma non è verificata anchora." Nehring (ed.), *Austro-Turcica*, 468 (no. 180), 1550. Johann Malvezzi to Ferdinand, Constantinople, June 18, 1550.

In the autumn of 1550, it appeared from the outside that nothing had yet been decided. The estates preserved the balance of power between the two sides and wished to commit the task of raising the young sovereign to Friar George and Petrovics.<sup>55</sup> At the same time, it was evident that the *ispán* of Temes was fortifying the castles in the country in preparation for the impending war.<sup>56</sup> During these weeks Isabella stood up for Petrovics, to whom she referred in a letter to the sultan as her pillar of support and suggested that if necessary she could personally visit the Sublime Porte along with her son and her advisor.<sup>57</sup> At the same time, Ferdinand also did everything possible to obtain Ottoman support. In late 1550, Ferdinand informed his envoy to the Ottoman Empire, Johann/Giovanni Malvezzi, that he was conducting negotiations with Friar George and if these talks succeeded then he would also be willing to pay an annual tribute to the sultan just as Isabella and Petrovics.<sup>58</sup>

In January 1551, Friar George finally assumed the strategic initiative and within just two months acquired total power in Transylvania. At the diet held in Várad on January 22 of that year, Friar George accused Petrovics of *Turcismus* and posing a threat to Christianity.<sup>59</sup> After seeing the superior strength of Castaldo's army in May and June of 1551, Petrovics withdrew to Lippa, where he continued to oppose Isabella's abdication.<sup>60</sup> Petrovics therefore did not attend the meeting in Szászsebes at which Isabella signed her declaration of abdication, though after some hesitation he did comply with the queen's order to cede the castles in Temesvár, Lippa, Lugos, Karánsebes and Déva (Deva, Romania) to the Habsburg king of Hungary. Ferdinand proposed to Petrovics that he switch his allegiance to him and in this case he would be permitted to maintain control over these castles. However, Petrovics refused this offer. According to Farkas Bethlen, Petrovics asserted at this time that he would be greatly surprised "if anybody is able to

55 "...filium in spem capessendae Reipublicae educandum Petrovithio et Georgio Monacho traderet" Bethlen, *Historia*, 460.

56 "...bene sciens Petrovithium impigre arces et propugnacula Regni firmare" *Ibid.*, 480. "De rebus Transsylvaniae hoc nobis constat: Fratrem Georgium et Petrum Petrovith magnam discordiam inter se habere et utrinque arma sumpta esse. Quis sit secuturum, adhuc sciri non potest." Letter from Ferdinand to Malvezzi, Vienna, October 3, 1550. Nehring (ed.), *Austro-Turcica*, 513 (no. 193).

57 "Io, nostro figliolo et Petro Petrovith, subditi de Vostra M.tà, siamo aparati a venir ala Gran Porta sua." Nehring (ed.), *Austro-Turcica*, 519 (no. 195).

58 "...si felicem, ut speramus, effectum haberet, nos nihilominus statuimus, Sultano et rustem Pascha aliisque paschis tantum quantum a regina Isabella et Petro Petrovith solvitur annuatim solvere, ac potius cum bona amicitia Sultani, quam bello et armis ipsam Transylvaniam obtinere et in potestatem nostram redigere." *Ibid.*, 542 (no. 204).

59 „Más urat kell keresniök ki ezt megethesse, mert ha Petrovicscsal mindnyájan törökké akarnak is lenni ő olyan urat keres, ki az országot keresztyénül tartja meg." Szilágyi (ed.), *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. 1, 269.

60 "Petrovithius vero cum iis, quas tunc auxilio Reginae adduxerat copiis, videns illas ad resistendum tantae potentiae impares esse, atque ad praecavendum, ne tam gravibus conditionibus, ad quas misera Regina redigebatur, sua praesentia subscribere videretur, illos non expectans ad arcem Lippam discessit." Bethlen, *Historia*, 486.

defend these castles against Soliman's forces for two years on end.<sup>61</sup> In exchange for the castles, Petrovics received the Munkács (Mukachevo, Ukraine) dominium, which he took over from Georg Werner at the end of 1552.<sup>62</sup>

