

# THE VICEBAN, THE NOBLE JUDGES AND “THE TRAITOR” (THE BIOGRAPHIES OF THE OSZLÁRI AND THE PORAZFALVI FAMILIES)\*

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## 1. Introduction

The title of the paper refers to the most significant landmarks of the life of four noblemen, who are Laurence of Oszlár, the viceban of Szörény (Severin) before 1393, Mark and Nicolaus of Porazfalva, the noble judges (Latin: *iudices nobilium*, Hungarian: *szolgabíró*) of Krassó (Caraş) county during the 1340s and Paul of Oszlár, the brother of the aforementioned Laurence, who committed treason by participating in the 1403 coup against King Sigismund. At this point, it might seem that these two families have nothing to do with each other, so one may ask why to discuss them together on the same pages? The answer lies in two simple facts: firstly, both families originally resided in the medieval Temesköz region<sup>1</sup> – the Oszlárís from Temes (Timiş), the Porazfalvis from Krassó county – giving the geographical framework of their relation; secondly, in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century this relationship grew stronger through a marriage connection established between the daughter of Laurence of Oszlár and the son of Nicolaus of

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to stress that the terms *Bánát/Bánság* and *banatus Themesiensis* (banate of Temes) were not used in the Middle Ages, for the simple reason that this political and administrative formation was created only in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Consequently, it is much more correct to use either *Temesköz* – a term found in medieval documents, though, used merely as a geographical designation – or *the Region between the rivers Danube, Tisa and Mureş* (Hungarian: Duna-Tisza-Marosközé) when referring to this area (István Petrovics, “Towns and central places in the Danube-Tisza/Tisa-Maros/Mureş region in the MiddleAges,” *Banatica*, 26/II (2016): 87–88, footnote nr. 18).

Porazfalva. Otherwise, concerning landed wealth, attitudes, career opportunities etc., the two families stood at the different ends of the society of the county nobility. Despite this fact, both reached an esteemed and prestigious status within and beyond the local noble community, which is evidently proven by what is indicated in the title: the office-holding of Laurence, Mark and Nicolaus and Paul's involvement in key events in 1403.

What explains our choice to introduce the comprehensive biographies of these two families in this paper, is our original curiosity for learning about the identity and the family ties of the locally important participants of the county communities, such as noble judges, regularly appearing royal men, men of the county, etc. Since the number of the sources is limited on the region, it was not evident at all that our investigation would go beyond the general collection of genealogical facts and the overall summary of the landed wealth of the selected families. However, as the process of data collection was going on, it soon became clear that, even with its limitations, the history of the Oszlárís and the Porazfalvis promises the opportunity to attempt a much deeper analysis, that is, to have an insight into the relations, the careers and the political participation of the locally esteemed families belonging to the group of nobility with middling wealth. So, no matter how many families have been identified from the medieval Temesköz with members who were rich enough or were entrusted with tasks by the community<sup>2</sup>, the original plan to include each of them in this paper had to be omitted and the number of families involved in the inquiry was finally reduced to two.

To contribute to the systematic socio-historical investigation of the Oszlári and the Porazfalvi families, traditional and modern approaches of family history were used. Therefore, this paper intends to focus not only on the reconstruction of the landed wealth and the genealogical trees of the families, but on the contextualising of the main turning points in the lives of the family members as well so as to reveal the circumstances which determined the rank of the Oszlárís and the Porazfalvis in the region. Also, to get a more precise and realistic image about their overall status within the noble community, we were fortunate enough to identify many of the social connections of the family

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<sup>2</sup> The list of potential families belonging to this category includes more than 20 names such as the Iktári Betlen, the Gáji Csölnök, the Majosfalvi, the Csatári Ernyefi, the Gyertyánosi, the Szarvastelki Vaski and the Perdveji families as deputies (*vicecomites*) of Krassó, while concerning the noble judges and other trusted members of the community, the list would consist of the Erményi Magyar, the Gegusfalvi, the Fúteleki, the Csatári Csire, the Bajlai, the Benkefalvi, the Partasi, the Gyülvészi, the Tejedi, the Gyalmári, the Helimbai, the Györögi, etc. families. The publication of their biographies, however, would have exceeded the word limit of the present paper.

members (e.g. marriage relations and *familiaritas*) which added further details about the socio-historical backgrounds of these families.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. The Oszlári/Pelbárthidai Family

### 2.1. The Origins

The Oszláris – the use of Pelbárthida as a distinctive possession will be discussed later – are amongst the few non-baronial noble families from the medieval Temesköz region whose genealogical tree and whose short biography can be found in the historical literature. In a study published by Mór Wertner in 1908 the main cornerstones of the family history and its key figures have already been identified<sup>4</sup>, while their compact family tree is not missing from Pál Engel's great volume of genealogical work either.<sup>5</sup> The presence of the Oszláris in these publications apparently points towards the relative significance of the family, especially knowing that modern and complex researches about other important families from the region (e.g. the Gyertyánosis, the Szarvastelkis, the Macedóniais, let alone the Himfis) have not been carried out yet. Although no matter how thorough Wertner's work had been in his time, its reconsideration is well proven, for instance, by their family tree reconstructed in Engel's book. Next to this, the revision of the aforementioned study on the Oszláris is also

<sup>3</sup> The history of medieval Temesköz has been in the focus of research interest since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the contribution of Sándor Márki, Frigyes Pesty, Tivadar Ortway and Antal Fekete Nagy is undisputable in this matter due to their document collections (either published or in manuscript) and monographies (Sándor Márki, *Aradvármegye és Arad szabad királyi város története*, vol. II/1 (Arad, 1892); Frigyes Pesty, *Krassó vármegye története*, [hereafter Krassó, vol. I–II/1–2, III] (Budapest, 1882–1884); Frigyes Pesty, *Oklevelek Temesmegye és Temesvár város történetéhez*, ed. Tivadar Ortway, vol. IV/1 1183–1430 (Pozsony, 1896) [hereafter *Temes I*]; the manuscript of Fekete Nagy can be found at The National Archives of Hungary (hereafter MNL OL P 1732) Antal Fekete Nagy, *A Temesi bánság oklevéltára*, boxes 1–3). It also has to be noted that our work has been inspired by the recent studies of Norbert C. Tóth, Tibor Neumann and István Kádas with their socio-historical approach towards the lower nobility (Norbert C. Tóth, *Szabolcs megye működése a Zsigmond-korban* (Nyíregyháza, 2008); Tibor Neumann, “A Vízköz kisnemesi társadalma a középkorban,” *Századok* 136 (2002): 417–450; Tibor Neumann, “Választott nemesi esküdtek Nyitrámegyében. Az 1486. évi 8. tc. végrehajtása,” *Századok* 139 (2005): 261–289; István Kádas, “Megyei emberek az észak kelet-magyarországi megyei oklevelekben,” in Gál Judit, Kádas István, Rózsa Márton, Tarján Eszter, eds, *Micae Mediaevales. Fiatal történészek dolgozatai a középkori Magyarországról és Európáról*, vol. IV (Budapest, 2015) 107–123); István Kádas, *Észak kelet-Magyarország szolgabírói társadalma az Anjou-kortól Mohácsig. Sáros megye példája*, [unpublished PhD dissertation] – here I have to thank the author who allowed me to have access to his manuscript).

<sup>4</sup> Mór Wertner, “Az Oszlári és Pelbárthidai Majsfi család eredete,” *Turul* 26 (1908): 64–69.

<sup>5</sup> Pál Engel, *Középkori Magyar genealógia – Oszlári* (digital version: *Családtörténet, heraldika, honismeret. DVD könyvtár IV* [Arcanum Digitéka] (Budapest, 2003).

supported by the availability of new sources to the inquiry which hopefully reveals formerly unpublished chapters from the history of the family such as 1) the clarification of certain family ties (for instance the correct identification of one of their cousins, or adding new members to the genealogical tree), or 2) their involvement in politically important events (e.g. the participation of Paul of Oszlár in the events of 1403, that is, his treason and its consequences), or 3) the socio-historical aspects of the investigation (e.g. *familiaritas*, the identification of the magnate whose retinue Paul belonged to).

From the previous works it is already known that the origins of the Oszlárís reach back to the early 14<sup>th</sup> century trailing to the 1460s. The family descended from Laurence, though, the first known active member of the Oszlárís was his son, Majos from the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century. Besides telling the first facts about the origins of the family, these early records provide information about the initial state of the landed possession of the Oszlárís as well. Based on the complaints of Majos, titled *magister*, before the authorities of Temes county in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, originating from the skirmishes between him and the inhabitants of Méra over his assets called Szentgyörgy and Oszlár<sup>6</sup>, the family's horizon surely moved beyond the borders of Temes county right from the beginning since, by owning parts in Szentgyörgy, they had already gained a foothold in the northern part of Krassó county close to River Berzava. This fact played a significant role in their social relations with the noble community of that county as well which apparently manifested in marriage connections and lawsuits (see the details later).

Considering the prestige and the landed wealth of the family, the next few decades brought significant changes in their status, however, not much is known about the background of their rise. What becomes evident from the documents is that the amount of the lands that the Oszlárís possessed in Temes county could have been much larger originally. As it turns out from the complaint of Laurence, Paul and John, the sons of Majos from 1389, they had already owned Oszlár, Kér, Antalfalva, Jakabfalva, the two Sebeds and Márkfalva by the late 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the accounts from the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century provide genuine information about how the family managed to add other possessions to their well-established landed wealth in Temes and, as it will be discussed later, in Bihar counties reaching the status of the upper end of the well-to-do nobility.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> September 9, 1343: MNL OL Collection of Charters (hereafter DL) 40914., August 8, 1351: MNL OL DL 41167 (see: Wertner, "Oszlári," 65.)

<sup>7</sup> April 7, 1389: MNL OL DL 42421.

<sup>8</sup> See Dezső Csánki, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza a Hunyadiak korában*, vol. I-III, V (Budapest, 1890-1913) (digital version: *Családtörténet, heraldika, honismeret. DVD könyvtár IV*

## 2.2. *John of Oszlár*

The first reference about the members of the next generation – the sons of Majos, namely Laurence and Paul – can be found in a postponement issued in 1378,<sup>9</sup> a decade earlier than the debut of their brother, John in 1389.<sup>10</sup> However, it has to be noted that an account from 1376 could also be regarded as an early reference to the latter.<sup>11</sup> As far as the careers of the three brothers are concerned, while Laurence and Paul turn out to be the main figures of the family, playing a significant role in the upcoming era of King Sigismund, John, unlike his siblings, occurs only in local affairs.

