

János Perényi, Master of the Treasury and his Relationship with the Upper-Hungarian Cities (1438–1458)

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In this paper the author focuses on the career of János Perényi (†1458), Master of the Treasury and his peculiarly long activity as Master of the Treasury which lasted for nearly twenty years. This paper aims to draw a sketch of the activities of Perényi as Treasurer and to examine his relationship with the Upper-Hungarian cities in the years 1438 – 1458. The thesis is based on the materials kept in the archives of the Upper-Hungarian cities. Most of the documents issued by the Treasurer were missile letters addressed to the cities under his jurisdiction, and privilege letters which included the decisions of the Court of the Master of the Treasurer. We can sporadically find receipts, which prove the acceptance of the sums paid to the Treasurer. However, we cannot draw a full picture without examining the letters of cities, rulers, major officeholders or such noticeable characters as Governor János Hunyadi and Jan Jiskra, mercenary captain and ispán ('sheriff') of County Sáros (Sariš).

Key words: János Perényi. Master of the Treasury. Upper-Hungarian Cities. 1438–1458.

I have been studying the career of János Perényi (†1458), Master of the Treasury, or simply Treasurer, since 2009. Besides presenting the outline of his career, I also argued before on his seal usage¹ and on the history of his family's land tenure.² In my present paper I will focus on his peculiarly long activity as Master of the Treasury which lasted for nearly twenty years. The duties of the Master of the Treasury were separated from the roles of the Royal Treasurer during the Angevin era and according to the historical studies before 1405 the office managed by the Master of the Treasury became the Court of Appeal for the citizens.³ Shortly after that it seceded from the court and was operated in Buda.⁴ In 1456 a Treasurer's charter was published on the basis of which the customary procedure of the Court of the Master of the Treasurer was recorded for the first time.⁵ Thus, the office and the Court of the Master of the Treasurer provided judiciary forum for the citizens of those royal free cities that fell under the jurisdiction of the Treasurer. Most of these cities – besides Sopron and Buda – emerged from the largest Upper-Hungarian cities, such as Košice (Kassa, Cassovia), Bratislava (Pozsony, Pressburg), Bardejov (Brátfá, Bartfa) Prešov (Eperjes) and Trnava (Nagyszombat, Tyrnavia). Since Sopron was pledged by the Hungarian crown during the period in question, and the charters of Buda were lost, it is obvious that we can reconstruct the activities of Perényi as Treasurer based only on the materials kept in the archives of the Upper-Hungarian cities.

1 NOVÁK, Ádám. The Seal Usage of János Perényi (†1458), Master of Treasury. In: *Történeti tanulmányok Acta Universitatis Debreceniensis Series Historicaí*, 2014, no. 22, pp. 78-96.

2 NOVÁK, Ádám. Egy felső-magyarországi bárói család birtoklástörténete 1465-ig. A terebesi Perényiek. In: *Agrártörténeti szemle*, 2015, no. 56, pp. 1-49.

3 BORECZKY, Elemér. *A királyi tárnokmester hivatala 1405-ig*. Budapest : Országos Központi Köszégi Nyomda Részv.-Társ, 1904, 120 p. KUBINYI, András. Der ungarische König und seine Städte im 14. und am Beginn des 15. Jahrhunderts. In: RAUSCH, Wilhelm (Ed.). *Stadt und Stadtherr im 14. Jahrhundert. Entwicklungen und Funktionen*. Linz : Wimmer, 1972, pp. 192-228. RADY, Martyn. The government of Medieval Buda. In: NAGY, Balázs – RADY, Martyn – SZENDE, Katalin – VADAS, András. (Eds.). *Medieval Buda in Context*. Boston : Brill, 2016, pp. 303-321, especially: pp. 318-319.

4 SZENTPÉTERY, Imre Jr. A tárnoki ítélőszék kialakulása. In: *Századok*, 1934, no. 68, p. 528.

5 SZENTPÉTERY, I. Jr. *A tárnoki ítélőszék...*, p. 582.

Most of the documents issued by the Treasurer were missile letters addressed to the cities under his jurisdiction, and privilege letters which included the decisions of the Court of the Master of the Treasurer. We can sporadically find receipts, which prove the acceptance of the sums paid to the Treasurer. However, we cannot draw a full picture without examining the letters of cities, rulers, major officeholders or such noticeable characters as Governor János Hunyadi and Jan Jiskra, mercenary captain and ispán ('sheriff') of County Sáros (Šariš). Based on these sources this paper aims to draw a sketch of the activities of Perényi as Treasurer and to examine his relationship with the above mentioned Upper-Hungarian cities.

