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From Croatia to Transylvania: War, Migration, and Adaptive Strategies in the Case of the Perušić Family (15th-17th Centuries)

The article gives the history of the noble Croatian family of Perušić, following the life and career of its main male representatives across three generations, from its emergence in sources in the mid-15th century up until its extinction in the male line in 1603. All three men – Gaspar (Gašpar) the Elder, Gaspar the Younger, and Matthew (Mate) – had primarily military careers, leading cavalry units and fighting either the Turks or other Christian nobles in civil wars which burdened Croatia, Slavonia, Hungary, and Transylvania from the late 15th to the early 17th century. Gaspar the Elder was the vice-ban of Croatia-Dalmatia and is a relatively well-known figure in Croatian historiography, while the lives of his son and grandson are thoroughly researched for the first time in this article. Gaspar the Younger, initially a supporter of the Habsburgs, was fighting the Ottomans in Croatia until 1532, with significant success, and was later engaged in civil strife in Slavonia, changing the sides he supported several times. He finally opted for King John Zápolya around 1538 and migrated to Zápolya's realm, settling finally in Transylvania, where he gained many estates and served several *de jure* and *de facto* rulers, including another fellow Croat – the bishop of Oradea, George Martinuzzi (Juraj Utišenović Martinušević). His son Matthew, the last male member of this line of the Perušić family, spent his lifetime as a military commander for various Transylvanian rulers, almost always joining the winning side in the conflict and gaining the house in the informal capital – Alba Iulia. He died in a battle in 1603, survived by his sisters' (Catherine's and Anna's) descendants.

Keywords: Gaspar (Gašpar) Perušić the Elder, Gaspar (Gašpar) Perušić the Younger, Matthew (Mate) Perušić, Perušić family, Croatia, Transylvania, nobility, migrations, early modern warfare

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Introduction

Land donations and office holding generated a constant process of mobility among the nobles of the medieval Hungarian Kingdom. This process was intensified during the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th century, in the context of the Ottoman expansion in the Balkans and the increased military pressure on the southern borders of the Kingdom.¹ War, with its dangers, but also its opportunities of social and material gain, was an important factor that encouraged the migration of individuals and communities. Thus, a considerable number of nobles and commoners from the southern parts of the Realm of Saint Stephen or from beyond its borders migrated towards the eastern parts of the Kingdom, Transylvania and the Banat region. Settled in their new homes, they played an important role in the political events that reshaped these parts of Europe.²

Among the prominent representatives of this migratory process were members of the Perušić (Hungarian: Perusics, Latin: Perusith) family originating from the Kingdom of Croatia. This article will first shed light on the career of the patriarch of the branch of this family, who ultimately went to Transylvania – Gaspar the Elder – who has already been studied in Croatian historiography, although not thoroughly. Then it will focus on the life and deeds of his son, Gaspar the Younger, who opted for King John Zápolya and permanently relocated to the easternmost part of the realm. Finally, an extensive chapter will be dedicated to the descendants of Gaspar the Younger in Transylvania, the most important being his son Matthew. In such a way, the readers will obtain a complete insight into the history of three generations of a Croatian noble family during the period of Ottoman threat, which affected its members wherever they settled. Although

¹ Borislav Grgin, *Počeci rasapa. Kralj Matijaš Korvin i srednjovjekovna Hrvatska* (Zagreb: Ibis grafika, 2002), 115-125, 171-186.

² On the migrations of the Croatian nobility see: Ivan Jurković, “Klasifikacija hrvatskih raseljenika za trajanja osmanske ugroze (od 1463. do 1593.)”, *Migracijske i etničke teme* 19 (2003), no. 2-3: 147-174; Ivan Jurković, “Socijalni status i prisilni raseljenici podrijetlom iz hrvatskih plemićkih obitelji u zemljama njihovih doseoba za trajanja osmanske ugroze”, *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 23 (2005): 63-85; Ivan Jurković, “Osmanska ugroza, plemeniti raseljenici i hrvatski identitet”, *Povijesni prilozi* 25 (2006), no. 31: 39-69; Ivan Jurković, “Demografska kriza u razdoblju protuosmanskih ratova: ugarski i hrvatski velikaši i priti”, in: *Prekretnice u suživotu Hrvata i Mađara: Ustanove, društvo, gospodarstvo i kultura*, eds. Pál Fodor, Dinko Šokčević, Jasna Turkalj, Damir Karbić (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet and Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2015), 294-301; Ivan Jurković, “Migracije. Raseljenička kriza za osmanske ugroze: 'U baščini mojoj ne dadu mi priti'”, in: *Vrijeme sazrijevanja, vrijeme razaranja: Hrvatske zemlje u kasnome srednjem vijeku*, ed. Marija Karbić (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2019), 99-113. Also see: Ildikó Horn, “Magyar végvári tisztek erdélyi karrierlehetőségei a 16. század második felében”, in: *Hagyomány és megújulás – Életpályák és társadalmi mobilitás a végváriak körében*, eds. Gábor Veres, Mátyás Berecz (Eger: Heves Megyei Múzeumi Szervezet, 2008), 103.

a case study, it may serve as a paradigm for wider research concerning the issues of nobility, identity, military service, office-holding, and cultural adaptation.