The following information revealed about John of Oszlár is his marriage to Dorothy, the daughter of a local nobleman called James Niger of Papd. As it can be learnt, in 1391 when Dorothy died, the male members of the Papdi family demanded that John should return those 25 horses which had been given to him as the dowry of Dorothy. The claim was, of course, rejected and turned down by John.<sup>12</sup> The next event that can be related to the same John, however, resulted in a more tragic and violent end. According to the accusation of Nicolas Literate of Szentgyörgy, reported from the general congregation for Temes and Krassó counties held at Temesvár (today: Timișoara, RO) in 1399, twelve years earlier John and his retinue had raided the house of his father, James of Szentgyörgy and, by setting the house in flames, James and his servant had burnt inside which, consequently, had caused their death. (Supposedly, the origins of the conflict can be linked to the neighbourhood of the two families.) Although John denied committing this malicious crime, the agreement with which the two families settled the dispute suggests that he and his men were responsible for the death of James, indeed. As it turns out, John and Paul of Oszlár pledged to pay 60 marks by instalments during the following year for the descendants of James of Szentgyörgy as a compensation. To ensure the payment of the bloodwite, the Oszlárís let Nicolas of Szentgyörgy be introduced into their possession called Kér until the total sum will have been repaid with the last

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[Arcanum Digitéka, Budapest, 2003]) (hereafter Csánki II) “Temesvármegye – Főbb birtokosai: Majosi”.

<sup>9</sup> October 13, 1378: MNL OL DL 8009.

<sup>10</sup> April 7, 1389: MNL OL DL 42421.

<sup>11</sup> July 1, 1376: MNL OL DL 42011. In this document, John is told to be the son of Majos of Majosfalva. The attribute, however, makes the association dubious since none of the Oszlári family members was called of this possession earlier and nor was it used later. On the contrary, the possession was used distinctively by the Majosfalvi or Oroszapáti family residing in Krassó county (see Krassó II/2. 18–20.), but, on the other hand, there is no known member of this family from this era who was called John.

<sup>12</sup> April 2, 1391: MNL OL DL 42478.

instalment.<sup>13</sup> However, this solution seemingly did not satisfy either party. A year later the sons of Paul of Oszlár voiced their objection to the will of their father and uncle before the authorities of Temes<sup>14</sup>, while John also complained about the proceedings carried out by the victim's family since, according to his words, he had already paid 440 small forints as a reward to them ten years before.<sup>15</sup>

Following this case, there are only very limited accounts about the members of the line descending from John who is no longer mentioned alive in the sources. To our knowledge, he had two sons, Majos and Nicolas who, knowing the year of death of their mother, must have been born before 1391. The two are mentioned first when their uncle, Paul acted personally in charge of them related to a daughters' quarter issue before King Sigismund at Temesvár in 1406<sup>16</sup>, while according to the complaint of his cousin (Peter) in 1430, Majos tried to expel him from both of his house and his portions in Oszlár.<sup>17</sup> This issue can surely be related to a division of the family's possessions because we are informed from an account issued five years later, in 1435, that Peter had pledged the portions of Majos (*fratris sui condivisionalis*) to Thomas and to Ladislav of Szarvastelek and now he wanted to take these portions back.<sup>18</sup> The last identified male member of the descendants of John is his grandson, Michael, the son of Majos, once listed amongst the 50 compurgators for Ladislav Dombai (of Dombó) in 1447<sup>19</sup>, and who pledged his portions in Antalfalva for 26 forints to John of Temesköz in 1456.<sup>20</sup> However, the latest identified member of this branch of the family is Elizabeth, the daughter of Majos, who was married to John of Vág, and occurs as the widow of this nobleman from Sopron county in 1497.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>13</sup> November 18, 1399: MNL OL DL 86557.

<sup>14</sup> December 7, 1400: MNL OL DL 42755.

<sup>15</sup> September 26, 1400: MNL OL DL 42753.

<sup>16</sup> November 23, 1406: MNL OL DL 42902. *Zsigmond kori oklevéltár*, eds. Elemér Mályusz, Iván Borsa, Norbert C. Tóth *et alii*, 12 vols. (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1951–2013) (hereafter ZsO) II/1, 5130 – with reference to their potential age, see footnote nr. 12.

<sup>17</sup> September 19, 1430: MNL OL DL 43852. *Diplome privind istoria comitatului Timiș și a orașului Timișoara/ Oklevelek Temesvármegye és Temesvárváros történetéhez*, vol. II, collected by Frigyes Pesty, Livia Magina, Adrian Magina, eds., (1430–1470) (Cluj-Napoca, 2014) (hereafter Temes II), 28.

<sup>18</sup> June 27, 1435: MNL OL DL 44045.

<sup>19</sup> May 26, 1447: MNL OL DL 14085.

<sup>20</sup> February 10, 1456: MNL OL DL 15027.

<sup>21</sup> December 30, 1497: MNL OL DL 71521.

### 2.3. Laurence of Oszlár – the (vice)ban of Szörény

What is known about Laurence, the second son of Majos and the sole officeholder of the whole family is very little and rather controversial. Following his first two occurrences in 1378 and 1389, he is mentioned again in 1406 when King Sigismund took his journey to the Temesköz the first time after his consolidation of power following the 1403 coup.<sup>22</sup> On this occasion, however, it was not Laurence who met the king personally at Temesvár, but, as quoted above, his brother, Paul. Nevertheless, according to the document issued at the royal presence, the encounter could not even happen because the account refers to Laurence as a deceased man! He must have died without a son as, given by the source, her daughter, Dorothy has just been offered to be satisfied with 50 forints as daughters' quarter by her uncle, Paul and her cousins.<sup>23</sup> It can also be learnt that Dorothy was married to George of Porazfalva, a locally esteemed nobleman from Krassó county. This marriage connection, together with what is known so far about the landed wealth, the financial condition and the marital ties of the Oszlárís further strengthens the image of the social status of the family, that is, that they belonged to the well-to-do nobility of middling wealth<sup>24</sup>, and most probably to the top end of it.

On social grounds, therefore, it should not be so surprising to see Laurence to be titled *egregius* and former ban of Szörény, which eventually happens in a royal donation issued in 1410 when King Sigismund endowed him with royal lands called Vejteh and the three Oszkolás with their appurtenances (two mills in Vejteh, Somkerek, Pordan, Általkerék, Csutak, the two Pápoces, and the two Gyandras) in Temes county for his loyal services.<sup>25</sup> In accordance with the historical literature, though, the activities of families of such rank where the Oszlárís stood were normally limited to their native county, they frequently joined the service of magnates and it was mostly from among them that the stewards and the leading retainers of the barons were chosen.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, we must agree with the conclusion of Pál Engel who claims that Laurence was not the ban of Szörény – owning this title would have expected a much higher

<sup>22</sup> Pál Engel, Norbert C. Tóth, *Itineraria regum et reginarum (1382–1438)* (Subsidia ad historiam medii aevi Hungariae inquirendam 1) (Budapest, 2005), 86.

<sup>23</sup> November 23, 1406: MNL OL DL 42902 = ZsO II/1, 5130.

<sup>24</sup> The term is used for families whose wealth – ranging from 20 to hundreds of holdings – assured a decent living and who played a leading role regionally (on the historiography of examining the stratification of Hungarian noble society and its English terminology see the summary of Tamás Pálosfalvi, *The Noble Elite in the County of Körös [Krizsevci] 1400–1526* (Budapest: MTA-BTK-TTI, 2014), 7–12.

<sup>25</sup> March 30, 1410: MNL OL DL 43037.

<sup>26</sup> Pálosfalvi, “The Noble Elite,” 10–11.

access to the court from him which is not justified at all –, instead, he should be considered to be the deputy of the ban (*viceban*) before 1393.<sup>27</sup>

The content of the document, however, is more problematic and raises at least two questions. The first, and probably the most awkward one is the controversy caused by the mysterious “resurrection” of Laurence. In 1406, if we remember, he was once mentioned as a deceased person! The second issue is in connection with the identification of a certain Paul, the son of James who occurs in the document as a co-beneficiary through Laurence (*per eum*) and a close relative (*frater patruelis* – cousin) of him.

Regarding the first question, it should be admitted that it is difficult to check which document – the one from 1406 or the one from 1410 – states false information about Laurence’s lifespan. It is simply because all together there are four accounts in which he occurs. Therefore, it would be a tempting solution to say that the two persons are not the same, mostly, because the charter of 1410 does not indicate the distinctive possession next to the name of the son of Majos. However, it looks certain that this former *ban* is indeed identical with Laurence of Oszlár.<sup>28</sup>

First, by checking the indexes of the volumes of the Charters from the Age of King Sigismund, no other match could be found with this father-son combination in the given time interval. Secondly, the provenance of the document also points towards this identification since, similarly to the one in question, most of the sources referring to the Oszlárís were preserved in the collection of Nicolaus Jankovich integrated into the collection of the Hungarian National Museum and then to the National Archives. Finally, the content of the donation with its enlisted possessions – especially Vejteh – can also be related to the claims of the Oszlári family (see later). Considering these factors, and the fact that the document is authentic, the lifespan of Laurence should rather be extended up to 1410 despite the earlier reference on him as a deceased man. At the same time, however, it should be accepted that we are left without a rational explanation for why Laurence was mentioned as a dead person back in 1406. (Most probably it was the mistake of the notary). What is more, deriving from the limited number of sources on him, there are further obscurities related to Laurence and his endowment. For example, the identity of the person seems

<sup>27</sup> Pál Engel, *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1301–1457*, vol. I–II (Historia Könyvtár. Kronológiák, adattárak 5) (Budapest, 1996) (digital version: *Családtörténet, heraldika, honismeret. DVD könyvtár IV.* (Arcanum Digitéka) [Budapest, 2003], “Bárók – szőrényi bán”.

<sup>28</sup> It should be noted that in the study of Mór Wertner the similar identity of Laurence of Oszlár and the former (vice)ban of Szőrény was taken for granted (Wertner, “Oszlári,” 66), however, Pál Engel did not indicate Laurence’s family affiliation in his work of archontology while referring to him (see: Engel, “Archontológia Bárók – szőrényi bán”).

to remain unknown in whose service he held the (vice)ban title. Similarly, the services to which King Sigismund referred in the donation have proven to be rather elusive. However, apart from much of the uncertainty around him, it looks clear that Laurence of Oszlár had no male heirs for which his line died out after 1410.

The second issue brought by and related to the content of the charter of donation is the identification of Paul, the son of James called of Laurence's cousin and co-beneficiary. It has already been attempted by Mór Wertner who linked this Paul and his father to the genealogical tree of the Oszláris directly descending from the ancestor of the family.<sup>29</sup> However, the assumption of the historian has evidently proven to be wrong, basically, as it is clear now, due to the lack of access to key sources revealing the brotherhood of the three sons of Majos which do not include any male members called James. The difficulties in this Paul's identification derive from the fact that similarly to the case of Laurence the distinctive possession of Paul is not indicated in the source. However, two clues have come to the help of getting closer to the correct identification: first, the name of the assets included in the document, especially the three Oszkolais in Temes county, second, the reference on Paul's deceased father as *a ban (Paulo filio condam Jacobi similiter bani)*. As a result, it can be stated with almost certainty that this Paul seems to be identical with the cousin of Luke, the son of Mark of Oszkola, who happens to be another former (vice)ban of Szörény holding the office before 1397.<sup>30</sup> The significance and the prestige of such office holding for the Oszkolais is well shown by the fact that the former title seems to have become an integral part of the family name. At least, it is suggested by a record when Luke appeared before the authorities of Temes at the end of 1410 to give up his claim over three marks towards Stephen Himfi. Here, the notary referred to him as *Lucas banus de Ozkolla*.<sup>31</sup> Presumably, the usage of the term *ban* after the name of Paul's father in the same year also exemplifies our hypothesis about the family name and its extension.