Historiographer Ferenc Forgách learned that Petrovics had justified his actions to Süleyman by claiming that they were aimed at defending King John II.<sup>63</sup> Contacts between Temesvár and the Sublime Porte may have been continuous already during the summer of 1551, therefore we might even accept the letter and its contents. In Constantinople, the captain general was regarded as a loyal vassal even in June 1551.<sup>64</sup> However, this disposition then began to change and by the end of the summer Friar George had managed to convince the envoys of the Sublime Porte that Petrovics was a traitor.<sup>65</sup>

Petrovics left the country along with the queen, although there could not have been complete accord between them by this time. Gianbattista Castaldo claimed that he had heard from Isabella that she would rather die than entrust her son to Petrovics in Kassa.<sup>66</sup> The author of *Memoria rerum*, however, emphasized that when "Petrovics went to Kassa with the queen he would not leave the side of the king's son."<sup>67</sup> The queen and her entourage had hardly left Transylvania when Sokollu Mehmed crossed the Danube at Pétervárad (Petrovaradin, Serbia) and occupied the castles in Becse and Becskerek that Petrovics had previously declined to cede to them.

The judgment of Péter Petrovics at the Sublime Porte developed in an interesting manner. Petrovics suffered no retribution from the Ottomans for having surrendered the sanjak over which they had granted him authority to the enemy. At around this same time, however, Rüstem Pasha – who had previously counted as one of his allies – concluded as a result of Friar George's effective

61 "Se non recusaturum fieri agazonum illius, qui has arcas per biennium adversus vim Solymani tutatus fuerit." *Ibid.*, 493.

62 In August 1552, Isabella urged Ferdinand to accede to the transfer of Munkács because, in the words of the queen, Petrovics – without an estate of his own – was following her around everywhere like a Gypsy. Samu Barabás, 'Erdély történetére vonatkozó regesták (IV. közlemény)', *Történelmi Tár* ser. III:15 (1892) 291 (reg. 275).

63 "Ad Solymanum tamen nuntium cum litteris ablegavit, quibus eum edocebat, quae agebantur. Quod vero Temesvaro et inferiori Ungaria sibi cedendum esset, id sese invitum facere, ne Johanni Secundo, qui artibus Georgii in potestate Germanorum iam esset, nex aut perniciēs inferretur." Forgách, *De statu reipublicae Hungaricae*, 14.

64 "...ipse etiam Petrowytch nobis est fidelis subditus begus" Árpád Károlyi, 'Fráter György. Befejező közlemény', *Történelmi Tár* ser. III:5 (1882) 122; Petritsch, *Regesten der osmanischen Dokumente*, 147.

65 Friar George admitted to Nádasdy that he would attempt to persuade the Sublime Porte that Petrovics had been responsible for what had taken place and this is indeed what happened. „A te arczodat – felelék neki – a hatalmas szultán fehérnek találta, s a te ellenséged Petrovics megszégyenült: mert váraiban mindenütt németekre akadtak, míg ő maga megszökött." Szilágyi (ed.), *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. 1, 347–348.

66 *Ibid.*, 281.

67 Bessenyei (ed.), *1504–1566 Memoria rerum*, 95.

diplomacy that Petrovics was unreliable.<sup>68</sup> The following year the sultan sent a couple of orders to Transylvania charging that “the turmoil erupted entirely because of the Friar and Petrovics.”<sup>69</sup> At the same time, other sources reveal that those in the sultan’s milieu had by February 1552 at the very latest become aware that the situation was the result of Friar George’s treason. Although the Ottomans called Petrovics to account for his decision to relinquish the castles and questioned his loyalty to the Sublime Porte, they believed that his devotion to Isabella had remained unbroken. The letter that Petrovics received at this time shows that the Sublime Porte knew how to influence the old *ispán* of Temes: “Transylvania is still the young prince’s sanjak. If you join forces with one another, you will drive the Austrians out by force of arms [and if] no injury befalls the queen and the prince, but instead they are brought back to their previous location, then he [Petrovics] will remain in possession of his castles and parts of the country, enjoying the grace of the sovereign. Do not allow the wealth of the prince to be lost, beware of Ferdinand’s machinations lest he be able to cause harm.”<sup>70</sup>