Gaspar Perušić the Elder and His Kindred

Gaspar/Gašpar³ Perušić the Younger stemmed from a line of lower, provincial Croatian nobility that rose to prominence during the last quarter of the 15th century – the period of gradual Ottoman advance towards the westernmost parts of the Balkans. According to Vjekoslav Klaić, the Perušići were a family or a branch of a noble kindred (Klaić thought they were a *hiža* i.e. “house”) originating from the county of Pset in the Kingdom of Croatia, part of the Realm of Saint Stephen. Pset (*Pesenta*) is mentioned among the Croatian administrative units (*župe*, roughly translated as counties) in the work *De administrando imperio* attributed to the Byzantine emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (r. 913 – 959).⁴ It was located east of the mountain Plješevica and the river Una, and west of the mountains Grmeč and Srnetica. The centre of the county was in the present-day plains called Petrovačko and Bravsko polje, which belong to the municipality of Bosanski Petrovac in the western part of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Medieval Pset probably comprised some settlements that now belong to the neighbouring municipalities – Bihać, Bosanska Krupa, and Drvar, all of which are now on the Bosnian side of the Croatian-Bosnian border.

Klaić believed that all known noble families of the county of Pset belonged to the same *generatio* (kindred) called the Kolunići. Yet, that is only confirmed for the Mišljenović branch, while the Oršići of Drinić and the Perušići of Bilić may or may not have been members of the same *generatio* since there is no direct reference to it.⁵ In fact, it is rather improbable that all the nobles of Drinić (*Udrinich*) were Oršići. The same applies for the assumption that all the nobles of Bilić (*Bylich*) were Perušići. It is quite possible that the Perušići were not a branch of the Kolunići (or any other) noble kindred, but just one of the families based in the village of Bilić, originally with the status of *iobagiones*, whose members (namely, the line of Gaspar Perušić the Elder) rose to prominence through military service to the magnate family of Frankapan (and, possibly, to the counts of Krbava). The first individually mentioned Perušić was a certain Peter/Petar Perušić in 1435

³ When mentioned for the first time, the English form of a name will be followed by a local (Croatian or Hungarian) variant, after the slash.

⁴ Vjekoslav Klaić, “Županija Pset (Pesenta) i pleme Kolunić (Prilog za historiju diaspore hrvatskih plemena)”, *Vjesnik Hrvatskog arheološkog društva* 15 (1928): 1-5; *Constantine Porphyrogenitus De administrando imperio*, ed. Gyula Moravcsik, trans. Romilly James Heald Jenkins (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1967), 144-145.

⁵ Klaić, “Županija Pset,” 3-12.

and 1437,⁶ while the first mention of the same family was in 1437, when *Petrus, Georgius, Franko*, and *Blasius Perusich de Bylich* were mentioned as witnesses during the introduction of Catharine/Katarina Frankapan and her son George/Juraj to the possession of the castle of Ermen/Rmanj and the district of Lapac.⁷ As stated before, from the noble predicate *de Bylich* we can assume that they were probably originating from the village or estate called Bilić, which no longer exists under that name. V. Klaić argued, rather unconvincingly, that it could have been a synonym for the fortified town of Belaj or Bilaj (present-day Bjelaj in the municipality of Bosanski Petrovac).⁸ In 1468, a certain Dominic/Dominik Perušić was mentioned as a servant of John/Ivan Kurjaković, son of Thomas/Tomaš, count of Krbava. There is no direct indication that he was a brother of Gaspar the Elder, although such assertions have been made in some publications on the region of Lika, nor that he was the founder of the Perušić fort in the county of Bužani, first mentioned in 1487. He could have, however, easily been Gaspar's kinsman.⁹

Afterwards, the most notable member of the family was Gaspar Perušić the Elder, who was, during his career, vice-ban of Croatia-Dalmatia, count of the county of Bužani (also known as the Buška county, which roughly encompassed the present-day municipality of Perušić¹⁰), castellan of the castle of Ermen (near the present-day village of Martin Brod in Bosnia and Herzegovina), etc. According to the Austrian chronicle of Jakob Unrest, on 29-30 October 1483, Gaspar was among the commanders who successfully fought against the Turks near the fort of Zrin on the river Una.¹¹ On 1 March 1484, he was mentioned as the "deputy

⁶ Lajos Thallóczy, Samu Barabás, eds., *A Frangepán család oklevéltára*, vol. I: 1133-1453 (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1910), 267, 299-300.

⁷ Klaić, "Županija Pset", 9-10.

⁸ Vjekoslav Klaić, ed., *Acta Keglevichiana annorum 1322-1527. Najstarije isprave porodice Keglevića do boja na Muhačkom polju* (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1917), XXXVI.