Considering the identity of Paul, the location of Oszkola and the tie of kinship indicated in the charter of donation, the most probable solution to explain the cousinhood between the Oszláris and the Oszkolais families is that Paul's father (James) married the unknown sister of the Oszláris brothers. These bonds, which possibly originate from the regional acquaintance of the families, could have developed through the time of Laurence's and Luke's office holding.

<sup>29</sup> Wertner, "Oszláris," 66–67.

<sup>30</sup> Engel, "Archontológia Bárók – szörényi bán". For the relation between the Oszkolais see the document cited by Engel which tells us that Luke had a brother called Ladislav and several cousins including a Paul, the son of James (October 30, 1397: MNL OL DL 65828.).

<sup>31</sup> December 16, 1410: MNL OL DL 53563.

In this context, the obtaining of the endowment by Laurence of Oszlár, and through him, Paul of Oszkola as a co-beneficiary can obviously be interpreted as another manifestation of the strong ties existing between these two families.

#### 2.4. Paul of Oszlár – “The Traitor”

Leaving the late 14<sup>th</sup> century behind, the history of the Oszlári family in the following period undeniably centres around Paul, the brother of John and Laurence, and his descendants. It is so because the biography of Paul and his line is more comprehensive compared to the ones of his brothers. As we could see, the activities of John were mostly restricted to the local neighbourhood, while what we could learn about Laurence’s career is rather limited, no matter how outstanding it seems to be at his level.

The third son of Majos, Paul, as it has already been cited, was mentioned as early as his siblings as he was personally involved in the affairs related to them from the 1370s to the late 90s. Soon, we can learn from 1399 that his spouse was called Helen, the daughter of John of Pelbárthida from the Egyedmonostori branch of the Gútkeled kindred residing in Bihar County.<sup>32</sup> Learning about this marriage connection, however, is highly significant for the reconstruction of the family history of the Oszláris and not only from a genealogical perspective.

Firstly, regardless his wrong conclusion about the identity of the cousin of Laurence, the contribution of Mór Wertner should be emphasised as he successfully proved what appeared formerly as an assumption in the historical-geographical work of Dezső Csánki, namely that the Pelbárthidai Majsfi and the Oszlári families from Bihar and Temes counties are identical.<sup>33</sup> Secondly, it is also known that Helen and her sister were supposed to inherit the landed wealth of their father, John, as in 1365 he had been granted with the privilege of having her daughters receive his possessions after his death as if the girls were boys (*praefectio*).<sup>34</sup> Consequently, Paul of Oszlár could have high expectations for enlarging his possessions with the hands of Helen before 1399 (these portions lay in the following assets as we learn from various sources from 1399, 1438 and 1462–64: (Kis)Kágya, [the quarter of] Egyed, Pelbárthida,

<sup>32</sup> February 21, 1399: MNL OL DL 79182. See: Engel, “Genealógia – Oszlári”.

<sup>33</sup> Wertner, “Oszlári,” 68–70.

<sup>34</sup> See Wertner, “Oszlári,” 69; József Holub, “Középkori fiúsítások,” *Turul* 47 (1927–2): 86 and Engel, “Genealógia – Gútkeled nem 4. Egyedmonostoriág 1. tábla: Adonyi, Pelbárthidi (the notes at Margareth and Helen) – on the rules of female inheritance in Hungary: Martin Rady, “The Filial Quarter and Female Inheritance in Medieval Hungarian Law,” in *The Man of Many Devices, Who Wandered Full Many Ways. Festschrift in Honor of János M. Bak*, eds Balázs Nagy, Marcell Sebők (Budapest: CEU Press, 1999), 422–431. See also Martin Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary* (London: Palgrave, 2000), 103–107.

Reszege, Kozmafalva, and for a short period of time they put their hands on Petri, Jankafalva, Félegyháza, Sárköz, Bolcs, Nyék and Pércs, too).<sup>35</sup> Considering that the office holding of Laurence of Oszlár can also be located approximately to around the late 1380s and the early 1390s when Paul acquired these lands through his marriage<sup>36</sup> – theoretically doubling the landed wealth of his family –, it can be stated that the decade of turmoil at the end of the Angevin Era and the beginning of the Era of King Sigismund significantly contributed to the growth of the Oszlárís' social status and wealth.

Finally, related to the rise of the Oszlárís, another socio-historical aspect of the marriage of Helen of Pelbárthida and Paul of Oszlár is worth being investigated hoping to find clues about the identity of the lord whom Paul might have served. The issue has been raised by the unusual choice of the spouse from a relatively distant county which might imply that the encounter of Helen and Paul could have been helped by the fact that Paul left Temes county for a while, most probably as a member of a retinue. It would be logical to think that he joined Nicolaus of Csák who became the *ispán* of Temes in 1394 with Nicolaus of Marcal, while the former also held the office of the ispanate of Bihar from 1395.<sup>37</sup> This argument, however, is greatly challenged by the fact that in 1400 Ladislás and Peter, the sons of Paul, sued their father and uncle before the authorities of Temes<sup>38</sup>, so the sons were at least 14 years old, if not older. Accordingly, they must have been born around the early 1380s, thus their parents must have tied the knot in those years, too.<sup>39</sup> Although this genealogical fact eliminates our previous idea about finding an overlapping connection between the marriage and the service of Paul in Bihar, it cannot be denied that Paul still belonged to the retinue of the Csáki family and served either Nicolas or George of Csák.

At this point, we have reached the event which could have broken the

<sup>35</sup> February 21, 1399: MNL OL DL 79182; 1438: Csánki I, "Biharmegye – Főbbirtokosai: Jankafalvi, Majosi", 1462–1464; Temes II, 336–337, 339–343, 376–369.

<sup>36</sup> However, it has to be noted that before the acquisition eventually came into being, Helen always acted on behalf of herself in legal issues related to her landed affairs (see: February 21, 1399: MNL OL DL 79182 = ZsO I, 5725; November 7, 1411: ZsO III, 319; January 16, 1414: ZsO IV, 1587; March 21, 1414: ZsO IV, 2854; May 4, 1415: ZsO V, 589). Only the descendants of Helen and Paul occur as real possessors of the maternal heritage (see later).

<sup>37</sup> Engel, "Archontológia – Ispánok: Bihar, Temes".

<sup>38</sup> December 7, 1400: MNL OL DL 42755.

<sup>39</sup> This idea is further supported by the age of Helen, their mother, of whom we know that she was already born in 1365 (see: *Codex diplomaticus domus senioris comitum Zichy de Zich et Vasonkew. A zichi és vasonköi gróf Zichy család idős bágának okmánytára*, vol. III, Nagy Iván *et alii*, eds. (Pest, 1874), 278–279), so, expecting that she had already given birth to her children between the age of 18 and 25, the birth years of Ladislás and Peter also falls to the early 1380s.

rise of the Oszláris, that is, the treason of Paul during the events of 1403.<sup>40</sup> Obviously, the central figures of the Temesköz region were its officeholders whose attitude determined the impact that the coup against King Sigismund had on the local noblemen. It looks certain that until February 1403 this part of the country was firmly controlled by the men of the king, Nicolaus of Csák and Nicolaus of Marcal who – besides being the *ispáns* of Temes, Békés, Csanád, Csongrád, Keve, Krassó and Zaránd – had also been holding the office of the voivode of Transylvania from January 1402.<sup>41</sup> In February 1403, however, Csáki and Marcali joined the rebels, and, with the escalation of the events led by Archbishop John of Kanizsa, their infidelity seriously challenged the authority of King Sigismund in this region.<sup>42</sup> Connected to the events, the treachery of George junior Pósa of Szer – from one of the most significant families of the southern Great Plain<sup>43</sup> – did not contribute to the strengthening of the monarch's power here, either. As far as it can be seen from the scattered accounts between April and September, much of our information about the disloyal activities in this region can be related to George Csölnök of Omor and to Stephen Himfi of Remete, who apparently acted as the leading *familiars* of the two voivodes in the southern counties.<sup>44</sup>

To counterbalance the position of the rebels in the Temesköz, however, King Sigismund could rely on Nicolaus Treutel of Nevna, the master of the treasury (Latin: *magister tavarnicorum*, Hungarian: *tárnokmester*) and the castle owner Macedóniai family, but it seems that it was not an easy situation for them either. It is known that in July the estates of Nicolaus Treutel lying in the Temesköz fell to the occupation of George's and Stephen's men who used

<sup>40</sup> This episode of the family history was not known by Mór Wertner.

<sup>41</sup> Engel, "Archontológia, Bárók – Erdélyi vajda".

<sup>42</sup> For their motivation and participation see: Pál Engel, *Királyi hatalom és arisztokrácia viszonya a Zsigmond-korban (1387–1437)* (Értekezések a történettudományok köréből. Újsorozat 83) (Budapest, 1977), 43; Elemér Mályusz, *Zsigmond király uralma Magyarországon* (Budapest, 1984), 50, 54, for their itinerary see Norbert C. Tóth, "Zsigmond király tisztség viselőinek itineráriuma," *Századok* 138 (2004): 469–470.

<sup>43</sup> The details are explained in the chapter "A várbirtoklás kapujában – Szeri Pósa unokái," [On the Verge of Being Castle Owners – the Grandsons of Pósa of Szer] in Elek Szasztkó, *A Szeri Pósa fiak. Egy dél-alföldi előkelő család története a 14–15. században* (unpublished PhD dissertation, 2014) 61–62. (accessible from [https://www.academia.edu/7209933/A\\_Szeri\\_Posafi\\_csalad\\_PhD\\_disszertacio\\_The\\_Szeri\\_Posafi\\_family\\_PhD\\_dissertation\\_](https://www.academia.edu/7209933/A_Szeri_Posafi_csalad_PhD_disszertacio_The_Szeri_Posafi_family_PhD_dissertation_))

<sup>44</sup> In April, both were allotted salt – worth of 1000 forints – for their salary and expenses by the voivodes (April 22, 1403: MNL OL DL 53197 = ZsO II/1, 2378, MNL OL DL 53205 = ZsO II/1, 2379, MNL OL DL 48222 = ZsO II/1, 2380). In July, George was ordered to join the forces of the rebels to welcome Ladislas of Naples the pretender at Körösköz (July 21, 1403: MNL OL DL 56513 = ZsO II/1, 2548.).

the revenues of the possessions illegitimately<sup>45</sup>, while in September the voivodes ordered George of Omor to destroy Treutel's fortified mansions (*castella*) (Jobbágy, Ohat and Széphely, all in Temes county) to the grounds so that the timber and the wood of the ruins of Széphely could be brought to Temesvár, supposedly to fortify its defence system. Meanwhile, the military preparations carried out by George also included the reparation of the moat around castle Csák.<sup>46</sup> Before these events, it had been attempted by the loyal Macedóniais to consolidate the situation. According to a letter issued by King Sigismund at the end of August, the king pardoned the two *familiares* after having been informed by the Macedóniais about their intention to return to his fidelity.<sup>47</sup> These efforts, however, did not pay off until early October. As we could see neither George nor Stephen took the opportunity to leave Csáki and Marcali. At least, this can be assumed from that urgently worded letter issued in mid-September at Nagyhatvan which prompted Stephen to arrive at the camp of the rebels as soon as possible with at least six horses.<sup>48</sup> Even at the end of September, when the fortune of the rebels obviously turned bad and the troops of the loyal supporters of King Sigismund had already had the advantage<sup>49</sup>, Stephen and George were ordered by their lords to continue the resistance and withstand the attack of the enemies under the command of the *ispán* of the Seklers, George of Csák, the brother of Nicolaus of Csák. However, as the letter continues, Csáki and Marcali assured the two servicemen that there were still 15 days left of the truce with the king and that the two would be informed personally about the results of the negotiations a week later.<sup>50</sup>

Although the previous paragraphs cannot be related to the history of the Oszlári family directly, there is a reason to present the background of the 1403 events in the Temesköz region in details. As it can be read in a document issued in November, the treacherous deeds of Michael, the son of Hankó of Berény<sup>51</sup>

<sup>45</sup> July 10, 1403: MNL OL DL 56200 = ZsO II/1, 2535.