A short history of the rise of the Perényi (i.e. the Terebes branch)

The ancestor of the family, who had gained the original estates and is also mentioned in the historical sources (1271), is a certain Orbán.⁶ The three branches of the family can be derived from his three sons. The Terebes branch originated from his son, called István Perényi.⁷ The acquisition of the estate called Szuhogy can be linked to András, the son of István. He purchased this estate in 1351 and the ruins of Csorbakő from the late Árpád-era also stood here. This was the family's very first own estate.⁸ Péter Perényi, the brother of András served Louis I of Hungary as castellan of Diósgyőr and he also obtained minor lands.⁹ He and his sons received smaller properties from both Charles II (III of Naples) and from Mary, Queen of Hungary,¹⁰ but it was King Sigismund who veritably smothered them with land grants.¹¹ The estates of Füzér and Terebes (Třebišov) were also castle manors, and they set up their seat¹² in Terebes, which presumably operated as the sedria of County Zemplén.¹³ Nothing proves this better than the fact that the family raised a grandiose gothic church here in 1400, dedicated to the Virgin Mary.¹⁴

Miklós Perényi, the oldest son of Péter rapidly climbed the career ladder. After obtaining the Banat of Szörény (Turnu-Severin),¹⁵ he received his own manors independently of his brothers.¹⁶ However, he and his brother died in the Battle of Nicopolis, thus the family continued in their sons, and in Imre, the third son of Péter. After the death of his brothers, Imre Perényi attained the office of the Master of the Cupbearers and could also serve King

6 Perény (Perin) Detek, Velejte (Veľaty). ENGEL, Pál. Zsigmond bárói: Rövid életrajzok. In: BEKE, László – MAROSI, Ernő – WEHLI Tünde (Eds.). *Művészet Zsigmond király korában 1387 – 1437. I – II*. Budapest : Budapest Történeti Múzeum, 1987, vol. II, pp. 405-457, 437, footnote no. 1.

7 For the family tree see Supplement no. 1. NOVÁK, Á. *Egy felső-magyarországi bárói...*, p. 22.

8 NOVÁK, Á. *Egy felső-magyarországi bárói...*, p. 11.

9 ENGEL, Pál. Magyarország világi archontológiája 1301 – 1457. In: *Arcanum DVD könyvtár IV. Családtörténet, heraldika, honismeret*. Budapest : Arcanum Adatbázis Kft., 2003, (Castellans).

10 E.g. Alsóregmecet. IPOLYI, Arnold – NAGY, Imre – PAUR, Iván – RÁTH, Károly – VÉGHÉLY, Dezső (Eds.). *Hazai okmánytár. Codex diplomaticus patrius I – VIII*, 1865 – 1891; vol. VII, no. 392-293.

11 Szentmiklós: *Zsigmondkori oklevéltár* (hereinafter ZsO), vol. I., 63. sz. reg.; Terebes: Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltár (National Archive of the Hungarian National Archives, hereinafter MNL OL) fund Diplomatikai Fényképgyűjtemény (Diplomatic Photocollection, hereinafter DF) 209 831.; Füzér: MNL OL fund Diplomatikai Levéltár (Diplomatic Archive, hereinafter DL) 7480.

12 NOVÁK, Ádám. Rezidencia-választás kérdése a Perényi családban – Csorbakő szerepe. In: CSIZÁR, Imre – KÓMÍVÉS, Péter Miklós (Eds.). *Tavaszi Szél 2014 Konferenciakötet*, 2014, vol. III, pp. 282-289. NOVÁK, Ádám. Rezidenciaalapítási és vallásosság kapcsolata a Perényiek példáján. In: *A víz szakralitása konferenciakötet*. Debrecen : Debreceni Egyetem, 2015, (under publication).

13 CSUKOVITS, Enikő. Sedriahelyek – megyeszékhelyek a középkorban. In: *Történelmi Szemle* 39, 1997, pp. 363-386.

14 NOVÁK, Á. *Rezidenciaalapítás...*, (under publication).

15 ENGEL, P. *Magyarország világi archontológiája...* (Bans of Szörény).

16 Patak and Szina (Seña): ZsO, vol. I, no. 1674.

Sigismund as ispán.¹⁷ Since he supported his king in the rebellion between 1401 and 1403, Sigismund donated him the lands of Imre Vadászi, which were close to Csorbakő.¹⁸ Not long after that the king commissioned him the title of Chancellor and granted him further estates.¹⁹

After the death of Imre, the oldest male member of the family was Miklós Perényi, the son of Ban Miklós, who did important services for King Sigismund, holding the office of the Master of the Horse until his death in 1428.²⁰ During this period and even after that the sons of Imre, János and István were neglected in the royal court. They only became barons at the end of the reign of King Sigismund.²¹ Later only János Perényi received lands from King Albert I (II of the Germans), as István passed away in 1437. Thus from the reign of King Albert, János was the only representative of the family in the royal court, as Lord High Steward.