⁹ Šime Ljubić, *Listine o odnošajih između južnoga Slavenstva i Mletačke Republike*, vol. X (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1891), 416, doc. CCCCXXXVII; Emilij Laszowski, *Hrvatske povjesne gradjevine: mjestopisni i povjesni opisi gradova, kula, samostana, crkava i drugih povjesnih gradjevina domovine Hrvata* (Zagreb: Naklada autorova, 1902), 11; Rudolf Horvat, *Lika i Krbava: povijesne slike, crtice i bilješke*, vol. II (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1941), 99-101; Mislav Elvis Lukšić, "Pogranični prijepori između mletačkih vlasti i knezova Krbavskih u drugoj polovini XV. stoljeća", *Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Zadru* 46 (2004): 217.

¹⁰ Vjekoslav Klaić, "Građa za topografiju Ličko-krbavske županije u srednjem vijeku", *Vjesnik Hrvatskog arheološkog društva* 6 (1902): 15-23.

¹¹ Simon Friedrich Hahn, ed., *Collectio monumentorum veterum et recentium ineditorum ad codicum fidem restitutorum, selectiorum et rariorum, diplomatum nempe, sigillorum, litterarum, chronicorum aliorumque insignium scriptorum, antiquitates, geographiam, historiam omnem ac nobiliores iuris partes haud mediocriter illustrantium*, vol. I (Braunschweig: Friedrich Wilhelm Meyer, 1724), 689-690; Vjekoslav Klaić, *Povjest Hrvata od najstarijih vremena do svršetka XIX. stoljeća*, vol. II, Part III (= II/3) (Zagreb: Knjižara L. Hartmana, 1904), 135-136; Vjekoslav Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata od najstarijih vremena do svršetka XIX. stoljeća*, vol. IV (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1988), 165-167.

of Matthew Geréb of Vingart, ban of Croatia-Dalmatia and Slavonia”,¹² while a document of 14 July 1484 mentions Gaspar as the “*porcolabus* of Ermen”.¹³

At a certain point in time, probably before 1487, three members of the Perušić family – Peter, Gaspar, and Matthew/Matko (Mate) – received two castles (i.e. fortified towns) in Vrhovine of the county of Gacka (Stari Perušić, present-day Vrhovine near Otočac) and in Vrhovine of the county of Bužani (present-day Perušić near Gospić) from the Croatian magnate John-Hans/Ivan-Anž Frankapan. The latter castle, first mentioned in 1487 (as “the castle of the Perušići”), named after the family, is still called Perušić (it is now a small town and a seat of municipality in Croatia, north of the regional centre – the town of Gospić).¹⁴ When Peter Perušić died, John-Hans Frankapan renewed this donation to Gaspar, Matthew, and Peter’s son John in 1495.¹⁵

Gaspar was among the 63 Croatian and Slavonian nobles who, during an assembly held in Buda, issued a charter on 7 March 1492, confirming and supporting the stipulations of the Peace of Pozsony, acknowledging the right of Maximilian of Habsburg to ascend the Hungarian and, likewise, Croatian throne should Vladislaus II or his son die without legitimate heirs.¹⁶ His seal with the family’s coat-of-arms is preserved on the charter. According to heraldic research, the motif on the seal is a (golden) lion on a (silver) shield.¹⁷

After the disastrous Croatian defeat by the Ottomans in the battle of Krbava in September 1493, in which Ban Emeric Derencsényi/Emerik Derenčin was captured, Gaspar, still the vice-ban, took over the defence of Croatia. The bishop of Nin (Latin: Nona), George Divnić, came to the area. He was asked by Gaspar to

¹² Klaić, *Povjest Hrvata*, II/3, 145; Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, IV, 177; Đuro Šurmin, ed., *Hrvatski spomenici: od godine 1100-1499* (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1898), 294-296; Stjepan Ivšić, Josip Bratulić, Zoran Ladić, ed., *Hrvatske glagoljične i ćirilčne isprave iz zbirke Stjepana Ivšića 1100.-1527.* (Zagreb: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 2017), 227.

¹³ Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, ed., *Acta Croatica – Listine Hrvatske* (Zagreb: Narodna tiskara dra Ljudevita Gaja, 1863), 120, doc. CVII; Šurmin, *Hrvatski spomenici*, 296-297; Ivšić, Bratulić, Ladić, *Hrvatske glagoljične i ćirilčne isprave*, 230.

¹⁴ Šurmin, *Hrvatski spomenici*, 328-329; Klaić, “Građa za topografiju”, 19; Stjepan Pavičić, “Seobe i naselja u Lici”, *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje južnih Slavena* 41 (1962): 70-73, 94-95. The “castle of the Perušići” was mentioned several times in the sources as the location of decision-making, and once as the seat of the “judicial table” of the county of Bužani in 1504. See: Kukuljević Sakcinski, *Acta Croatica*, 187-188, doc. CLXXIV; Klaić, “Građa za topografiju”, 21.

¹⁵ Lajos Thallóczy, Samu Barabás, eds., *A Frangepán család oklevéltára*, vol. II: 1454-1527. *Hamis oklevelek. 1209-1481* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1913), 218-219; Gjuro Szabo, *Sredovječni gradovi u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1920), 203.

¹⁶ Klaić, *Povjest Hrvata*, II/3, 183; Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, IV, 220-221, 444-446; Laszowski, *Hrvatske povjesne gradjevine*, 11; Horvat, *Lika i Krbava*, II, 99-101.