<sup>46</sup> September 10, 1403: MNL OL DL 56505 = ZsO II/1, 2609.

<sup>47</sup> August 25, 1403: MNL OL DL 53201, = ZsO II/1, 2585.

<sup>48</sup> *Si fraternitatem nostrum vobis cupitis adesse, extunc mox habitis presentibus vos personaliter, si non, pluribus, saltem in sex equis ad nos et ad alios fratres vestros venire velitis* (September 18, 1403: MNL OL DL 56504 = ZsO II/1, 2618)

<sup>49</sup> Mályusz, "Zsigmond," 54.

<sup>50</sup> *omnibus nobis contraria revolentibus unacum aliis fratribus nostris, [...] Nicolao filio Petro insurgere et eisdem resistere velitis, dominum etiam Georgium comitem Seculorum fratrem nostrum erga v(e)stras s(er)enitates direximus, nos autem unacum rege Sigismundo treugas pacis habemus dierum quindecim* (September 25, 1403: MNO OL DL 47905 = ZsO II/1, 2628)

<sup>51</sup> Concerning the origins of the family, it is known that Hankó was a burger from the town of Kassa (today: Košice, SVK) from northern Hungary, so the family has a non-noble origin. The first account about their occurrence in Krassó, the other end of the country, can be found in a

and Paul of Oszlár, which they supposedly had committed by joining the former voivodes, were pardoned by King Sigismund. Had it not been for the amnesty given to them, both Michael and Paul would have risked capital punishment and the confiscation of their properties, but the monarch guaranteed personal and landed security for both by forbidding any kind of harassment from the authorities of Temes County headed by Pipo of Ozora.<sup>52</sup>

In the end, Paul's participation in the events did not have dire consequences, however, from this time on, he only appears in local affairs. An account from 1405 informs us that he had Peter Parvus, the official of Ohat, and the inhabitants of Jobbágy cited before the law court of Temes County.<sup>53</sup> Were it not for the names of the possessions, this source would be just another documentation of the regular skirmishes discussed before the authorities of a county. Nonetheless, the fortified mansions, which were supposed to be wrecked in 1403, were also located at the same villages. This coincidence allows us to assume that the origins of this particular case between Paul and the official of Ohat might be linked to the events that happened during the rebellion. In this context, even though this idea looks rather hypothetical, this account could be a late repercussion of Paul's involvement in the attack against the properties of Nicolaus of Treutel. Consequently, Paul served in the retinue of Nicolaus of Csák (and Nicolaus of Marcal) under the command of their chief *familiares*. Otherwise, as it can be seen, we are left without any details about Paul's contribution to the course of the 1403 events in the region for which he was given amnesty.

Concerning the means of the restoration of the royal authority in the Temesköz and the signs of normalisation<sup>54</sup>, the most significant demonstration

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transcribed document dated to 1383 in which Hankó and Michael were sued by Bartholomeus, the son of Gál of Omor for unlawfully retaining two possessions (Szederjes and Szentandrás) in Krassó county (Krassó III, 196–197). Berény, their distinctive possession, however, lay in Temes county. Following the death of his father, Michael stayed in the region and became an accepted member of the local noble community: following the 1403 events, he acted as an arbitrator for the Gyertyánosi family in their lawsuit against the Himfis (May 15, 1404: MNL OL DL 53211 = Krassó III, 245–246). Four years later, however, Michael was a deceased man whose landed wealth was donated to Pipo and Matthias of Ozora. These possessions consisted of Berény in Temes county with its appurtenances (19 inhabited and 4 uninhabited kenezian villages), Baj (with its tolls) and Szederjes (with *praedium* Szentandrás) (January 2, 1409: MNL OL DL 87809).

<sup>52</sup> November 19, 1403: MNL OL DL 42797 = ZsO II/1, 2782 (see the full text in the Appendix [5.1] of this paper)

<sup>53</sup> June 23, 1405: MNL OL DL 42851 = Temes I, 367.

<sup>54</sup> The appointment of Pipo of Ozora in 1404 to be the *ispáns* of the counties in the Temesköz undeniable contributed to the consolidation (Engel, "Archontológia – Ispánok – Krassó," Pál Engel, Ozorai Pipo (Ozorai Pipo emlékezete), in Pál Engel, *Honor, vár, ispánság (Válogatott tanulmányok)*, ed. Enikő Csukovits (Budapest, 2003), 247–301), while concerning the signs of stability, the restart of the operation of the county authorities and the renewal of the general

of the political consolidation was apparently the personal visit and the staying of King Sigismund at Érsohely (today: Vršac, SRB) and Temesvár throughout November in 1406.<sup>55</sup> Almost all the preserved documents issued in the name of the king at Temesvár are the accounts of the seemingly never-ending rewarding of the services of the loyal ones.<sup>56</sup> However, as the document issued on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November shows, this occasion was also appropriate to function as a court having the king in person which provided an opportunity to settle the greater or smaller legal cases of the local noblemen as well. As it has been quoted before, this account mentions Paul, who, representing his son (Peter) and his cousins (the sons of his brother, John), had his agreement with Dorothy of Oszlár about her daughters' quarter recorded here.<sup>57</sup> Notwithstanding, reaching the monarch in person could have ensured Paul that his treason had been pardoned. Besides the political hints, this source is also valuable from a genealogical point of view since it can be learnt that Ladislav, the other son of Paul, had already been dead by 1406.

Meanwhile, Paul initiated a legal case against the members of the family called Bobal of Vejteh and the noblemen of Fánccsalak claiming that they had not satisfied him with the dowry of his grandmother and owed him the daughters' quarter from the possessions called Varjútelek, Péterfalva, the two Apafásas, Teremi, Várelő and Vejteh. The first account in this matter was recorded in October 1408 when Paul appeared personally before the chapter of Csanád (Cenad) and presented his claim. However, he was charged by the respondents by stating that Paul's ancestors had already been satisfied with the daughters' quarter a long time ago, but – as they complained – neither the Bobal nor the Fánccsalaki families were able to testify their statement because the original documents of proof were taken away from them when the house of the Fánccsalakis had been raided. Nevertheless, to their knowledge – they continued – these documents are at Paul's hand now. To clarify himself from the accusations and to prove his right, in December 1408 Paul took an oath at the chapter of Csanád with 25 noblemen that he had rightful claims over these portions.<sup>58</sup> According to the letter of precentor Peter, the deputy (vicar) of the bishop of Csanád, issued in 1415, despite the fact that Paul was successfully awarded with the acquisition of the demanded portions with his oath in 1408<sup>59</sup>, he refrained

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assemblies, held personally by Pipo for the local nobility, can be mentioned (Elek Szaszko, "Behind the Archontology of Krassó County. Remarks on the Personnel and the Operation of the County Authorities in Krassó," *Banatica* 26/II (2016): 143.).

<sup>55</sup> Engel, Tóth, "Itineraria," 86.

<sup>56</sup> MNL OL (Collection of Photocopies) (hereafter DF) 233604, ZsO II/1, 5118–21, 5125.

<sup>57</sup> November 23, 1406: DL 42902 = ZsOII/1, 5130, see footnote nr. 23.

<sup>58</sup> October 10, 1408: ZsO II/2. 6362 = Temes I, 497–499.

<sup>59</sup> December 15, 1408: ZsO II/2. 6476 = Temes I, 499.

from being introduced into the lands because he feared the *ispán* of Temes, Pipo of Ozora. However, as the letter continues, seven years later the introduction was verified and finally carried out, partly due to a prompting letter from King Sigismund addressed to Pipo of Ozora which warned the *ispán* of Temes to follow his orders, and the letter of introduction was completed with the detailed description of the borders belonging to Paul's property.<sup>60</sup>

According to the hypothesis of Mór Wertner, Paul's grandmother would be identical with the daughter of Theodor of Vejteh.<sup>61</sup> It is true that this Theodor once belonged to the well-to-do and esteemed landlords of the Temesköz region in the 1320s<sup>62</sup>, but Wertner's identification is rather problematic based on what can be learnt about the families involved in the above-cited lawsuit. First, it is not evident at all that the members of the Vejtehi Bobal family and the descendants of Theodor of Vejteh could be linked together genealogically. The last known record about Theodor's sons is from 1332<sup>63</sup>, while the earliest account mentioning the first member from the Bobals dates back to 1363.<sup>64</sup> This Michael Bobal of Vejteh, who had become the knight of the court by 1378<sup>65</sup>, can most probably be identified with the father of Dominic and Gál Bobal of Vejteh, two of the respondents from 1408. However, as the female ancestor of the Oszlár is not mentioned by name in the document from the year of 1415, we cannot be certain whether she was the member of the Vejtehi Bobal or of the Fánccsalaki family. If the former was true, she could be placed one generation above Michael Bobal. The next option would be to link her to the family of the other two respondents, but due to the limited number of sources, very little is known about the Fánccsalakis. To our knowledge, this is the only account in which they occur, so we are left without any traces that would help either the identification of this lady or the reconstruction of the possible genealogical linkage between the Bobal and the Fánccsalaki families.

Another interesting aspect of the case, following the discussion of the genealogical backgrounds, is the context in which this lawsuit was initiated by Paul of Oszlár. Knowing about the circumstances, it cannot be denied that the end of the first decade of the 15<sup>th</sup> century could have ended much worse for the Oszlár is

<sup>60</sup> February 6, 1415: ZsO V, 192 = Temes I, 496–503.

<sup>61</sup> Wertner, "Oszlári," 67.

<sup>62</sup> György Györffy, *Az Árpád-kori Magyarország történeti földrajza*, vol. III (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1987), 474.

<sup>63</sup> Engel, "Genealógia – Csanádnem 1. Főág 4. tábla: Bogyoszlóága".

<sup>64</sup> January 25, 1363: MNL OL P 1732 Antal Fekete Nagy, *A Temesi bánóság oklevéltára*, box 1. nr. 358 = Bath. Miscell. Heimiana, nr. 186 and MNL OL DL 51984 = Krassó III, 51.