Path towards the Treasury

The Perényi brothers, István and János, were not among the favourites of King Sigismund. Unlike the Pálóci or the Rozgonyi brothers,²² they did not gain hereditary grants, nor did they receive important governmental offices. The position of the Lord High Steward can be recognized as more of a position of prestige rather than a position of real power. However, they became regular creditors of King Sigismund, who was often short of money, and tried to enlarge their territories – even if only temporarily – by purchasing pledged lands.²³ Therefore they were considered an expressly wealthy family, since we can find them among the ten most significant landholders of the Hungarian Kingdom.²⁴ The possession of a significant amount of land did not enable them to increase the familiars of the family or to keep them in arms,²⁵ and lend considerable amounts of money. Such actions require a well-established administration and sufficient utilization of the lands in their possession. By looking at the lands of the family on a map it becomes evidently clear that the north-eastern estates had significant economic advantages.²⁶ As opposed to the extensive estates in the southern territories of the country where the leading economic sector was grain cultivation, it was not the case on the lands of the Perényi family. Vine cultivation began to spread in a massive scale at the beginning of the fifteenth century.²⁷

Grape-growing becomes especially profitable if one possesses lands along the routes where wine is transported. I had already pointed out in a former study that the Terebes branch of the Perényi family had authority over several larger customs houses on the Tokaj–Košice–Prešov–Sabinov–Stará–Ľubovňa–Kraków trade and military route. In addition to this, they

17 ENGEL, P. *Magyarország világi archontológiája...*, (Ispánok).

18 ZsO, vol. II, no. 2716.

19 Sztropkó (Stropkov) and Újvár (Nový hrad - Hanigovce): ZsO, 1956, vol. II, no. 7599.

20 ENGEL, P. *Magyarország világi archontológiája...*, (Masters of the Horse).

21 ENGEL, P. *Magyarország világi archontológiája...*, (Lord High Steward).

22 ENGEL, P. *Zsigmond bárói...*, pp. 434-435, 440-441.

23 Alsótelkes and Felsőtelkes were pledged for four hundred Forints on August 11, 1425. ZsO, vol. XII. no. 921-922. The castle of Fülek (Filakovo) was pledged for the first time on November 10, 1435. MNL OL DL 12 770.

24 ENGEL, Pál. A magyar világi nagybirtok megoszlása a XV. században 1 – 2. In: ENGEL, Pál. *Honor, vár, ispánság: Válogatott tanulmányok*. Ed. Csukovits Enikő. Budapest : Osiris, 2003, pp. 13-72.

25 István Perényi received a request from the city of Siena for fourteen horsemen in 1433, meaning he kept many familiars armed abroad. KOVÁCS, Péter E. *Zsigmond király Sienában*. Budapest : Corvina Kiadó, 2014, p. 212.

26 NOVÁK, Á. *Egy felső-magyarországi bárói...*, pp. 1-49.

27 FÜGEDI, Erik. Magyarország külkereskedelme a XVI. század elején. In: *Agrártörténeti Szemle*. Budapest : A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1969, pp. 9-10.

possessed customs houses on side routes and also market towns holding market rights.²⁸ Therefore they were able to profit from the trade which was mainly in the hands of the citizens. By doing so, the Perényi family inevitably came into contact with the citizens and the urban communities. This explains the decision of King Albert and Queen Elizabeth of Luxemburg who appointed János Perényi as Master of the Treasury in 1438.²⁹ János Rozgonyi, who also originated from the same area, had fulfilled this position³⁰ until his death in 1438, and the vacancy of the baron's seat came in handy for the king. Moreover, instead of appointing a member of the Rozgonyi family favoured by King Sigismund, they chose the member of a so far neglected family for this position who would be loyal to them in the future. We will see that this decision later played a crucial role in the life of Perényi.

The first cases as Treasurer

Besides receiving a seat in the council of King Albert, János Perényi also held the Court of Appeal of the cities and the office of the Treasurer. We have evidence that he presided over cases in such an assembly in the second year of his office. The representatives of Buda, Pest and Esztergom met in Buda on March 15, 1439 to hear judgement on a case between the city of Pest and István Kassai, a citizen of Pest. Although the charter survived in the archive of Bratislava, it describes a legal case between the city of Pest and a citizen of Pest.³¹ Even this early case indicates that in the period during which Perényi sat in the office, the Court of the Treasurer was always held in Buda. Therefore Buda was not only the seat of the king but was also prominent among the cities under the jurisdiction of the Treasurer. This can be related to the fact that when the barons were at the royal court, they were accessible for the citizens, who regularly sent representatives to the king.

This is the last judgement diploma that was issued in peacetime and testifies of the traditions of the Sigismund era. At the end of 1439 King Albert suddenly died without an heir, while leading a campaign against the Ottomans. The Hungarian orders had to decide about the succession. On January 18, 1440 a group of barons and noblemen elected Władysław III of Poland as king of Hungary (Vladislaus I).³² In order that Władysław could occupy the throne, they immediately sent a group of emissaries to Kraków and among the members of the emissaries we find Perényi as well.³³ The delegation moved slowly, they were only at Prešov on February 17. Perényi himself gives an account of that in a letter he wrote to the Cathedral Chapter of Eger concerning the case of the citizens of Prešov.³⁴ According to the letter there was a quarrel between the cities of Prešov and Bardejov, which is most probably the well-known linen bleaching lawsuit about which we will hear soon. Linen bleaching was the final process of making linen, which was being used to whiten and soften the material, taking away the roughness and yellowish colour caused by the vegetable fibre. Weavers could get material

28 Almost two dozen customs houses. NOVÁK, Á. *Egy felső-magyarországi bárói...*, p. 21.

29 He was first mentioned as Master of the Treasury on September 8, 1438. TELEKI, József. *Hunyadiak kora Magyarországon X*. Pest : Okmánytár, 1853, p. 23.