¹⁷ Ivan von Bojničić, *Der Adel von Kroatien und Slavonien* (Nürnberg: Verlag von Bauer und Raspe, 1899), 231, Taf. 169; Enver Ljubović, *Grbovi plemstva Gacke i Like* (Rijeka: Adamić, 2001), 148-149.

write a letter to Pope Alexander VI with a report on the battle and a plea for help, which he did.¹⁸ As the effective governor of Croatia-Dalmatia, Gaspar also sought help from the Croatian and Hungarian nobility and the commune of Dubrovnik (Ragusa).¹⁹ The authorities of Dubrovnik wrote to King Vladislaus II on 17 October 1493 that they had helped Vice-ban Gaspar, secretly, by giving him 500 ducats to reinforce Croatian castles and suburbs.²⁰ Afterwards, they sent envoys to the Hungarian king, instructing them to detract 500 ducats from the 9-year tribute they owed to Hungary because of the help given to Gaspar Perušić in 1493, for which they had his receipt.²¹ This service of the Ragusans was recognised by King Vladislaus II in 1502, when he issued his own receipt after receiving the tribute.²² Taking his efforts into account, Gaspar the Elder may have been the person hiding under the “Perazović” mentioned in early Croatian epic poetry as a staunch fighter against the Turks.²³

The treasury of King Vladislaus II noted in 1495 that it had given 30 florins to “egregio Caspar Perusyth pro conservatione castris sui Belay dati sunt 30 fl.”²⁴ The *castrum Belay* is in today’s village of Bjelaj (municipality of Bosanski Petrovac) mentioned above. In 1505, Belay was already in the hands of Beatrice/Beatrica Frankapan, widow of John Corvinus, the late duke of Croatia-Dalmatia, and her castellan Dujam Orlovčić. On the other hand, in December 1505, Gaspar Perušić was Beatrice’s castellan in the castle of Ostrovica (today in Podastrana near Perušić) in the county of Bužani, pledging his allegiance to her.²⁵ An unpublished

¹⁸ Klaić, *Povjest Hrvata*, II/3, 191; Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, IV, 230; Emilij Laszowski, ed., *Znameniti i zaslužni Hrvati te pomena vrijedna lica u hrvatskoj povijesti od 925-1925* (Zagreb: Hrvatski štamparski zavod, 1925), 63.

¹⁹ Klaić, *Povjest Hrvata*, II/3, 194-195; Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, IV, 233-236.

²⁰ József Gelcich, Lajos Thallóczy, eds., *Raguza és Magyarország összeköttetéeseinek oklevéltára* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1887), 652; Vinko Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808.*, vol. I (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1980), 322-323; Bariša Krekić, “Odjek bitke na Krbavskom polju (1493) u Dubrovniku”, *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Dubrovniku* 27 (1989): 88-89.

²¹ Gelcich, Thallóczy, *Raguza és Magyarország*, 666-667.

²² János Luczenbacher, “Oklevelés toldalék”, *Tudománytár közre bocsátja a Magyar Tudós Társaság* 1 (1837): 155-156; Jovan Radonić, *Dubrovačka akta i povelje*, vol. II/1 (Beograd: Srpska kraljevska akademija, 1935), 50-51, 58-59.

²³ Josip Kekez, prir. *Bugaršćice: starinske hrvatske narodne pjesme* (Split: Čakavski sabor, 1978), 130.

²⁴ Lajos Thallóczy, *Jajca (bánság, vár és város) története* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1915), 118; András Kubinyi, “Logisztikai kérdések a Mohács előtti magyar hadszervezetben”, in: *Az értelem bátorsága. Tanulmányok Perjés Géza emlékére*, ed. Gábor Hausner (Budapest: Argumentum, 2005), 443.

²⁵ Thallóczy, Barabás, *A Frangepán család oklevéltára*, II, 263-264; Pavičić, “Seobe i naselja u Lici”, 53; Ivan Jurković, “Raseljena plemićka obitelj za osmanske ugroze: Primjer Berislavića de Werhreka de Mala Mlaka. Dio prvi – Stjepan Berislavić Vrhrički i Malomlački”, *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 20 (2002): 137.

document from 18 August 1502 (see document no. 1 in the appendix), issued by Gaspar himself (styled as *Gaspar Perwsych de Belay*) states that John Corvinus, duke and ban of Croatia, Dalmatia, and Slavonia, pledged his castle of Ostrovica in Bužani to Gaspar for 2000 golden florins and a promise of service. If Gaspar failed in his service, the castle would be taken from him without refund. On the other hand, if Duke John died, his heir could redeem the castle for 1000 instead of 2000 florins. He did die in 1504, but, as we saw earlier, he transferred his allegiance to John's widow and kept the castle.²⁶ Two documents of Gaspar the Elder from September 1497, in which he is still mentioned as vice-ban of Croatia and Dalmatia, residing in the Lab fortress in Knin, suggest that, contrary to the information usually found in historiography, he was not vice-ban only from 1484 to 1493, but up until 1497 and most probably even for a somewhat longer period.²⁷