The situation in Transylvania soon changed. Friar George was assassinated in December 1551, Temesvár fell in 1552 and General Castaldo withdrew with the Habsburg armies from the remainder of King John’s realm. There was an outbreak of plague in Brassó (Braşov, Romania) in 1553 that the following year spread toward Nagyszeben (Sibiu, Romania), where 3,200 people died of the disease in 1555.<sup>71</sup> The peoples of Transylvania quickly learned the bitter lesson that the Habsburgs were still unable to defend them, thus preparations for a restoration of power soon began. Already in October 1552, Castaldo informed Ferdinand that the Transylvanians wanted to break away from the Habsburgs and dragoman Mahmud paid a visit to Péter Petrovics in order to discuss the reinstatement of elected King John II. During these talks, Mahmud promised Petrovics that he would again be permitted to exercise the office of *ispán* of Temes under the same conditions as previously.<sup>72</sup> On December 26, 1552, news began to circulate in Gyulafehérvár that within days Petrovics would arrive to Munkács, where he would meet with Ferenc Kendy, one of the voivodes whom Ferdinand had appointed to govern Transylvania, and in the meantime Isabella had been notified from Transylvania that her return was awaited.<sup>73</sup> Castaldo increasingly feared Kendy, whom he suspected of being the most significant

68 “*El bassa rispose che Petrovich et fratre Georgio erano inimici et che non credeva a Petrovich; et disse che fratre Georgio era fedel servitore del Sig.or Turcho.*” Nehring (ed.), *Austro-Turcica*, 595 (no. 231).

69 Dávid and Fodor, “*Az ország ügye mindenek előtt való*”, 574. Petritsch, *Regesten der osmanischen Dokumente*, 188.

70 Dávid and Fodor, “*Az ország ügye mindenek előtt való*”, 272–273.

71 Mihály Siegler, ‘A magyarok, az erdélyiek és a szomszédos tartományok történetének kronológiája’, in Péter Kulcsár (ed.), *Krónikáink magyarul*, vol. 3/2, translated by Péter Kulcsár. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2007, 95.

72 Barabás, ‘Erdély történetére vonatkozó regesták’, 489 (reg. 319).

73 *Ibid.*, 660 (reg. 368).

source of local support for the pro-Isabella faction despite the fact he was serving as a representative of Ferdinand's authority in Transylvania. On January 4, Castaldo wrote a letter to Ferdinand in which he accused Kendy of being a traitor and recommended that he be placed under arrest. Castaldo furthermore complained about the decision of leaders in Brassó to send a tribute to the sultan and also suggested that István Dobó, Ferdinand's other voivode in Transylvania, apprehend Petrovics when he returned from Poland.<sup>74</sup>

Several documents from the year 1553 concern the erstwhile *ispán* of Temes. After rumors in January that Petrovics was headed to Munkács, his followers in Transylvania sent him 1,000 shields and lances the following month.<sup>75</sup> On February 23, Tamás Varkocs wrote to Castaldo from Várad that two of Petrovics's envoys, one of whom was Pál Bakics, were on their way to meet Kasim sanjakkbey of Temesvár, and afterward would continue on to Constantinople. On March 5, Varkocs provided Ferdinand with even more concrete information. Varkocs had learned that the Sublime Porte had ordered Petrovics to organize the return of the prince and had promised the military support of 10,000 Serbian soldiers from Sylvania for this purpose. In addition to Kasim, Ali Pasha of Buda and Derviš, sanjakkbey of Szeged, were Petrovics's greatest sources of support. News indicated that the sultan was also prepared to return Lippa to him.<sup>76</sup> A few weeks later, rumors also emerged that Petrovics himself would pay the sultan 50,000 gold forints in exchange for Temesvár, Lippa and the Lower Parts (*Partes Inferiores*) of Hungary and that Transylvanian conspirators awaited him and his entourage in the village of Nagykereki in Bihar County.<sup>77</sup> Petrovics finally surfaced on the border of the Partium region at the end of the summer, though after leaving Debrecen Ferdinand's military forces under the command of Ferenc Tahy and Mátyás Zaberminus prevented him from reaching Várad, forcing him to withdraw on October 3.

After his failed attempt to return to Transylvania in 1553, Péter Petrovics tried again via another route the following year – this time with success. Petrovics arrived to Lugos by way of Munkács and Moldavia after the sultan gave him the former city along with Karánsebes<sup>78</sup> so that he could prepare for Isabella's return in coordination with local Serbs.<sup>79</sup> On March 6, 1554, Süleyman announced to the citizens of Brassó as well as to Ferenc Kendy and other Transylvanian nobles that he had given the realm to John Sigismund and that Petrovics would temporarily receive the sanjakkbey flag symbolizing power. The sultan instructed

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 663 (reg. 378).