30 ENGEL, P. *Magyarország világi archontológiája...* (Masters of the Treasury).

31 MNL OL DF 239 718. Original: Štátny archív v Bratislave (hereinafter ŠA BA), fund Magistrát mesta Bratislava (hereinafter MMB), no. 1610. [cit. 15. 9. 2016]. Available on the Internet: <<http://monasterium.net/mom/SK-AMB/362/1610/charter>>.

32 MNL OL DF 289 005. Original: Archiwum Głównie Akt Dawnych w Warszawie, fund Zbior doc. perg. 5574.

33 MNL OL DF 289 005. Original: Archiwum Głównie Akt Dawnych w Warszawie, fund Zbior doc. perg. 5574.

34 MNL OL DF 213 043. Original: Štátny archív v Prešove (hereinafter ŠA PO), pracovisko Archív Bardejov (hereinafter AB), fund Magistrát mesta Bardejov (hereinafter MMB), no. 361. IVÁNYI, Béla. *Bártfa szabad királyi város levéltára. 1319–1526*. Budapest : Kiadja a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1910, no. 354.

of very good quality and high price by bleaching. That is why it was considered a privilege and not all weavers' guilds were allowed to perform this activity. The city of Bardejov gained a royal privilege for bleaching linen in 1420.³⁵ Flax and hemp necessary for the production of linen was cultivated throughout the Topoly-valley and transported to Bardejov. In 1450 a regulation was issued in German concerning the procedure linen bleachers were supposed to follow. They had a diverse trade network, but perhaps their most important partner was the city of Kraków. However, according to the literature, they transported linen to the Russian Empire as well as to Constantinople.³⁶

The smaller town of Prešov also wished to take part in the business, and although they did not have royal grant to perform this activity, it can clearly be seen that they had quarrels on the matter with the citizens of Bardejov even before 1440. The latter made a complaint before the Cathedral Chapter of Eger and the vicar initiated a procedure in the case. Perényi, who was at Prešov on February 17, warned the vicar that litigation between cities fell within the jurisdiction of the Master of the Treasury, meaning that he had no right to give any judgement on the matter. Therefore the citizens of Prešov presumably gave a warm welcome to János Perényi, the guardian of all the laws in connection with this office, and to his fellow emissaries. Since Perényi took a stand on legal matters only in written form, he did not regulate the city of Prešov which carried out unlawful activity, or at least we do not have any written evidence about this.

Perényi in the civil war

The delegation finally arrived at Kraków on March 8, Władystaw accepted the Hungarian throne and slowly took the way to Hungary and Buda. In the meantime, Queen Elisabeth gave birth to the son of King Albert, Ladislaus V (the Posthumous), who was shortly crowned as King of Hungary. In July the same year, Władystaw was also crowned king of Hungary in Székesfehérvár, hence the civil war began. It is important to point out which side the people standing in the focus of our investigation took. The Upper-Hungarian cities took the side of Queen Elisabeth and the newborn Ladislaus the Posthumous from the beginning.³⁷ Based on their support, and also guaranteeing it, Queen Elisabeth sent Czech mercenaries into the area to ensure her power primarily in the eastern parts. Commanding some 5.000 troops, Jan Jiskra pushed into the counties of Szepes, Sáros and Abaúj, and into the city of Košice.³⁸ From this point on for eighteen years the Upper-Hungarian cities – Košice, Bardejov, Kežmarok, Levoča – became the base and hinterland for Jiskra. The motivation of the cities is detailed in the literature.³⁹ However, the position János Perényi took is a lot more exciting topic to investigate. Our historians frequently came across with the contradiction that the Master of the Treasury, János Perényi was a member of the delegation that invited Władystaw to the throne, and that is why they positioned him on the side of Władystaw. Nevertheless, it is evident that the paths of Władystaw and Perényi parted on their way back from Kraków. We find only the younger János Perényi beside the Polish king in Buda. However, János Perényi

35 IVÁNYI, B. *Bártfa...*, no. 88.

36 TÓTH, Sándor. *Sáros vármegye monográfiája* [online]. Budapest : A vármegye költségén, 1909 – 1912, pp. 461-462. [cit. 15. 9. 2016]. Available on the Internet: <http://mek.oszk.hu/12800/12885/pdf/12885_3_3.pdf>.

37 PÁLÓSFALVI, Tamás. Jan Jiskra és a felvidéki városok. In: *Hadsereg, város, társadalom a 15. századtól 1918-ig (Mestá, kasárne a posádky na Slovensku v posledných desaťročiach pred prvou svetovou vojnou)*. Bratislava : Vojsenský historický ústav, 2002, pp. 31-32.

38 VACH, Miloslav. Jan Jiskra z Brandýsa a politický zápas Habsburků s Jagellovcí o Uhry v letech 1440 – 1442. In: *Historické štúdie* 3, 1957, pp. 172-227.