It is believed that Gaspar had some ties with the Kurjaković family – the counts of Krbava, and that he was also active in the hinterland of Zadar, in the county of Luka, where a small castle called Perušić still exists in the vicinity of the town of Benkovac (today it is in the village called Perušić Benkovački). In view of Sannudo's information about the family ties of Gaspar the Younger (which will be discussed later), it seems that the connection with the Kurjakovići is a correct assumption, unlike the hypothesis that the Perušić family originated from the hinterland of Zadar. In this regard, it should be mentioned once again that a certain Dominic Perušić was mentioned in 1468 as a servant of Count John of Krbava.²⁸

In 1501, there was an ongoing lawsuit between Gaspar Perušić the Elder and the current vice-ban, Marčinko (Martinko) Jezdarić of Duvno and Predrihovo.²⁹ A certain Bartholomew/Bartul of *Bylich* from Pset (possibly a cousin of Perušić, and certainly originating from the same village/estate as him) was among the witnesses. An extensive document about the investigation conducted on 18 and 21 August 1501 in the counties of Lika and Bužani by the chapter of Senj and a *homo regius* reports that more than 200 nobles of the above-mentioned counties swore that Vice-ban Marčinko had unrightfully verbally attacked Gaspar

²⁶ Hungary (hereafter: HU) – Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, Budapest (hereafter: MNL OL) – Diplomatikai Levéltár: Mohács Előtti Gyűjtemény – Q szekció (hereafter: DL) 37741. Interestingly, the preserved seal does not seem to match the motif from Gaspar's seal from 1492. The impression of the signet ring in wax is small and rather shallow. It does not resemble a lion, but rather a tree, possible with a snake around it.

²⁷ Croatia – Hrvatski državni arhiv, Zagreb – fond 25 – Ugarska dvorska komora. Hrvatske plemićke obitelji i vlastelinstva (Neoregistrata acta), no. 316, 035; HU-MNL OL-DL 33109; Mladen Ančić, "Parba za dio nasljeđa banovca Jakova Šubića Bribirskog", *Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Zadru* 36 (1994): 328-329.

²⁸ Ljubić, *Listine*, X, 416, doc. CCCCXXXVII.

²⁹ On Marčinko (Martinko), see: Tamás Pálosfalvi, *The Noble Elite in the County of Körös (Križevci) 1400-1526* (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont. Történettudományi Intézet, 2014), 252-253, 425-426, 460.

Perušić (the Elder), accusing him of being disloyal to John-Hans VIII Frankapan and calling him “son of a whore” (using this particular expression literally).³⁰ It is probable that this rather common insult was said in Marčinko’s fit of anger, without any deeper subcontext concerning Gaspar’s family or origin.

On 21 October 1502, King Vladislaus II ordered the chapter of Senj to introduce Nicholas/Nikola Kolunić, *magister agazonum*, to the possession of Stokolić and Orlić in the district of Gacka, which belonged to the royal castle of Otočac. Among the possible noble witnesses from the region, there is a mention of Gaspar Perušić (the Elder).³¹ On 3 February 1504, *knez* Andrew/Andrija Blažičević gave a plot of gardening land to Vidas Štefnić from Korenica “after being asked to do so by *knez* Gaspar Perušić and *knez* Stephen/Stjepan Martinušević”.³² Gaspar the Elder died in Zadar on 10 January 1507, leaving behind two underage sons – Gaspar the Younger and Gregory/Grgur.³³ A certain Dujam Perišić (sic!) was mentioned as a *knez* in the county of Bužani in 1512, but we do not believe that he was a member of the same kindred, since his surname has a different root (Periša instead of Peruša).³⁴

At the time of Gaspar the Elder’s death, his nephew John Perušić was in Hungary and there are mentions of his other cousins, also sons of Peter Perušić. John was among the members of the personal guard of the Croatian ban Peter Berislavić (died in 1520), same as the famous Peter Kružić, who eventually became the hero of the defence of Klis and the leader of the *uskoks* of Senj.³⁵

The Early Age of Gaspar the Younger

The exact year and birthplace of Gaspar the Younger are not known. Since it was stated that he was young at the time of his father’s death in 1507, he was probably no more than 15 years of age, or even less. Therefore, a safe assumption would

³⁰ Ante Gulin, *Hrvatski srednjovjekovni kaptoli: loca credibilia Dalmacije, Hrvatskog primorja, Kvarnerskih otoka i Istre* (Zagreb: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 2008), 326; Kukuljević Sakcinski, *Acta Croatica*, 182-183, doc. CLXVII; Ivšić, Bratulić, Ladić, *Hrvatske glagoljične i ćirilične isprave*, 365-376.

³¹ Mile Magdić, “Petnaest izprava, koje se čuvaju u arhivu senjskoga kaptola”, *Vjestnik Kr. hrvatsko-slavonsko-dalmatinskog zemaljskog arhiva* 3 (1901): 54-55.

³² Kukuljević Sakcinski, *Acta Croatica*, 185, doc. CLXXI.