<sup>65</sup> January 4, 1378: MNL OL DL 42089 = Krassó III, 132–136. The last accounts in which Michael occurs were issued in 1381. In one of these records, he is called of Zdenecs (March 25, 1381: MNL OL DL 52359 and July 29, 1381: MNL OL DL 42200).

especially due to the treason of Paul. Next to this, the relatively large sums of expenses (440 forints of bloodwite and 50 forints of daughters' quarter) could also have had a negative impact on the family, for instance, causing their impoverishment. In the end, however, the status of the family remained unharmed, what is more, the successful realisation of the claim over their grandmother's quarter portions around Vejteh resulted in the enlargement of the Oszlár's landed wealth in Temes county. Now, it is also clear that the donation of royal Vejteh and Oszkolla with its appurtenances to Laurence of Oszlár in 1410 was not accidental. With the acquisition of these parts through a royal endowment, Laurence's brother, Paul was most probably able to emphasise his and his family's claim over the demanded territories more effectively which finally contributed to his success in February 1415.

The last known activities in Paul's life can be related to a legal issue with one of the tenants of Nicolaus Treutel from Maráz. As it can be expected, Paul dealt with the matter in person before the authorities of Temes at Temesvár appearing at the county court (Latin: *sedes iudicaria/sedria*, Hungarian: *megyei ítélőszék*) held on the third day of September and the one following it in two weeks' time.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, these are the last accounts in which Paul occurs.<sup>67</sup> He surely passed away between 1415 and 1420 because when the names of the family members return in the records, it is no longer Paul but the next generation of the Oszlár's whom the history of the family continues with.

### 2.5. Peter of Oszlár/Pelbárthida

Concerning the period between 1420 and the 1460s, which marks the end of the male line, the main achievement of the living members of the Oszlár's was the maintenance of the family's established status and landed wealth. Most of the records related to the family in this era upheld the activities of Paul's descendants, namely his son, Peter and the children of the latter, Ladislas and George. However, a few accounts are also available about the branch of Paul's brother, John including his son, Majos and his offspring, Michael and Elizabeth.

Considering the landed issues, Peter's acquisitions in Bihar county should be mentioned first. These lands consisted of 1) his mother's portions (Pelbárthida, Egyed, Reszege, Kágya and Kozmafalva), which seem to have become the *de facto* property of Peter following the death of his parents, and 2) the possessions of his condivisional relatives, the members of the Jankafalvi/Jankafi family (Petri, Jankafalva, Félegyháza, Sárköz, Bolcs, Nyék and Pércs), who had died

<sup>66</sup> September 3, 1415: MNL OL DL 43301 = ZsO V, 1009; September 17, 1415: MNL OL DL 43303 = ZsO V, 1069.

<sup>67</sup> However, once he is mentioned to be a deceased person earlier in May (1415 May 4, 1415: ZsO V, 589).

heirless.<sup>68</sup> The first accounts which inform us about the change of the status of the former lands were issued in the 1420s<sup>69</sup>, but it was in 1438 when Peter, titled *strennuus*, obtained a royal confirmation of these possessions for himself in return for his loyal services.<sup>70</sup> As a consequence of the attainment, Peter and his descendants were now being called of Pelbárthida, but almost only in the affairs which were related to the possessions in Bihar county, otherwise, the family members continued to use Oszlár as a distinctive possession while being referred to. At the same time, another change can be observed in the use of their family name, because, according to the records, the members of this generation were regularly referred to as Majosi or Majosfi without indicating the actual name of the fathers.

Nevertheless, as the accounts related to the legal matters located at Temes county show, the main residence of Paul's branch remained in Oszlár. At least, it can be deduced from the constant personal presence of Peter at the *sedrias* at Temesvár where he repeatedly appeared as a complainant in his issue with Gregory Bobal of Vejteh and his brothers<sup>71</sup>, while the authorities also reported his demand for an inquiry about a skirmish committed by the Dobozi Dánfis against his tenants at Oszlár.<sup>72</sup> On the other hand, it is also known that he visited personally the court of the judge royal (Latin: *iudex curiae regis*, Hungarian: *országbíró*) at Buda twice in 1438 where he withdrew his claim over Félegyháza in Bihar county,<sup>73</sup> and at the end of the year, he appeared before the chapter of Várad as well to prohibit the Stari noblemen from the unlawful use of Pelbárthida.<sup>74</sup> Besides the itinerary, the last two accounts include relevant genealogical data as well, as it can be learnt that Peter's eldest son, Ladislav was yet an under aged child in November 1438 and it is the charter of the chapter of Várad which recorded first the name of his younger son, George.

As far as the relation between the two branches of the Oszlári is concerned,

<sup>68</sup> The status of these lands and the ties between Peter's family and the Jankafalvi noblemen are thoroughly explained in Wertner's study (Wertner, "Oszlári," 67–70).

<sup>69</sup> June 17, 1420: MNL OL DL 87936 = ZsO VII, 1851, August 4, 1421: ZsO VIII, 843.

<sup>70</sup> January 26, 1438 > April 11, 1438: MNL OL DL 13152. – It is also important to mention that the royal endowment was immediately followed by lawsuits initiated by various parties claiming the unjust introduction of Peter into the portions of the Jankafalvi family, especially into Félegyháza (MNL OL DL 13146, 13195, 13271, 14593, 86553).

<sup>71</sup> March 3, 1433: MNL OL DL 43942; April 5, 1433: MNL OL DL 43952; December 15, 1433: MNL OL DL 43981 = Temes II, 40–41; February 16, 1434: MNL OL DL 43988 = Temes II, 46. In 1439 he was listed amongst some local compurgators for John Soky (March 24, 1439: MNL OL DL 44240.).

<sup>72</sup> June 14, 1435: MNL OL DL 44038 = Temes II, 57.

<sup>73</sup> June 5, 1438: MNL OL DL 13195; November 11, 1438: MNL OL DL 14593.

<sup>74</sup> December 13, 1438: MNL OL DL 86553.

it can be stated with utmost certainty that Peter and his cousin, Majos decided to divide the family's landed wealth lying in Temes County, which they most probably carried out in the early 1430s.<sup>75</sup> One of the accounts related to this matter upheld the name of Peter's wife called Scolastica, the daughter of Ladislas Vasky of Szarvastelek.<sup>76</sup> Knowing that Peter's father-in-law was in charge of the administration of Krassó county as its deputy (*vicecomes*) between 1416 and 1418 under Pipo of Ozora, and that his brother-in-law, Thomas also held this position from 1436 to 1437<sup>77</sup>, the engagement between the two locally prominent families fits into the marriage pattern of the Oszlárís revealing Peter's and his family's respected status. Another manifestation of his esteemed rank in the social hierarchy of the local noble society is his presence at the diet in May 1439 where he was sent as one of the representatives of Temes County.<sup>78</sup> This mandate goes well beyond the usual, local horizon of the Oszlárís, however, it is rather unfortunate that this is the final account from the life of Peter.

Before continuing with the history of the last members of the family, it should be noted that the Csáki family appeared once again in the history of the Oszlárís. In 1421, following the acquisition of the possessions in Bihar county, some noblemen prohibited Peter from alienating the half of Pelbárthida for others including – and the prohibition was especially emphasised over the intention of – George of Csák, the former *ispán* of the Seklers.<sup>79</sup> Adding to this, Elizabeth of Oszlár from the other branch of the family pledged her portions in the possessions lying in Temes for Michael of Csák in 1497.<sup>80</sup> These accounts may highlight the relevance of the formerly established connections and services of the Oszlárís in the retinue of the Csákis. However, neither the nature of their affiliation can be exactly described, nor its uninterrupted continuation can be evidently stated, simply because besides these two records there are no more accounts which would inform us about the persistence of such relationship.

## 2.6. *The last members of the Oszlárís*

It is also true that the sources related to the Oszlárís become newly available from the mid-1450s, which documented three main tendencies in the history of the family. First of all, it seems that the members of John's descendants, the children of Majos, left the Temesköz and made another start in the Transdanubian

<sup>75</sup> See footnotes 17 and 18.

<sup>76</sup> June 27, 1435: MNL OL DL 44045.

<sup>77</sup> Engel, "Archontológia – Ispánok: Krassó".

<sup>78</sup> Engel, "Archontológia – Főrendek és országgyűlési követek 1439–1457. oszlári [Majos] Péter 1439A: 45."

<sup>79</sup> August 4, 1421: ZsO VIII, 843.

<sup>80</sup> December 30, 1497: MNL OL DL 71521.

region. This is well-proven by the earlier cited occurrence of Michael, the son of Majos as one of the 50 compurgators for Ladislás Dombai (of Dombó) in 1447 whose interests lay mostly in Tolna county.<sup>81</sup> Another example to their connection with Transdanubian families is the marriage of Michael's sister, Elizabeth to John of Vág whose residence was located in Sopron County and whose prestigious status is evidently shown by his office holdings in the same county.<sup>82</sup> The fact that they moved from the Temesköz may explain the numerical difference between the accounts referring to the descendants of John and to the branch of Paul. Yet, the task of the thorough scanning of their scattered documentation in the records of the potential families with whom Michael and Elizabeth, the children of Majos established relations was not undertaken, so, it is probable that we have not found (and used) each reference in which they occur. Hopefully, these hits will become available with the systematic investigation of the *famili-ares* of the Transdanubian families.

The second noticeable tendency can be described as the impoverishment of the family, or at least as the continuous shrinking of their landed wealth. One factor which contributed to the lessening was that Ladislás and George, the sons of Peter carried out another land division between themselves, so, following the first partition of the family estates, now, the portions of Paul's branch were halved as well.<sup>83</sup> Although the case when Helen, the widow of Matkó of Jobbágy offered her complete portions in Apáca (Krassó County) to George in 1469 may seem to be the last acquisition of the Oszlárís, in fact, it was not, because George pledged his parts in Kozmafalva to Helen in exchange.<sup>84</sup> Next to this example, several other alienations of their landed wealth are documented in the series of records from the 1450s and 1460s. For instance, the two earliest cases have preserved their deal with John of Temesköz, a member of an esteemed family

<sup>81</sup> May 26, 1447: MNL OL DL 14085. For the estates of this Dombai family see: Csánki III, "Tolnavármegye – Főbb birtokosai: Dombai" – for their genealogical tree see: Engel, "Genealógia – Csák nem 6. Trencsényi ág 2. tábla: Dombai"

<sup>82</sup> John's name occurs twice among the elected noble jurors between 1486 and 1490 (Norbert C. Tóth, Richárd Horváth, Tibor Neumann, Tamás Pálosfalvi, András W. Kovács, *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1458–1526*, vol. II [Megyék] (Budapest: MTA–BTK–TTI, 2017), 242), while his father, Blaise and his son-in-law, Emeric of Vág were deputies of Sopron county (Ibid. 232.). For the family relations between the Vágis see: July 17, 1516: MNL OL 48941.

<sup>83</sup> It is evident from the wordings of the documents issued in 1462 and 1463 when George was about to pledge his portions to Ladislás of Upor – e.g. *quia ipse Georgius Maiosi directam medietatem omnium prescriptarum possessionum, que videlicet medietas condam Ladislai Maiosi, fratris videlicet sui carnalis prefuisset, quos nobili domine Iustine, relicte ipsius Ladislai, fratris sui, pro certo debitis et aliis rationabilibus ex causis pro quingentis florenis auri hungaricalibus pignori obligasset* (March 6, 1462: Temes II, 340–341).