39 VACH, M. *Jan Jiskra z Brandýsa...*, pp. 172-227.

did place his seal on the poly-sigillic diploma that is in connection with the crowning of Władysław, just like the unequivocally oppositional László Garai, the Ban of Macsó, and Dénes Szécsi, the archbishop of Esztergom.⁴⁰ If he was to hope the rise of the country and that of his own from the young king in the future as well, he would have received donations from the Hungarian lands⁴¹ of the Serbian despot, György Brankovics (Đurađ Branković), as his fellow envoys, László Pálóci,⁴² János Kompolti and the sons of Péter Perényi, János and Miklós did.⁴³ Supposedly, at that time he was not even at Buda, but withdrew to his distant estates.

Although he was a rich and influential person in the region, he did not get any order from Władysław against Jiskra, which proves that János, as Master of the Treasury stayed away from the side of Władysław. We have every right to believe that in 1441 he must have met Jiskra, since on December 3, 1441 he lent 4.500 forints to his distant relative, János Perényi the younger, who was at that time the captive of Jiskra in return for the pledge of his relative's estates in Ugocsa county.⁴⁴ In February, 1442 he wrote from Füzér,⁴⁵ in March from Terebes to Bardejov.⁴⁶ Unfortunately, we do not have more detailed information of him; he still did not receive donations from Władysław and we cannot find him in the surroundings of the king. At the beginning of 1443 he issued a receipt in Terebes.⁴⁷ He did not issue charters on his own right from this point on. On July 13, 1443 his castellans from Stropkov, Miklós "Wargaw" and György "Demethe" asked for twenty mercenaries, chariots and siege machines from the city of Bardejov to use them against Simony Rozgonyi, the bishop of Eger.⁴⁸ They did not demand these on the orders of János Perényi, but on the orders of his wife, Katalin Kórógyi.⁴⁹ And this can only mean that in the absence of the head of the family, János, Master of the Treasury, his wife oversaw the estates of the Perényi family. The letter in question was dated after April 1443 when Talafus Chech captain raided Eger and later fell into captivity.⁵⁰ In a later donation letter from 1453 Ladislaus the Posthumous mentions amongst the virtues of Perényi that he stood beside him from the beginning, he even had to bear the burden of imprisonment.⁵¹ Consequently, it is probable that both Perényi and his familiares belonged to the raiding army of Talafus. Similarly to the cities, Perényi took a stand against Władysław.

This is demonstrated by the fact that on April 4, 1443 at latest Władysław appointed János Guti Ország as Master of the Treasury, who fulfilled this position until at least the April 18, 1444.⁵² In the treasurers' archontology of Imre Szentpétery Jr., he lists Perényi as Ladislaus

40 MNL OL DF 289 006. MNL OL 289 009. ENGEL, P. *Magyarország világi archontológiája...*, (VII. High orders and diet emissaries between 1439 and 1457. 1440C–D).

41 MNL OL DF 269 912.

42 MNL OL DF 212 066.

43 MNL OL DL 13 564. MNL OL DL 39 125.

44 MNL OL DL 70 896.

45 MNL OL DL 84 454.

46 MNL OL DF 213 069. IVÁNYI, B. *Bártfa...*, no. 380.

47 MNL OL DL 13 705.

48 MNL OL DF 213 095. IVÁNYI, B. *Bártfa...*, no. 406.

49 MNL OL DF 213 095. IVÁNYI, B. *Bártfa...*, no. 406; "(...) *exmittere Geneosae Dominae nostrae Catharinae conthorali Magnifici Ioannis de Peren (...)*".

50 NOVÁK, Ádám. Hadi események és résztvevői a Felső Részekben 1440 és 1445 között. – Azok a bizonyos „zavaros idők”. In: PÓSÁN, László – VESZPRÉMY, László (Eds.). *Elfeledett háborúk: Középkori csaták és várostromok (6 – 16. század)*. Budapest : Zrínyi Kiadó, 2016, pp. 320.

51 MNL OL DL 14 627.

52 ENGEL, P. *Magyarország világi archontológiája...*, (Masters of the Treasury).

the Posthumous' Master of The Treasury from 1441, while at the same place he lists Ország – although we must admit Mihály and not János – as Władysław's Treasurer.⁵³ This decision is understandable in the light of the fact that he could maintain a more favourable connection with the cities that were controlled by Ladislaus the Posthumous through Jiskra, and with which he probably had trade connections. Unfortunately, the account books of the cities do not mention whether the cities conducted business with Perényi or his familiares. Charters and letters did not survive either from this era. Another interesting fact is also worth mentioning: we do not find any letters in the archives of Košice written by or to Perényi either between 1440 and 1445 or while he was in office. However, the archives hold regular correspondence related to the holders of this office.⁵⁴ The reason for this is surely not that Perényi did not maintain connections with Košice, which was the closest city to his seat at Terebes and which was the most powerful city in the region. The absence of the letters might be due to the close proximity of the city. An envoy or representative of the city could regularly be found in the court of Perényi, or in his direct environment.