³³ Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, “Izvjestje o putu kroz Dalmaciju u Napulj i Rim s osobitim obzirom na slavensku književnost, umjetnost i starine”, *Arkiv za povjestnicu jugoslavensku* 4 (1857): 372; Ivan Črnčić, *Dvie razprave: Slovinski sveti Jerolim u Rimu a Rieka i Drugo je Senj a drugi Segni* (Trst: [Ivan Črnčić], 1868), 18; Karlo pl. Horvat, “Glagolitica Vaticana: nekoliko prinosa glagolskim spomenicima što se čuvaju u Rimu”, *Starine Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 33 (1911): 515.

³⁴ Kukuljević Sakcinski, *Acta Croatica*, 202, doc. CXCVI; Klaić, “Građa za topografiju”, 21.

³⁵ Klaić, *Povjest Hrvata*, II/3, 288; Klaić, *Povjest Hrvata*, IV, 344.

be that he was born in the 1490s, most probably after the battle of Krbava. There have been assertions in historiography that he was born in Skradin (Latin: Scardona) and that he was a nephew of George Martinuzzi/Juraj Utišenović Martinušević, who later became the bishop of Oradea/Veliki Varadin, cardinal, and governor of the part of the Hungarian Realm which belonged to John Zápolya/Ivan Zapolja. However, the author of these assertions did not name the source from which they were drawn.³⁶ It is more likely that Gaspar the Younger was connected to Martinuzzi's family through marriage to the Bartaković branch of the Utišenović family.³⁷ In Hungarian historiography, it has been speculated that Gaspar the Younger was married to Martinuzzi's sister or first cousin Catherine, or that he and Tamás Mihályfi were married to two daughters of Bartak Utišenović.³⁸

The only data explicitly mentioned in the sources links Gaspar the Younger with the Kurjaković family of the counts of Krbava. Namely, during his actions against the Turks in 1532, Sanudo's diaries first note that he was a nephew of John, count of Krbava, and then style him as Gaspar Perušić of Krbava.³⁹ The second notion may be imprecise, but the first one should seriously be taken into account since Sanudo was rather well informed. Which John of Krbava was Gaspar's maternal uncle (since it could not have been paternal)? The obvious choice would fall on Count John Torquatus Karlović, at that time recently deceased (in 1531), the last male member of the line and ban of Croatia. However, historiography (at least at present) states that he had three sisters – one of them was married to Count Zrinski and inherited all the estates of the Kurjaković family, and none of them was married to Gaspar the Elder. Yet, it is possible that the sources just did not mention the fourth sister. The other John, count of Krbava, was son of Thomas, but he died as early as in 1469 and it seems unlikely that he was Gaspar the Younger's uncle. Yet, he was the one who had a Perušić in his service, as it was stated earlier.⁴⁰

³⁶ Kálmán Juhász, *A Csanadi Püspökség Története (1500-1552)* (Makó: Csanád Vármegeye Közönsége, 1947), 85, note 28.

³⁷ Bartak Utišenović (Utišenić) was, most likely, a paternal uncle of Martinuzzi. Ančić, "Parba", 334.

³⁸ Iván Nagy, *Magyarország családai czimerekkel és nemzékrendi táblákkal*, vol. XI (Pest: Ráth Mór, 1865), 420-421; Géza Kathona, *Fejezetek a török hódoltsági reformáció történetéből* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1974), 215, note 305; Adriano Papo, Gizella Nemeth Papo, *Frate Giorgio Martinuzzi: Cardinale, soldato e statista dalmata agli albori del Principato di Transilvania* (Canterano: Arcane editrice, 2017), 24, note 5.

³⁹ Marino Sanudo, "Izvodi za jugoslavensku poviest iz dnevnika Marina ml. Sanuda za g. 1526-1533. (Nastavak, 1532.)", ed. Franjo Rački, *Starine Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 21 (1889): 158, 166-167; *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto*, vol. LVI (Venezia: Visentini, 1901), 467, 617.

⁴⁰ More on the Kurjaković family in: Ivan Botica, "Krbavski knezovi u srednjem vijeku" (PhD dissertation, University of Zagreb, 2011), passim.

There are some other data that point out to the connection between the Kurjaković and Perušić families, although the latter was mainly connected with the provincial governors appointed by the king and the Frankapan family. We have already mentioned that the Perušić family was usually linked to the small fort of Perušić near Benkovac, which was in the area controlled by the counts of Krbava. The fact that the first military actions of Gaspar the Younger against the Turks were conducted in that region and that his base was in Bag (Latin: Scrisa, present-day Karlobag), a town belonging to Count John Karlović of Krbava, suggests his tight connections with the Kurjaković family, at least by service. Finally, among the beneficiaries of the testament of John Perušić, Gaspar's first cousin, registered in Venice in 1527, there are not only members of the Perušić family, but also some men belonging to the retinue of John Karlović.