<sup>84</sup> December 18, 1469: Krassó III, 419–420.

residing in Borsod and Szabolcs counties known as Móré of Dada (or sometimes called of Korneth), but whose origin stems from Temes county.<sup>85</sup> In 1453, it was Ladislás of Oszlár who had it recorded at the chapter of Csanád that he handed over Szentgyörgy to this John, this time called of Horog. According to the document, Szentgyörgy originally belonged to Stephen of Csobod, however, it became the possession of Ladislás of Oszlár with the consent of Stephen for unknown reasons. Now, Ladislás literally returned the asset to John of Temesköz whose wife, called Elizabeth, happened to be the daughter of Stephen of Csobod.<sup>86</sup> Three years later, however, it was Ladislás's cousin, Michael of Oszlár who pledged his portions in Antalfalva for 26 forints to the same John.<sup>87</sup> This case might be connected to Michael's move to Transdanubia<sup>88</sup>, whereas the other pledges of George of Oszlár – half of Pelbárthida to Ladislás of Upor in 1457<sup>89</sup> and then all his portions to the same Ladislás for 1500 forints in 1462<sup>90</sup> – can be related to a more essential issue, that is, the management of the heirless end of the family.

As it can be learnt from the last records from the 1460s, the ones who benefited the most from this situation of the Oszlárís were the members of the Upori family originating from Zemplén County.<sup>91</sup> First, it was Ladislás of Oszlár who established stronger ties with the medium landowning Uporis by marrying Iustina, the sister of the aforementioned Ladislás of Upor<sup>92</sup>, one of

<sup>85</sup> Regarding the identification of John's family background, the dedication goes to Norbert C. Tóth. On the brief biography of John's family see: Tamás Bodnár, "Birtokos nemesség Borsod vármegyében: A Móré család," László Veres, Gyula Viga, eds., *A Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve*, vol. XLV (2006): 159–179, especially 159. and 175.

<sup>86</sup> November 1, 1453: MNL OL DF 251570. Note the short summary of the content in early 16<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian on the back of the document: "Temeskjozy Janosnak es felesygenek Cuboldj Erzyebetnek attja meg Temeswarmegyeben Zentgeorg new faljut Ezlarj Lazlja".

<sup>87</sup> February 10, 1456: MNL OL DL 15027. Note the short summary of the content in early 16<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian on the back of the document: "Mayus Myhalj atta temes w[ar]megyeben antalfalua belj rezyet zyaljagban Temeskozy Janasnyak".

<sup>88</sup> It becomes clear, however, that Michael and this branch of the Oszlárís did not wind their estates up in the Temesköz as we can learn that her sister, Elizabeth pledged her portions lying in Temes county (most probably given to her as daughters' quarter) to Michael of Csák in 1497 (December 30, 1497: MNL OL DL 71521).

<sup>89</sup> August 10, 1457 > September 24, 1457: MNL OL DL 44847.

<sup>90</sup> March 6, 1462: Temes II, 340–341.

<sup>91</sup> For the key figures and the status of the Upori family see: István Kádas, "Középkori család- és birtok történet: A Semseiek," *Fons* 20 (2013/3): 442; István Kádas, "Egy abaúji atyafiság Mátyás király udvarában. Adalékok a Semsei család Hunyadi-kori történetéhez," in Bence Péterfi, András Vadas, Gábor Mikó, Péter Jakab, eds., *Micae Mediaevales. Fiatal történészek dolgozatai a középkori Magyarországról és Európáról*, vol. II (Budapest, 2012), 147.

<sup>92</sup> Engel, "Genealógia – Upori". This work, however, mentions only the name of her second husband, George of Nyársapát.

the leading *familiares* of Ladislás of Pálócz, the judge royal (Latin: *iudex curiae regis*, Hungarian: *országbíró*) (1446–1470).<sup>93</sup> The prestige of the marriage is well shown by the fact that the career of this Ladislás Upori just reached its peak at the turn of the 1450s and 1460s when he had been appointed to administer Máramaros county as its *ispán* (1457–58), and then, to be the deputy of Ung (1460–62) while holding the title of the vice captain of the Upper Parts (1460–61).<sup>94</sup> However, the marriage did not seem to help the continuation of the line of Ladislás Majosi of Oszlár, because he died heirless before January 1462. Although he was still alive in 1459, when one of his lawsuits was postponed<sup>95</sup>, the next account three years later refers to him as a deceased man.<sup>96</sup>

Following the death of Ladislás, however, we can learn about the existence of a much stronger connection between the two families. The members of the Uporis, especially the widow of Ladislás, his former brothers-in-law, the other Ladislás and John of Upor immediately took the opportunity to establish their claim over the possessions of the Oszlárís, including the portions of George of Oszlár as well. What is more, they were already introduced into them by the convent of Lelesz in early February of 1462.<sup>97</sup> Had it not been for George's consent, the realisation of the Uporis' claim would not have become possible for sure. But, as it is highlighted in two documents issued a month later, the role and the contribution of George to the acquisition went much beyond that. When he appeared personally at Patak before Ladislás of Pálócz in March 1462, George literally made the Uporis be the legal heirs of his portions lying in Bihar (Pelbárthida, Egyed, Reszege, Kozmafalva, Kágya) and Temes counties (Szentkeresztfalva, Oszlár, Kér, Zsebed, Magyarzsebed, Márkfalva, Ambrusfalva, Antalfája, Kecskés, Csobaj, Ivántelke and Gyülvész). Having no sons, he had his preferred little daughter, called Anne, betrothed to Paul, the son of Ladislás of Upor, consequently, the possessions of the Oszlárís

<sup>93</sup> Norbert C. Tóth, Richárd Horváth, Tibor Neumann, Tamás Pálosfalvi, *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1458–1526*, vol. I (Főpapok és bárók) (Budapest: MTA–BTK–TTI, 2016), 89.

<sup>94</sup> For his offices and affiliation see: Ibid., 149, 301 and Richárd Horváth, "Adalékok a Szapolyaiak északkelet-magyarországi felemelkedéséhez," in *Analecta Mediaevalia, Tanulmányok a középkorról*, ed. Tibor Neumann, vol. I (Piliscsaba: Argumentum, 2001), 101 and footnote nr. 13. It can also be learnt that Ladislás of Upor was the captain of the troops in the campaign against Litva in 1461 (*fidelis noster egregious Ladislaus de Upor capitaneus gentium nostrarum sub fortalicio Lythwa existentium* – Temes II, 341–342). For the campaign see: Richárd Horváth, *Itineraria regum et reginarum Regni Hungarie II. Itineraria regis Mathiae Corvini et reginae Beatricis de Aragonia (1458 –[1476]–1490)* (Susidia ad historiam medii aevi Hungariae inquirendam 2), (Históriakönyvtárak – Kronológiák, Adattárak 12) (Budapest, 2011), 69.

<sup>95</sup> May 9, 1459: MNL OL DL 44916.

<sup>96</sup> January 23, 1462: Temes II, 336.

<sup>97</sup> January 23, 1462 > February 8, 1462: Temes II, 336, 337–338.

were supposed to be inherited by their descendants through this engagement. In accordance with the agreement, Ladislás would take care of George and his wealth in his age of decrepitude.<sup>98</sup> To ensure his decision, George pledged his portions to Ladislás, titled *egregius*, for 1500 forints on the same day at the same place.<sup>99</sup> Following the arrangement, the Uporis practically established rightful claims over the complete landed wealth of the Oszlári family which was first confirmed by King Matthias in April 1462 then repeatedly two years later in 1464 in a form of a privilege.<sup>100</sup>

Although it was worded in one of the documents that George hoped to have male heirs later<sup>101</sup>, he died without the comfort of having one. George of Oszlár was still alive in 1469<sup>102</sup>, but almost two decades later we only hear about her widow, Catherine, who pledged her portions lying in the estates of Oszlár in Bihar and Temes counties (evidently given to her as her morning-gift) to Stephen of Pocsaj for 200 forints.<sup>103</sup> George is known to be the last member of the male line; however, it is Elizabeth of Oszlár who owns the last recorded mentioning of the family members from 1497, as it has been cited above.

### 3. The Porazfalvi Family

#### 3.1. The Origins

As far as it can be judged, the members of the Porazfalvi family were amongst the prestigious and trusted noblemen of the local noble community of Krassó, especially during the first half of the Angevin period. The most can be learnt about Kilián, the son of Poraz, together with Mark and Nicolas, two of the grandsons of the ancestor of the family. Considering their status within the local society, it would suffice to mention that the latter was authorised to hold the office of noble judges for several years, but their father and they themselves regularly appear as men of the county and as royal men as well, which

<sup>98</sup> *ipse annotatam filiam suam Annam tamquam prolem masculinum et per ipsam iamfactum Paulum, filium Ladislai de Upor, generum scilicet suum, ipsorumque heredes universos, as possidendas possessions suas (...) suosveros et legitimos constituisset et prefecisset successores (...) ex quo ipse homo debilis existit et labores facere non potest* – March 6, 1462: Temes II, 339–340.

<sup>99</sup> March 6, 1462: Temes II, 340–341.

<sup>100</sup> April 20, 1462: Temes II, 341–343; April 30, 1464: Temes II, 367–369. However, the Uporis could not enjoy the wealth of the newly acquired lands for a long time because they also died heirless in the 1480s (Engel, “Genealógia – Upori”).

<sup>101</sup> *idominus Deus ipsum Georgium Mayosy cum prole masculine providerit et dotaverit, sic quod idem Georgius filium vel filios habuerit* – March 6, 1462: Temes II, 339.

<sup>102</sup> December 18, 1469: Krassó III, 419–420.

<sup>103</sup> Two decades after the death of George, his widow, Catherine also pledged her portions (evidently given to her as her morning-gift) to Stephen of Pocsaj for 200 forints (February 20, 1483: MNL OL DL 71002).

evidently show the esteemed status of the family. Owing to the rare name of the son of Poraz, it was relatively easy to reconstruct the genealogical tree of the first three generations. Luckily, the identification of their distinctive possession called Porazfalva finally contributed to the extension of the family tree up to the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

It is revealed in a report of the authorities of Krassó from 1325 that master Kilián's possession called Kopajt was adjacent to the land of the Himfis called Perdvej. According to the document, the skirmishes and disputes between the litigants were settled peacefully before the authorities by re-establishing the borders along their assets.<sup>104</sup> However, it would be arbitrary to call this family of Kopajt.<sup>105</sup> On the one hand, none of the earlier records has upheld this distinctive form while referring to them. On the other hand, it is clear from the accounts of the late 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries that the members were called of Porazfalva, evidently bearing the name of the family's ancestor. At the same time, this identification allows us to suggest that Kopajt is most probably identical with Porazfalva.<sup>106</sup>

As it can be seen, the main scope of the family can be located to the northern region of Krassó, however, like many noble families from this part of the county, the Porazfalvis also had landed interests in the neighbouring Temes County and, consequently, established strong family ties with its noble community as well. In case of the Porazfalvis, their much wider horizon is exemplified by their marriage relations with the Partasi and the Oszlári families (discussed below), and secondly by the fact that the sons of Kilián appear as possessors of village Dóc in Temes.<sup>107</sup>

As far as the biographical data are concerned, the family history starts with master Kilián who immediately appears to be a respected member of the noble community of Krassó. It is well documented by some early sources from the region, for instance in 1319, in one of the first charters issued by the county authorities of Krassó, he was mentioned as man of the county sent to carry out an inquiry about the illegal transportation of 16 stooks of hay on behalf of the protest of Gál of Omor.<sup>108</sup> His next appearance in 1321 is related to the events stimulated by the Himfis' gains in Krassó. This year, apparently as a

<sup>104</sup> September 25, 1325: MNL OL P 1732 Antal Fekete Nagy, *A Temesi bánság oklevéltára*, box 1. nr. 99 = Batth. Miscell. Heimiana, nr. 48.