The second term of Perényi as Treasurer – The linen bleaching case

On June 30, 1445 Perényi once again held the office of the Master of the Treasury.⁵⁵ From this point on he is particularly active in his office, issuing altogether six judgement letters and exchanging nearly a dozen letters with the cities. The series of documents in connection with the aforementioned linen bleaching case can be arranged in a chronological order and several other letters can be added to these issued by other people but related to the same case. Almost two dozen documents survived about the lawsuit between the cities of Prešov and Bardejov just in the archives of these two cities. It is not an unsurprising particularity of this case that the archives of these cities hold only those documents which were issued in favour of the given city.

The first trial was held before the representatives of Levoča and Košice in November, 1446 where Prešov lost its case and appealed to the Treasurer.⁵⁶ In December János Perényi delayed further hearing on the matter⁵⁷ and on June 16, 1447, when he presided over the Court of the Master of the Treasury, he delayed the case again referring to the fact that only the king can sit in judgement on royal privileges, and Ladislaus the Posthumous was not in the country.⁵⁸ On this occasion, however, he dismissed the envoys with the decision that the city of Prešov can continue to perform its bleaching activity. The seriousness of the case is indicated by the fact that the lawyer of Prešov assaulted the lawyer of Bardejov. In the light of this, Perényi forbade the citizens of Prešov any kinds of conflict, but not bleaching linen.⁵⁹

Both the citizens of Bardejov and Prešov sought to obtain the judgement of the Court of Appeal. At first János Hunyadi delayed the case in 1447 until the return of the king.⁶⁰ As ispán of County Sáros, Jan Jiskra also took a stand in the case, prohibiting Prešov from

53 SZENTPÉTERY, I. Jr. *A tárnoki ítélőszék...*, p. 525.

54 Archív mesta Košice (hereinafter AMK), fund Collectio Schwartzbachiana (hereinafter CS). Three pieces from János Rozgonyi between 1434 and 1436. MNL OL DF 270 235. MNL OL DL 270 239. MNL OL DL 270 248.

55 MNL OL DF 270 275. AMK CS 235. Partial diet at Szina.

56 IVÁNYI, B. *Bártfa...*, no. 466.

57 IVÁNYI, Béla. *Eperjes szabad királyi város levéltára 1245 – 1526*. Szeged: Szeged Városi Nyomda és könyvkiadó R.-T, 1931, no. 309.

58 IVÁNYI, B. *Eperjes...*, no. 315.

59 IVÁNYI, B. *Eperjes...*, no. 318.

60 IVÁNYI, B. *Eperjes...*, no. 316, 319, 332.

performing this activity.⁶¹ The diet also postponed the case in 1448,⁶² and later gave orders to the County of Sáros to investigate it.⁶³ The investigation of the county stated that the city of Prešov always had the right to bleach linen.⁶⁴ Long after that, in 1456, following his return to the country, Ladislaus the Posthumous laid down in a judgement letter that since Prešov had previously received the rights of Buda, amongst which there is no privilege of linen bleaching, it is prohibited for the city to perform this activity.⁶⁵ In September Treasurer Perényi wrote a request to the king in which he asked for the privilege to be given to Prešov.⁶⁶ Next March the County of Sáros turned to the king for the same grant.⁶⁷

The surviving sporadic sources related to the case enable us to conclude that János Perényi had a certain interest in enabling Prešov to bleach linen, while it is clear from the sources that Bardejov did have the right to bleach and Prešov did not. The reason for this is that Perényi most probably had political and/or economic interest in supporting Prešov. Due to the lack of sources it is not possible to investigate the topic any further. Linen bleaching in Prešov was either beneficial for the nearby Perényi estates (Kučín, Novy hrad–Hanigovce, Svinica), or it increased the value of the customs duties related to these estates, especially in case of the customs at Prešov which was held by the estates in Sáros.

The Treasurer, as the organizer of the military actions against the “bratrics”

Although following the death of Władysław in 1444, the quest of Jan Jiskra to help Ladislaus the Posthumous to come to power became void, he was still able to retain his authority and influence in the territory. Since he could only pay his mercenaries with great difficulties, more and more of them distanced themselves from his direct control. These fighting units integrated adventuresome Czech and Polish mercenaries, and formed companies. They did not follow the political and religious ambitions of the Hussites, they simply practiced military activities income, they harassed urban merchants or besieged castles. The literature refers to these units as “bratrics”, or in other words “brothers”.⁶⁸ Perényi also had conflicts with them, as they captured the castle of Novy hrad–Hanigovce somewhere around 1447-8. To liberate the castle, he asked for help from the city of Bardejov on May 5, 1448.⁶⁹ We do not have any evidence about the outcome of the military action, but Perényi stood up for the citizens of Bardejov before the Governor.⁷⁰

During the governorship of Hunyadi, Perényi’s influence continued to rise and he took on more and more roles in the region. In the fall of 1448 he collected the taxes from the nobleman of Ung county,⁷¹ and in 1450 he sent an invitation to Bardejov so that its representatives could join the diet.⁷² Together with László Pálóci he wrote in the name of the Governor to the cities

61 TÓTH-SZABÓ, Pál. *A cseh-huszita mozgalmak és uralom története Magyarországon*. Budapest : Hornyánszky Viktor cs. és kir. udvari könyvnyomdája, 1917, pp. 229-230.