There is a gap between 1507 and 1525 in which there is no information concerning the whereabouts of Gaspar the Younger, while his brother Gregory is no longer mentioned at all. An unsuccessful Turkish attack on the Perušić fort in the hinterland of Zadar was recorded in 1514 with no notion if any member of the Perušić family was there at the time or involved in the matter.⁴¹ A document of 28 October 1514, issued by the members of the "judicial table" of the counties of Lika and Bužani, testifies about the rights deriving from the lease of mills in the area. The judges concluded that one bank of the stream was the possession of the Perušići, while the other belonged to Count John Frankapan of Cetin. The involved Perušići were not mentioned by name.⁴²

There is no direct mention of Gaspar the Younger serving under the captaincy of Senj, which was founded by King Matthias Corvinus as a centre of defensive and, eventually, offensive actions of the Realm against the Ottomans. Yet, his military experiences might have started there. His first known action took place in February 1525 and was recorded in Sanudo's diaries.⁴³ The data comes from the reports sent to the Venetian government by the communes of Pag (on 28 February) and Zadar (on 12 March). According to the reports, the two first cousins, Gaspar and John Perušić, conducted a raid on the Turkish fort of Skradin and its vicinity, capturing a substantial booty that consisted of many horses and prisoners (including a son of Damjan Klokočić,⁴⁴ a former castellan of Ostrovica in the county of Luka, who had surrendered his fort to the Turks and become an

⁴¹ Klaić, *Povjest Hrvata* II/3, 258; Klaić, *Povjest Hrvata*, IV, 308.

⁴² Ivšić, Bratulić, Ladić, *Hrvatske glagoljične i ćiriljične isprave*, 424-426.

⁴³ Marino Sanudo, "Odnosaji skupnovlade mletačke prema južnim Slavenom. Produženje od g. 1517. do 1525.", ed. Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, *Arkiv za povjesnicu jugoslavensku* 8 (1865): 196-199; *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto*, vol. XXXVIII (Venezia: Visentini, 1893), 54, 63-64, 76-78.

⁴⁴ Sanudo writes *Conclusich*, but there is no doubt that this refers to Klokočić, connected by marriage with the (by then) deceased *vlach* vojvode Kožul, who fought against the Turks in the county of Luka (in the hinterland of Zadar).

Ottoman subject and voivode). Soon after the raid, the Perušići and the Turkish authorities in Skradin wanted to make an arrangement that would include the release of prisoners and animals (on 6 or 7 February), but the Venetian authorities in Zadar did not want the exchange to take place in their territory, fearing that the Turks would consider that as a sign of help given to the Christian units from Croatia. The original plan was therefore abandoned and the Perušići brought most of the booty, along with the best 50-60 horses, with themselves to Bag. The Turkish castellan in Skradin, as well as Damjan Klokočić, wanted to reciprocate and conceived a counterattack. Although Count John of Posedarje, the castellan of Obrovac, promptly came to Bag to warn the Perušići, they failed to react swiftly. In the morning of 27 February 1525, a sudden Turkish and *martolos* raid (which consisted of 400 or 4,000 soldiers, since the reports differ) attacked Bag, pillaged it, set a part of the town on fire and captured around 300 Christian souls, including Gaspar and John Perušić, nobleman Gregory Banić, and John of Posedarje.⁴⁵ The Venetian communes assessed the attitude of the Perušići in the wake of the attack as imprudent, but also expressed regrets to the fact of their captivity, since they were valiant and effective anti-Ottoman fighters.

There is no information on how the Perušići were released, but they were probably ransomed or exchanged that same year, since John Perušić, son of Peter, moved to Venice soon and became a silk merchant. He kept contact with his homeland and the nobility, including his cousin Gaspar Perušić the Younger. In his testament composed in 1527, John left many of his belongings to his friends and kin in both Venice and Croatia (from the Mogorović kindred and, as it has already been mentioned, from the retinue of John Karlović of Krbava).⁴⁶ John, styled as *egregius*, was, together with another nobleman Gaspar Križanić, recommended to Ferdinand I by the queen-widow Mary of Hungary on 30 November 1526, as a faithful noble from the Kingdom of Croatia.⁴⁷ He, consequently, acted as an envoy of the Croatian estates to King Ferdinand.⁴⁸ There is no mention of him after 1527, which made Gaspar Perušić the only active member of the Perušić

⁴⁵ Klaić, *Povjest Hrvata*, II/3, 338; Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, IV, 404-405; Pavičić, "Seobe i naselja u Lici", 116; Matija Mesić, "Hrvati nakon bana Berislavića do Muhačke bitke", *Rad Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 22 (1873): 114; Marko Perojević, *Petar Kružić: kapetan i knez grada Klisa* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1931), 72; Stjepan Pavičić, "Raseljenje starosjedilaca i doseljenje Bunjevaca u senjski kraj", *Senjski zbornik* 2 (1966): 362.

⁴⁶ Italy – Archivio di stato di Venezia, Venezia – fondo 3525 – Notarile. Testamenti, b. 777, no. 241; Ivan Jurković, "Socijalni status i prisilni raseljenici", 80. Also see: HU-MNL OL-DL 104621 (ca. 1485-1493); Perojević, *Petar Kružić*, 56.

⁴⁷ Joseph Chmel, *Actenstücke zur Geschichte Croatiens und Slawoniens in den Jahren 1526 und 1527* (Wien: Verlag von Peter Rohrmann, 1846), 25-26; Ferdo Šišić, ed., *Acta Comititalia Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae, Slavoniae*, vol. I (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1912), 36.