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 666 (reg. 393), 671 (reg. 409).

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 676 (reg. 430).

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 681 (reg. 457).

<sup>78</sup> In the 1540s, there was a conflict between Péter Petrovics and the city of Karánsebes, several dozen citizens of which had confessed under oath against the *ispán* of Temes before pro-Habsburg Chief Magistrate László Rakovici. Bálint Lakatos, 'Városi nemesek Karánsebesen a 15–16. század fordulóján', *URBS Magyar várostörténeti évkönyv*, vol. 3. Budapest: Budapest Főváros Levéltára, 2008, 78.

<sup>79</sup> Bethlen, *Historia*, 553.

them to be loyal to him and to their king. Süleyman also sent this command to Sokollu Mehmed of Bosnia, Toygun of Buda, Kasim Pasha of Temesvár and the voivodes of Moldavia and Wallachia.<sup>80</sup>

Over the subsequent year and a half, Péter Petrovics prepared in Lugos for the return of the royal family. The Transylvanian estates decided at the diet convened in Marosvásárhely in December 1555 to recall King John and sent official envoys to Petrovics in Lugos.<sup>81</sup> The elderly magnate wasted no time, responding to the invitation via his emissary, Kelemen Hagymássy, already at the beginning of January and traveling shortly thereafter to Szászsebes, where he accepted the homage of the Transylvanian Saxons. Petrovics himself convoked the diet held on March 8 in Szászsebes at which he was chosen to serve as governor until the return of Queen Isabella. According to Farkas Bethlen, the estates authorized Petrovics to deploy stewards to royal cities, gold and silver mines and customs houses, to appoint *ispáns* to govern counties and even placed the justice system under his control.<sup>82</sup> During these days, Petrovics also received an order from Süleyman to prepare for the return of John II and to drive Ferdinand's military forces out of the province.<sup>83</sup>

Péter Petrovics reached the pinnacle of his career during the twilight of his life with his appointment as governor. A council composed of two members from each of the three recognized nations – the Hungarian nobility, the Székelys and the Saxons – assisted Petrovics with his duties as governor. The following representatives served on this six-member council: Boldizsár Pathóchy, who was related to Petrovics, and Miklós Forró on behalf of the Hungarian nobility; Miklós Kornis and Márton Andrási on behalf of the Székelys; and Péter Haller, Ferdinand's former treasurer, and Brassó magistrate Johann Benkner on behalf of the Saxons. However, there is no data regarding the activity of these councilors.<sup>84</sup> Petrovics officially served as the *locum tenens* for Isabella and John II in Hungary and Transylvania (*infra reditum Maiestatum suarum in iurisdictione earundem Maiestatum suarum tam in regno Hungariae quam etiam in hoc regno*

80 Petritsch, *Regesten der osmanischen Dokumente*, 254.

81 Bethlen, 561. For the events of 1556, see Teréz Oborni, 'Bornemissza Pál és Dobó István távozása Erdélyből (1556)', in Teréz Oborni and László Á. Varga (eds.), *Memoria Rerum. Tanulmányok Bán Péter tiszteletére*. Eger: Heves Megyei Levéltár, 2008, 349–361.

82 "Praeterea constituunt Petrovithium Locumtenentem, ut ipse Regni negotia omnia ad adventum Reginae cum filio administret." Bethlen, *Historia*, 597. "Though until we are able to bring His Majesty along with our lady Her Majesty together among us in accordance with their eminence: we place in the image of His Majesty lord Péter Petrovics, in whose hands we place every domain – befitting the royal eminence – in the cities, the castles, the villages, the salt mines, the gold and silver mines, the thirtieth tax and all estates... Petrovics His Lordship shall place bailiffs everywhere and *ispáns* in the counties – let His Lordship dispense the law." Szilágyi (ed.), *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. 1, 570–571.

83 Petritsch, *Regesten der osmanischen Dokumente*, 335.

84 Győző Ember, *Az újkori magyar közigazgatás története Moháctól a török kiűzéséig*. Budapest: "Budapest" Irodalmi, Művészeti és Tudományos Intézet, 1946, 407; Zsolt Trócsányi, *Törvényalkotás az Erdélyi Fejedelemségben*. Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 2005, 26.