<sup>105</sup> Hereby, the former identification of the author is modified: Szaszgó, "Behind the archontology," 159.

<sup>106</sup> Compare: Krassó II/2, 97.

<sup>107</sup> Their ownership of Dóc is revealed in a document listing the possessions of Ladislas of Omor. The same document mentions Dóc to be adjacent to Csúd (1343: MNL OL DL 71413 = Temes I, 72).

<sup>108</sup> 1319: MNL OL DL 60117.

neighbour, Kilián was referred to as a royal man in action when the dispute between Ladislaus the son of Him and Bodor the son of Valentine over the three Bodorfalva, otherwise called Perdvej, came to an end. Upon the instruction of the country judge to the chapter of Csanád, Kilián, of whom we also learn that his father's name was *Poraz*, was to divide the possessions into three parts. Following that, in accordance with the litigants' agreement, he was to introduce Ladislaus and Bodor into their portions; first Ladislaus to have him own the two third of Perdvej, then Bodor to own the remaining one third.<sup>109</sup>

### 3.2. *The Noble Judges – Mark and Nicholas of Porazfalva and their brothers*

As it was mentioned earlier, the border issues between the Himfis and the neighbours in the vicinity did not leave Kilián unaffected either. Although their dispute had already been settled, it seemingly sparked out again, yet, under the lifetime of his sons. At least in 1342, Paul the son of Him banned Mark, Benedict, Nicholas, Paul and Demetrius from the unlawful use of Perdvej.<sup>110</sup> The consequences of this issue are not known, but the family tree of the Porazfalvis could be well extended by the genealogical data. Fortunately, more can be learned about three of the sons, who, according to the records mentioning them in the 1340s and 1360s, rose to become the esteemed members of the local noble community, to a certain extent exceeding their father's prestige, too.

It is especially true for Mark who was listed among the noble judges of the county in four almost consecutive years.<sup>111</sup> First, he appears with this title at the general assembly of the county held by the *ispán*, Pósa of Szer at Érdosmlyó in 1342.<sup>112</sup> It is interesting to learn from a charter issued two months later in the same year that when Paul the son of Him protested before the *sedria* against the sons of Kilián, including Mark as well, Mark himself was the member of the county authorities initiating the investigation which finally barred the Porazfalvi siblings from the occupation of Paul's lands.<sup>113</sup> It looks as if he was made to have a short break in his office holding since his name is not included in the complete list of the authorities in November<sup>114</sup>, however, Mark was able to return to his

<sup>109</sup> May 17, 1321: MNL OL P 1732 Antal Fekete Nagy, *A Temesi bánság oklevéltára*, box 1. nr. 79 = Bath. Miscell. Heimiana, nr. 39.

<sup>110</sup> August 1, 1342: MNL OL P 1732 Antal Fekete Nagy, *A Temesi bánság oklevéltára*, box 1. nr. 182 = Bath. Miscell. Heimiana, nr. 83.

<sup>111</sup> The complete list of the noble judges of Krassó County is available in Elek Szaszko, "Adalékok Krassó megye történetéhez. Krassó megye archontológiája (1319–1439)," *Turul* 86 (2013): 64–65.

<sup>112</sup> June 4, 1342: MNL OL P 1732 Antal Fekete Nagy, *A Temesi bánság oklevéltára*, box 1. nr. 181 = Bath. Miscell. Heimiana, nr. 84.

<sup>113</sup> August 1, 1342: MNL OL P 1732 Antal Fekete Nagy, *A Temesi bánság oklevéltára*, box 1. nr. 182 = Bath. Miscell. Heimiana, nr. 83.

<sup>114</sup> November 28, 1342: MNL OL P 1732 Antal Fekete Nagy, *A Temesi bánság oklevéltára*, box

office soon as it is proved by a document issued at the county court at Haram in May, 1343.<sup>115</sup> The next three records covering the end of 1343 and 1344 do not contain the name of any noble judges<sup>116</sup>, nevertheless, when they are listed again by name in 1345 and 1346, Mark was yet again in charge of the office.<sup>117</sup>

The next trusted member of the Porazfalvi family was Nicolas, the brother of Mark, who – despite the earlier skirmishes – acted on behalf of the request of Benedict Himfi as a man of the county in 1343. According to the complaint, he had to investigate the arbitrary arrestment of Benedict's serf called Mikola, who had already been in captivity for three months at the hands of Ladislaus the son of Gál of Omor.<sup>118</sup> Beyond doubt, the local career of Nicolas reached its peak in 1347, when, following the footsteps of his brother, he became the member of the county authorities as a noble judge.<sup>119</sup> Besides containing relevant information related to the history of this family, this document is also valuable for detecting some non-regular elements in the operation of the county authorities of Krassó.<sup>120</sup>

Compared to the activities of the family members in the 1340s, very little is known about the Porazfalvis from the next two decades. The one of whom we can learn more than his name and who breaks the long period of silence was the third son of Kilián, called Paul who reappears as a designated royal man in 1363.<sup>121</sup> In the end, according to the report of the chapter of Csanád, it was not him who was sent to introduce the new set of wealth for the Himfis, which consisted of Kövespatak, Székáspatak, Vaja and the half of Bácsstövis, but based on this record it is evident that the Porazfalvis belonged to the circle of those families who the most significant lords in northern Krassó willingly entrusted, even if they had conflicts. Nevertheless, to our present knowledge, the relation did not reach the level of *familiaritas*. Another expressive account indicating the local reputation of the Porazfalvi family is the list of royal men in the previous document where Paul is enumerated amongst members of as prestigious families of the region as the Pósaí and the Macedóniai.

1. nr. 185. = Batth. Miscell. Heimiana, nr. 81.

<sup>115</sup> May 15, 1343: MNL OL P 1732 Antal Fekete Nagy, *A Temesi bánság oklevéltára*, box 1. nr. 191. = Batth. Miscell. Heimiana, nr. 87.

<sup>116</sup> MNL OL DL 51261, MNL OL DL 51265, MNL OL DL 51280.

<sup>117</sup> June 30, 1345: MNL OL P 1732. Antal Fekete Nagy, *A Temesi bánság oklevéltára*, box 1. nr. 210. = Batth. Miscell. Heimiana, nr. 97, March 30, 1346: MNL OL DL 91368.

<sup>118</sup> November 27, 1343: MNL OL DL 51261.

<sup>119</sup> August 27, 1347: MNL OL DL 91381.

<sup>120</sup> Most of the documents of the authorities were issued on the fifth day of the week, that is on Thursdays since the county courts were regularly held on Thursdays at this time. However, the date of issue of the document in which Nicholas occurred as a noble judge was Monday (for the locality of the *sedrias* see: Szaszko, "Behind the archontology," 172)

<sup>121</sup> January 25, 1363: MNL OL DL 51984.

### 3.3. *The Last Generation*

Seven years later, however, Paul was not alive. In 1370, as it can be learned from the letter of John, the archdeacon of Temes, James the son of Peter Bodon of Partas assured his female cousins that certain portions from the family's possessions would be delivered to them as daughters' quarters since they married to non-noble persons.<sup>122</sup> Paul can be connected to this seemingly distinct family agreement through his widow, namely Catherina, who, as the granddaughter of the aforementioned Peter Bodon, was one of the suitors against his uncle.

Besides learning the name of Paul's former wife and giving hints about the marriage connections between the local families, this document contains the first reference to the name of the family's distinctive possession. The text happens to be spoilt and damaged, nevertheless, from the legible first and last letters – read as *Pauli de P[...]*a – it looks evident that it was meant to be Paul of Porazfalva. Next to this, another potential family member appears in the document discussing the matter of the Partasi family, inasmuch as the father of the arbitrator for the other two granddaughters of Peter Bodon called George, the son of Kilián is identical with the Kilián of Porazfalva. Bearing in mind that there is no knowledge of another Kilián residing in the region, this genealogical linkage is somewhat supported. On the other hand, since all five sons of Kilián were active between the 1340s and 1360s, the single and late reference on George surely weakens this identification. Fortunately, the history of the family does not end at this point, thus, it is hoped that the data referring to the next generation of the Porazfalvis might also help us find the real place of this George on the genealogical tree.

Despite the limited and fragmented nature of the sources of this region, it was possible to extend the family tree by two new members from the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Apparently, it is Valentine the son of Demetrius and George the son of Nicolas by whom we know for sure that the family was called of Porazfalva since both appear with this attribute in the documents. The pertinence of the two to the family is evidently justified by the identity of their fathers and the fact that their distinctive possession bears the name of their great-grandfather. If that is so, it immediately raises the question whether the two Georges of the family are identical or not, however, the obvious indications of the genealogical relations seemingly leave no place for such correspondence.

As it was highlighted, the identification of George as the son of Kilián is problematic because of his single and late appearance in the sources, especially compared to his siblings. However, it looks more than coincidental for the

<sup>122</sup> July 19, 1370: MNL OL DL 44482.

family to feature two Georges around the same era. For these reasons, it seems logical to think that this George (the son of Nicolas) is identical with the one previously mentioned as the son of Kilián. The assumption could be wrong, but it is highly possible that in 1370 the notary of the archdeacon indicated the name of George's well-known grandfather instead of the name of his father.

As far as the family history is concerned at the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, the documents do not add particularly new to it, at least considering the landed wealth of the Porazfalvis. For the first sight, it looks as if they still belonged to the lower end of the noble society as there is no sign of any further extension of their landed property. However, the marriage connections of Valentine and Nicolas may indicate that their social status within the local community remained reputable.

As we learn, Valentine took his wife, the daughter of James called Margaret, from the local Szentgyörgyi family<sup>123</sup>, while his cousin was married to Dorothy, the daughter of Laurence of Oszlár from Temes county.<sup>124</sup> The latter exemplifies the regular cross-boundary connections among the local noble families living in the border zones of the two counties (similarly to his uncle's marriage with the Partasi family). Moreover, the esteemed position of the Porazfalvis in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century is also well justified by their marriage connection with the Oszlári family. Especially by taking into account that in this period the latter's landed wealth and social status – as being at the top of the wealthy nobility and belonging to the noble élite of Temes county for the time being – could have predestined the Oszláris to establish marriage connections with more illustrious families. However, Laurence's choice to give his daughter to George of Porazfalva, whose family stood rather at the lower end of the noble society, tells us that her daughter's marriage with him was prestigious enough for Laurence, the former (vice)ban of Szörény, which indirectly can be used as an evidence to justify the respected status of the Porazfalvi family as well. Notwithstanding, it would be interesting to know whether (or how) the legal issue between the families of the sisters-in-law influenced the relationship of the Porazfalvi cousins, but obviously, due to the limited nature of the sources, there is no chance of such realisation.