62 IVÁNYI, B. *Eperjes...*, no. 322.

63 IVÁNYI, B. *Eperjes...*, no. 324.

64 IVÁNYI, B. *Eperjes...*, no. 323.

65 IVÁNYI, B. *Eperjes...*, no. 869.

66 IVÁNYI, B. *Eperjes...*, no. 391.

67 IVÁNYI, B. *Eperjes...*, no. 397.

68 TÓTH-SZABÓ, P. *A cseh-huszita mozgalmak...*, pp. 235-236.

69 IVÁNYI, B. *Bártfa...*, no. 504.

70 IVÁNYI, B. *Bártfa...*, no. 528.

71 MNL OL DL 31 575–6.

72 IVÁNYI, B. *Bártfa...*, no. 560.

of Košice, Levoča, Prešov and Bardejov, and called on them to maintain their loyalty towards Ladislaus the Posthumous. In 1452 he took an oath with János Hunyadi when they signed a peace treaty with Jiskra.⁷³ In 1454 he held a meeting at his seat, hosting the noblemen of the region, the envoys of seven counties and that of some cities in order to clear the area of these mercenaries.⁷⁴ Two years later, in 1456, he was among the group of barons who were to discuss terms with Jan Talafus about the liberation of the provostry of Jászó (Jasov). For a certain sum, Talafus was willing to leave Jászó, and the barons put the provostry under the protection of Košice.⁷⁵ During the fall of the same year Perényi aimed at dissolving the conflict between the Polish mercenary leader, Péter Komorovszki and Jan Jiskra.⁷⁶ On April 13, 1457 he called the envoys of Bardejov to Terebes again to discuss how to restore peace in the region.⁷⁷

It is clear that Perényi actively participated in regional politics, and was continuously counting on the support of the cities. Although the medieval archives of Levoča and Kežmarok perished, based on the documents of Bardejov and Prešov we can reconstruct in which cases Perényi relied on the help of the cities. Primarily he gave them certain military assignments, and he asked for financial or political support. In return he stood up for them before the Governor, ensured their participation at the Court of the Master of the Treasury, at the regional conventions as well as at the diet.

Perényi's military activity was at its zenith in the summer of 1457, when, after the decapitation of László Hunyadi, the barons turned against each other once again. In this situation King Ladislaus the Posthumous, appointed Perényi to accompany Jiskra as captain of the upper lands. Already on August 7 he issued a letter as captain,⁷⁸ and also used this title when he made peace with Mihály Szilágyi on September 8.⁷⁹ Internal affairs altered again when Ladislaus the Posthumous died on November 23, 1457. The noblemen who assembled at Buda wrote letters to the cities at the end of November and at the beginning of December, naming János Perényi as the leader of this region.⁸⁰ The cities of Bardejov and Prešov expected further instructions from him, which was received by Bardejov on December 22: he summoned the envoys to Terebes for consultation.⁸¹

The Treasurer, as the judge

Meanwhile, the cities could count on their Treasurer at their Court of Appeal. Besides the bleaching case, he gave justice half a dozen times for the citizens of Buda and Pest.⁸² By passing the aforementioned charter of 1456, the largest cities (Buda, Košice, Bratislava, Trnava, Sopron, Prešov and Bardejov) were able to monopolize the office of the Treasurer, thus the group of the "Treasurer's cities" came into existence. Accordingly, Perényi played an important role in the development of urban law in Hungary. By the beginning of the

73 MNL OL DF 235 587.

74 MNL OL DL 31 664. *Hazai okmánytár*, vol. VII. no. 419.

75 MNL OL DF 270 319. AMK, CS 279. SPILKA, Lőrinc. *Jászó története 1243-tól 1552-ig*. Gödöllő: [s. n.], 1943, pp. 20-21.

76 IVÁNYI, B. *Bártfa...*, no. 896.

77 IVÁNYI, B. *Bártfa...*, no. 954.

78 IVÁNYI, B. *Eperjes...*, no. 402.

79 TÓTH-SZABÓ, P. *A cseh-huszita mozgalmak...*, pp. 416-418.

80 NOVÁK, Ádám. Levelek Budáról. Az országnagyok levelei a városoknak V. László halála után. In: GÁL, Judit – PÉTERFI, Bence – VADAS, András – KRANZIERITZ, Károly (Eds.). *Miccae Mediaevales III. Fiatal történészek dolgozatai a magyar középkorról és Európáról*. Budapest: ELTE BTK, 2013, pp. 153-166.