*Transsylvaniae locumtenens*) and in similar fashion to Friar George exercised nearly regal authority.<sup>85</sup>

Over the subsequent months, Péter Petrovics handled the affairs of the part of the country that had been placed under his authority with exceptional energy. Petrovics summoned the voivodes of Moldavia and Wallachia to the realm to deal with István Dobó, who was supporting Ferdinand, and already in early March ordered Menyhárt Balassa to seize Gyulafehérvár. With soldiers and weapons obtained in Nagyszében, Petrovics managed to reoccupy the royal capital city. He then traveled to Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca, Romania), where the assembled Transylvanian estates decided to recall the queen and her son. After returning to Transylvania from Lemberg (Lviv, Ukraine), Petrovics met Isabella in Dés (Dej, Romania) and together they entered the gates of Kolozsvár on October 22, 1556.<sup>86</sup> Ferenc Forgách suggested that Petrovics had at the end of his life become estranged from the queen and may have even killed her had he not died first.<sup>87</sup> However, the fact that Petrovics left his entire estate to Isabella in his will contradicts Forgách's hypothesis.<sup>88</sup>

Péter Petrovics's enemy, Pál Bornemissza, wrote in September 1557 that the queen existed in Transylvania only as a painted picture and was unable to rule because everything took place according to the will of Petrovics, whom evil had possessed and for this reason all his actions were merciless and tyrannical.<sup>89</sup> However, the queen did not, in fact, have to fear this as in the case of Friar George one decade previously. Her lieutenant was not dazzled by power and vacated his office as *locum tenens* immediately after the return of the prince. The loyalty of his old relative became a subject of study for the young sovereign, who in Poland had been placed under the tutelage of the humanist Albertus Novicampianus. Writing under the pseudonym Scopus Biblicus, Novicampianus wrote a book that he dedicated to Petrovics, in which he highlighted the humility and selflessness with which Petrovics had renounced ownership over his enormous estates.<sup>90</sup>

85 Magyar Országos Levéltár, Erdélyi Országos Kormányhatósági Levéltárak, Gyulafehérvári Káptalan Országos Levéltára, F 5 Cista diversorum comitatum, Cista 1, Fasc. 1, no. 15.

86 Bethlen, *Historia*, 596.

87 Forgách, *De statu reipublicae Hungaricae*, 168.

88 "Regina omnium Bonorum suorum haerede constituta." Bethlen, *Historia*, 610. "Péter Petrowyth died and was buried in Kolozsvár and all his treasure was left to the queen." Bessenyei (ed.), *1504–1566 Memoria rerum*, 105.

89 Pál Bornemissza's letter to Tamás Nádasdy, Nyitra (Nitra, Slovakia), September 26, 1557. "Reginam non secus, atque tabellam pictam, nihil posse agere, aut imperare sed omnia fieri nutu Petrovich, quem putant daemone obsessum, aut potius daemonem in corpus ipsius transformatum esse. Unde omnia ipsius acta impia et tyrannica." Georgius Pray, *Epistolae Procerum Regni Hungariae*, vol. 3. Posonii: Ex Typographeo G. A. Belnay, 1806, 123.

90 Orgona, 'Jan Zygmunt', 14. "Illustri item ac Magnifico domino Comiti Petrowicz viro mitissimo et integerrimo, tuique amantissimo, qui propter te unum possessiones amplissimas in Hungaria demisit: caeterisque omnibus. Multo tamen te chariorem fore putato, si, ut, coepisti, pietati caeterisque virtutibus et disciplinis Principe dignis studueris. Nihil enim charius, nihil amabilius virtute." Scopus Biblicus *Veteris et Novi Testamenti authore Alberto Novicampiano*. Cracoviae: Lazarus Andree excudebat, 1553, [16].

However, Péter Petrovics differed greatly from his queen and king in terms of religious inclination. For unknown reasons, Petrovics was among the aristocrats of Hungary who became very early supporters of Protestantism. Mihály Balázs wrote the following with regard to this subject: “Governor Péter Petrovics – certainly as a result of his longer-term political objectives – was not only a supporter of the Reformation, but in programmatic fashion engaged the services of preachers who, although they espoused divergent dogmatic concepts, had all made a radical and permanent break with the entire institutional and dogmatic system of Catholicism, allowing for no retreat or compromise.”<sup>91</sup>