Even less is known about their activities in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. Besides the sources revealing their marriage connections, there are no more records left about Valentine, whereas the one about George is related to a legal issue with the Gyertyánosis. Similarly to the arrival of the Himfis in the 1320s, the rise of the Gyertyánosi family almost a century later inevitably led to conflicts with the

<sup>123</sup> November 18, 1399: MNL OL DL 86557.

<sup>124</sup> November 23, 1406: MNL OL DL 42902.

local noblemen, including the Porazfalvis as well. At least, suggesting from the letter of Peter, cantor and the deputy of the bishop of Csanád, which recorded the mutual will of James of Gyertyános and George of Porazfalva to postpone their case in 1405<sup>125</sup>, this scenario looks very likely.

#### 4. Summary

Taking into consideration the making of history, neither the Oszlári nor the Porazfalvi families played a significant role in it. In fact, as it is indicated in the title of this paper, the members of both families – some of them to a greater, others to a lesser extent – contributed rather to the local history of Temes and Krassó counties which apparently allowed them to become esteemed families of the local noble community. While the Oszláris were somewhat predestined to reach this status – especially if we consider the original size of their landed wealth, let alone their later acquisitions, and the *magister* title by which some members (e.g. Majos and Paul) were entitled right from the beginning –, the significance of the Porazfalvi noblemen is less obvious. Indeed, the biographies of the families – allowing a comparative analysis – exemplify the different horizons of the so-called nobility of middling wealth to which – based on the number of their possessions (the number of their tenants is not available) – both the Oszláris and the Porazfalvis belonged to, nevertheless, to the two ends of it.

This paper intended to identify the family backgrounds, the career opportunities, the marriage relations and the affiliation of these two families from the medieval Temesköz. Compared to the limited and scattered nature of the sources which characterises this region, it can be said that these aims were successfully achieved by the reconstruction of the relatively complete biographies of the Oszlári and the Porazfalvi families containing the detailed socio-historical investigation of the careers of their four most outstanding members.

As far as the Oszláris are concerned, the Temesköz region always meant an important sphere of influence for them throughout the entire history of the family. It was due to their possessions lying here and their already established family ties (e.g. with the Papdi, the Vejtehi Bobal, the Fácsalaki, the Oszkolai and the Porazfalvi families). However, the activities of the third generation started to move beyond this local horizon in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century which manifested in the office-holding of Laurence, titled *egregius*, and in the participation of Paul in the events of 1403, as described, most probably in the retinue of Nicolas of Csák. Their growing wealth and their increasing political and social significance can be further exemplified with the acquisitions of Paul's branch in Bihar county and with Peter's delegation to the diet of 1439. These tendencies

<sup>125</sup> May 4, 1405: MNL OL DL 53237.

are also recognisable in their marriage connections as well (e.g. with families of their kind like the Pelbárthidai, the Szarvastelki, the Vági and the Upori families) which allow us to state firmly that the Oszlárís belonged to the well-to-do nobility or – for the time being – to the so-called noble élite. Although the Oszlárís divided up their possessions and one branch of the family left the Temesköz and moved to Transdanubia, they were able to maintain their status until the 1460s when the last male members died heirless and their estates enriched other families through marriage connections and/or pledges.

Concerning the Porazfalvi family, their history is less comprehensive compared to the Oszlárís. It is also true that their wealth and career rather characterise the lower end of the county nobility whose activities are usually limited to their residing region. Nevertheless, the results and the conclusions drawn from the history of this family are valuable from various aspects. First, considering the history of institutions, the operation of the county authorities of Krassó could now be enriched with the identity of one of its noble judge families. Following this initiative, we see high potential in the continuation of such efforts to map the family backgrounds of the trusted members of the local noble community in Krassó including the noble judges, the regularly appearing royal men, the men of the county, etc. This would be essential from the point of view of local history as well because these identifications might reveal the structure of the landed wealth of the families and the most important relations between the local landowners. Although the results might be limited in Krassó county due to the (non)availability of the sources, as the example of the Porazfalvis shows (e.g. their identifiable landed wealth, their neighbourhood relationship with the Himfi or with the Gyertyánosi families, let alone their marriage ties with the local nobility), it still contributes to the better understanding of the basic texture of the local society. Finally, considering the socio-historical aspect, the history of the Porazfalvis exemplifies well that the locally esteemed status did not necessarily correlate with the landed wealth of a noble family. Regarding our family, their office holding (noble judge) was one element in their rise out of the masses of the county nobility, whereas, its peak was certainly reached with the marriage between Dorothy of Oszlár and George of Porazfalva. The latter evidently proves the stratified, yet, flexible nature of this stratum of the noble society – a feature which has been taking a more and more obvious shape in the literature as well.

## 5. *Appendix*

### 5.1. *Documents*

November 19, 1403. Esztergom

King Sigismund pardons the treachery of Michael of Berény and Paul of Oszlár.

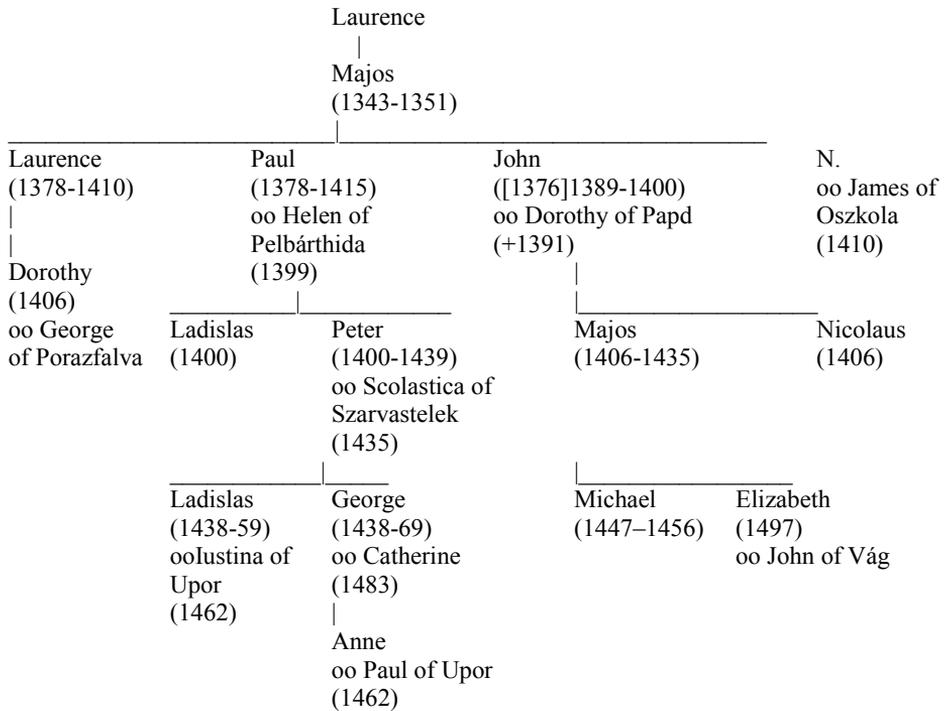
Original, sealed with the king's ring-seal under a paper sleeve. MNL OL DL 42797 (The Collection of the Hungarian National Museum – Magyar nemzeti múzeumi törzsanyag) – Abstract: ZsO II/1, 2782.

Commissio regis propria

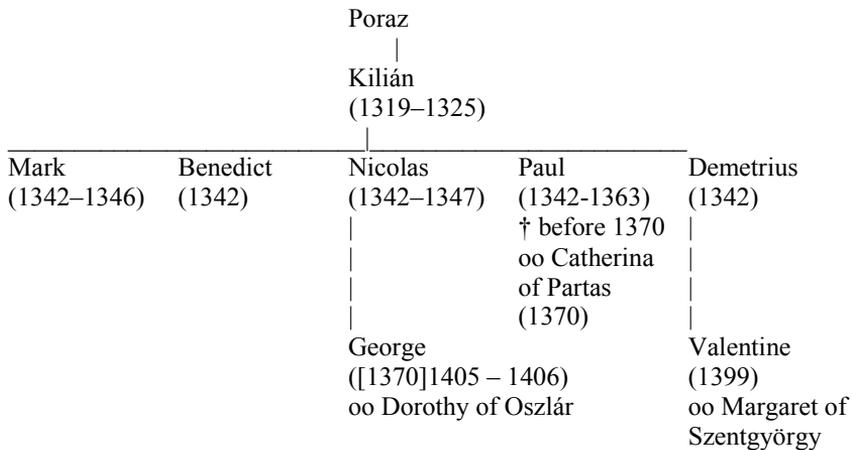
Sigismundus Dei gratia rex Hungarie, Dalmatie, Croatie etc., marchioque Brandenburgensis sacri Romani imperii vicarius generalis et regni Bohemie gubernator memorie commendamus, quod nos de pietate regia, que magis miserari solet, quam ulcisci, Michaellem filium Haniconis de Beren et Paulum filium Mayus de Ozlan a nota infidelitatis, quam ipsi hiis disturbiorum temporibus utriusque Nicolao pridem vayvodis Transylvanis forsitan adherendo contra nostram maiestatem incidisse perhibentur, duximus expiandos gratiam et misericordiam capitibus et possessionibus necnon rebus et bonis eorum universis facientes specialem, ita tamen, quod iidem de cetero a tali enormitate immunem se studeant conservare. Quocirca vobis, fidelibus nostris, comitis regni nostri, iudicibus et iusticiariis, signanter comiti vel vicecomiti Temesiensi presentibus et futuris regio sub edicto firmissime mandamus precipiendo, quatenus prefatos Michaellem et Paulum ratione previa ad nullius instantiam intra vel extra iudicium in personis, possessionibus, rebus et bonis eorum prenotatis quibuscunque quomodolibet audeatis perturbare. Secus pro nostra gratia non facturi in premissis. Presentes quoque perfectis reddi semper mandamus presentanti. Datum Strigonii, in festo beate Elizabeth regine, anno Domini millesimo quadringentesimo tertio.

## 5.2. Genealogical Trees

## 5.2.1 The Oszlári/Pelbárthidai Family



## 5.2.2 The Porazfalvi Family



VICEBANUL, JUDELE NOBILILOR ȘI “TRĂDĂTORUL”  
(BIOGRAFIILE FAMILIILOR OSZLÁRI ȘI PORAZFALVI)

*Rezumat*

Lucrarea de față prezintă biografiile a două familii nobiliare de importanță locală, care și-au dus existența în regiunea medievală Temesköz (Între Timișuri): Oszlári (numiți și Pelbárthida) și Porazfalvi. Pe lângă elementele tradiționale privind istoria familială – de exemplu reconstrucția arborilor genealogici și averea domenală – am fost destul de norocoși să extindem investigația la un nivel socio-istoric. Carierele (ex: funcțiile ocupate, serviciile de familiaritate) și modelele de căsătorie ale celor patru membri mai de seamă ai celor două familii – Laurențiu și Paul de Oszlár, Marcu și Nicolae de Porazfalva – exemplifică diferitele orizonturi ale așa-numitei nobilimi mijlocii, căreia cele două familii îi aparțineau. Cu toate acestea, având în vedere aspectul politic al biografiei familiei Oszlári, pot fi adăugate detalii suplimentare istoriei evenimentelor petrecute în regiune în anul 1403.