81 IVÁNYI, Béla. *Bártfa...*, no. 983.

82 E.g. MNL OL DL 14 074. MNL OL DL 70 900. MNL OL DF 240 179. MNL OL DL 106 096.

15th century the representatives of the cities at the Court of the Treasurer were pushed in the background by the judges of noble origin. In 1456, however, the representatives used Perényi's intervention to make the king pass an act which enabled the will of the citizens to predominate the Court of the Treasurer. Minor cities, like Esztergom, whose representatives could be influenced by the archbishop, were excluded from this circle. Furthermore, they stipulated that the meetings must be held in Buda, and not in the castle, but in the town, where the Treasurer or his deputy must maintain a house.⁸³ We can more or less determine whether or not the treasurer received any "remuneration", or "payments" above the fees for giving judgement at his court. Perényi received seventeen gulden as fee⁸⁴ from the city of Bratislava on March 21, 1456 and took 8 gulden as a yearly fee on March 28, 1458.⁸⁵ There is a great difference between the two amounts, as Imre Szentpétery also pointed out. The sum of the fee changed partially because of its own value – the gulden of Košice was not worth a hundred, but only fifty denarius – and partially due to the lack of regulation. If we accept the fact that all cities paid roughly the same fee for the Treasurer, then it adds up to 50-100 gulden per year, which is far from being a vast sum. Especially, if we also consider, that his deputy also had to be paid from this sum.⁸⁶

Summary

The above mentioned examples prove that during the nearly uninterrupted twenty years long activity of Perényi as Master of the Treasury, he had plenty of opportunities to get in contact with the cities. The fact that he was able to maintain his position during the civil war era and during the period characterized by the continuous threat from the "bratrics" implies that Ladislaus the Posthumous, Governor János Hunyadi, the noblemen and the communities of the cities all found Perényi suitable and qualified for fulfilling this position. He understood the needs of the cities, he was able to negotiate with them and together they worked out a legal regulation which proved to be a crucial guideline until the end of the century. Although he sometimes acted in his office as he saw fit, this does not reduce his aforementioned merits. As Master of the Treasury and landholder of the northeast, he always considered it very important to maintain and secure trade and production and this is why he mobilized significant forces against the raiding companies which obstructed the transportation of goods. He could rely on the experiences he gathered during the reign of King Sigismund, therefore he always had a position in the royal council, even if he did not belong to the topmost group of office holders. Due to these facts he established the future of his family, and although his son, István was neglected at the beginning of the reign of Matthias Hunyadi, owing to his connections, he did get the position of the Master of the Treasury in 1472 which he held until 1478.⁸⁷

83 FELHŐ, Ibolya. Buda elsősege a tárnoki városok között. In: *Tanulmányok Budapest Múltjából* 19, 1972, pp. 155-156.

84 MNL OL DF 240 353. Original: ŠA BA, MMB, No. 3079. [cit. 15. 9. 2016]. Available on the Internet: <<http://monasterium.net/mom/SK-AMB/362/3079/charter>>.

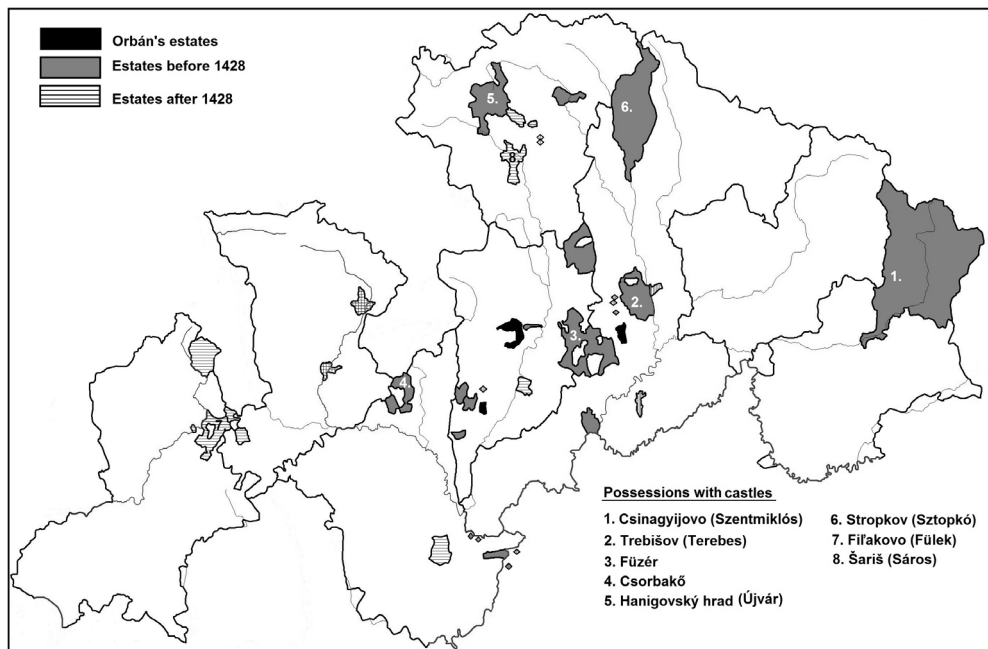
85 MNL OL DL 44 858.

86 SZENTPÉTERY, I. Jr. *A tárnoki ítélőszék...*, p. 564.

87 This article is supported by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences - University of Debrecen 'Lendület' Research Group 'Hungary in Medieval Europe'.

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Appendix 2
The estates of the Terebes branch of the Perényi family in 1465