Among those whom Petrovics patronized were the radical Italian reformer Francesco Stancaró, one of the first promulgators of Unitarian theology, and Márton Kálmáncsehi Sánta, who likewise engaged in a radical effort to purify churches and rites. It is uncertain whether we can speak of a conscious religious-political concept in the case of Petrovics, who was very likely illiterate,<sup>92</sup> though in 1549 he certainly took István Szegedi Kis into his service in Temesvár and in 1550 convened a synod in Tornya (Turnu, Romania) in Csanád County for priests from the region who were leaning toward Protestantism and at which the opinion of more radical parish clerks who were more open to Calvinist doctrine triumphed.<sup>93</sup> The disturbances that took place in Kolozsvár in December 1551, which resulted in the – for the time being temporary – expulsion of the Franciscan community from the city, can be interpreted as an expression of support for Petrovics against the occupation of the Catholic Habsburgs.<sup>94</sup> Data indicating that Petrovics’s former court priest, whose name is unfortunately unknown, was elected to serve as parish priest in Kolozsvár in late 1552 is compatible with this supposition.<sup>95</sup> On March 15, 1556, just one week following Petrovics’s appointment as governor, the early phase of the Reformation concluded in Kolozsvár with the expulsion of the Franciscans and Dominicans from the city and the confiscation of their landed property.<sup>96</sup> In 1557, it was decided that a school should be founded in the building of the Dominicans as an endowment from Isabella and the possibility that Petrovics left his estate to the queen in order to support the establishment of this school cannot be excluded.

91 Mihály Balázs, ‘Megjegyzések János Zsigmond valláspolitikájáról’, *Credo* 14:1–2 (2008) 69.

92 I am not aware of any letter or signature from him in his own mother tongue. Instead of a signature, Petrovics placed his seal on documents. Vilmos Fraknói, *Werbőczy István életrajza*. Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1899, 320, illustration 106; Endre Veress, *Izabella királyné 1519–1559*. Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1901, 267, illustration 82. The signature “*idem manu propria*” is derived from the same handwriting that drafted the diploma with the reference as in note 85.

93 Géza Kathona, *Fejezetek a török hódoltsági reformáció történetéből* (Humanizmus és Reformáció 4). Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1974, 217.







94 Radu Lupescu, ‘Utriusque ordinis expulsi sunt. Kolozsvár, 1556. március 15.’, in József Csurgai Horváth (ed.), *Az első 300 év Magyarországon és Európában. A Domonkos-rend a középkorban*. Székesfehérvár: Alba Civitas Történelmi Alapítvány, 2017, 295.

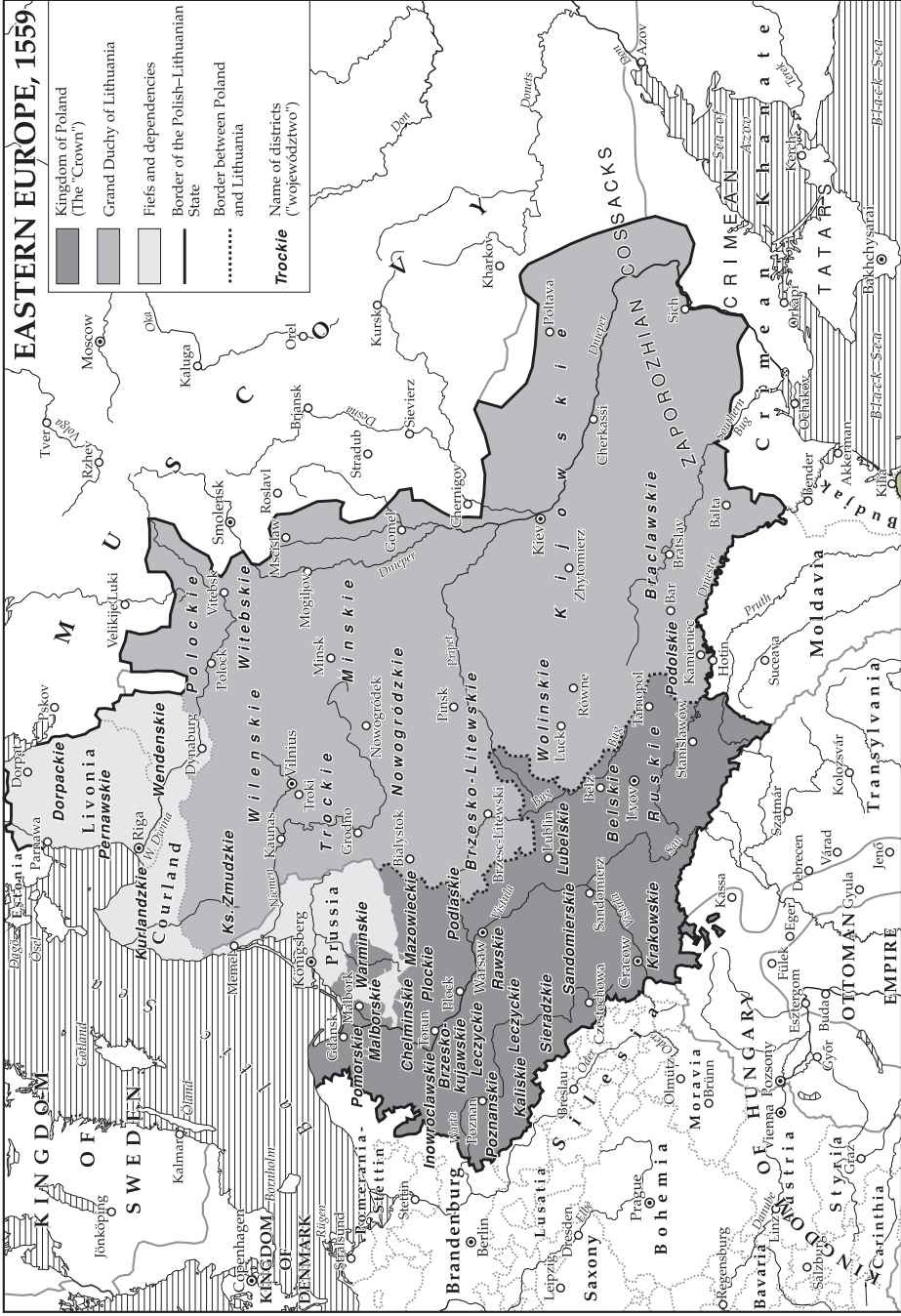
95 Zsigmond Jakó, *A kolozsmonostori konvent jegyzőkönyvei 1289–1556*, vol. 1 (Magyar Országos Levéltár Kiadványai II; Forráskiadványok 17). Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1990, 87.

96 Lupescu, ‘Utriusque ordinis expulsi sunt’, 300–301.

Péter Petrovics presumably died a satisfied man. At the end of decades of service for the Szapolyais he was able to restore to elected King John II the realm of his father. He accumulated neither wealth nor property and thus did not have to worry about the fate of his inheritance. At the end of his life, he helped Márton Kálmáncsehi Sánta transform the citizens of Kolozsvár into followers of Calvin, thus he had no reason to feel shame before God. At the same time, the fact cannot be concealed that among the supporters of King John, Petrovics – with the exception of the most unrepentant renegades – stood the closest to the Sublime Porte. Whereas Friar George had attempted to maneuver between the two great powers and retain the place of John's kingdom among the Christian realms, Petrovics had regarded the benevolence of the sultan to be a necessary condition for survival. The early modern history of Transylvania proves that Petrovics's conclusion was not unfounded, though his career proves a clear demonstration of the narrow boundaries of this pathway.

# EASTERN EUROPE, 1559

	Kingdom of Poland (The "Crown")
	Grand Duchy of Lithuania
	Fiefs and dependencies
	Border of the Polish-Lithuanian State
	Border between Poland and Lithuania
	Name of districts ("województwo")





MOHÁCS 1526–2026  
RECONSTRUCTION AND REMEMBRANCE

The first English-language volume of the series discusses the life of Queen Isabella Jagiellon (1539–1559), wife of King John I Szapolyai.

In 1539, Isabella, a princess whose Italian mother had prepared her for court life in the spirit of the Renaissance, arrived in Hungary. Perhaps recalling the example of her parents, King Sigismund I and Queen Bona of Poland, she may have hoped that her marriage to King John would be happy, fruitful, and enduring. With a little luck, Isabella could have had a fate very similar to that of her mother. However, with the death of King John, she suddenly found herself without the guarantees and protections with which she could have grown into her role as queen.

Although Isabella did not have the long and tranquil life that she had envisioned at the time of her marriage, she nonetheless had an interesting life, as she was forced to confront challenging political and personal circumstances.

The present volume highlights a few aspects of Isabella's life in the hope that a new monograph on the queen will be published as part of an international endeavor within the next few years.