⁴⁸ Vjekoslav Klaić, *Povjest Hrvata od najstarijih vremena do svršetka XIX. stoljeća*, vol. III, part I (= III/1) (Zagreb: Knjižara L. Hartmana, 1911), 62; Vjekoslav Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata od najstarijih vremena do svršetka XIX. stoljeća*, vol. V (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1988), 79.

family. The castle of Perušić in the county of Bužani was conquered by the Turks around 1527/1528. By then, Gaspar had probably moved northward.⁴⁹

Gaspar the Younger between Ferdinand and Zápolya

Although he was probably released from Ottoman custody within months of his imprisonment, Gaspar the Younger was once again mentioned only after the Hungarian defeat at Mohács in 1526 and the decision of the Croatian nobility to elect Ferdinand I of Habsburg the King of Croatia at the assembly in Cetin (1 January 1527). Gaspar was not among the nobles issuing the charter on that occasion, nor was his cousin John. Yet, John Karlović, possibly his uncle and, most definitely, benefactor was among them. Within a few months there would be more concrete evidence suggesting that Perušić belonged to Ferdinand's camp at the beginning of the strife for the Hungarian throne. Namely, he was mentioned in the plans for organizing the defence of major towns and fortresses along the border with the Ottomans, who had by 1527 penetrated deeply into the Croatian counties of Pset, Lika, and Krbava, reaching the county of Bužani. The plans were devised by Ferdinand's trustee Nicholas/Nikola (Mikulica) Jurišić, supreme commander of the southern borders and later the famous defender of Güns/Kőszeg. The ideas that ultimately led to the establishment of the captaincy of Bihać included suggestions that the town should be provided with 200 Czech archers and 100 Croatian horsemen (i.e. light cavalry). Gaspar Perušić was suggested as a commander of this unit of Croatian cavalry since "there is no one more apt than him". The proposition was given in Jurišić's letter, dated 24 July 1527, to Nicholas/Mikula Šiško, who was to inform King Ferdinand himself. We do not know if all these suggestions were ever implemented, but probably they were not.⁵⁰

Ferdinand's failure to provide the means (both money and manpower) to defend the southern borders, increasingly pillaged by the Turks, and the support that John Zápolya acquired in Slavonia, from which he stemmed, led to a war among the Croatian and Slavonian nobility between 1528 and 1530. The leader of Zápolya's faction was the bishop of Zagreb, Simon/Šimun Erdődy. Interestingly enough, it seems that Gaspar Perušić made here his first (but not the last) allegiance shift, although both of his benefactors – John Karlović and Nicholas Jurišić – were staunch supporters of Ferdinand. The information is scarce, but there are several lines in the sources that indicate his involvement on Bishop Si-

⁴⁹ Pavičić, "Seobe i naselja u Lici", 128-135.

⁵⁰ Lajos Thallóczy, Antal Hodinka, eds., *A horvát véghelyek oklevéltára 1490-1527* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1903), 692-694; Milan Kruhek, *Krajiške utvrde i obrana hrvatskog kraljevstva tijekom 16. stoljeća* (Zagreb: Institut za suvremenu povijest, 1995), 109-110; Damir Stanić, "Bihać kao sjedište Bihačke kapetanije i slobodni kraljevski grad" (PhD dissertation, University of Zagreb, 2020), 146.

mon's side in 1530, around the time when John Katzianer/Ivan Kocijan became the supreme commander of King Ferdinand's forces on the southern border. Namely, on 9 May 1530, Ludovicus Pekry/Ludovik Pakrački wrote to the king about his military actions against Bishop Simon, whom he ultimately vanquished near Čazma. Pekry said that the bishop was acting like the Turks, that he had subjected Slavonia to Zápolya and wanted to attack the cities of Zagreb (Gradec) and Varaždin. Yet, before the bishop and his brother Peter could fully move their infantry and artillery, forces loyal to Ferdinand defeated the strong cavalry units of 600 hussars on 14 April somewhere along the river Čazma. These units, supposedly aided by the Turks, were led by two captains – Gaspar Perušić, who was the only one from this detachment to escape on his horse while his men were either killed or captured, and Nicholas Kunović, who sustained five wounds and barely escaped death. There were many prisoners, among them a brother-in-law of Pekry, for whose life and estates Pekry made pleas with the king.⁵¹

It was not the last action of Perušić against Ferdinand's army in 1530. On 18 August 1530, Pekry wrote to Katzianer from Zagreb about the military campaigns in Slavonia, and especially about the worsening position of John and Francis/Franjo de Zempche/Svetački, who were under the Ottoman attacks. He only briefly mentioned that some estates of the chapter of Zagreb, including three castles, were being pillaged by Gaspar Perušić. Without help, such a situation would lead to grievances of the Zempche brothers against Ferdinand's captains or their defection to Zápolya's camp.⁵²

Finally, on 9 September 1530, captain Gaspar of Karschan wrote to Katzianer that one of the Perušići (possibly Gaspar) barely succeeded to escape with 200 horses during a clash of armies four days before that (i.e. on 5 September).⁵³ All these actions point to the conclusion that Gaspar was supporting the bishop of Zagreb in the ongoing strife in Slavonia. However, through the efforts of John Karlović and other nobles, a peace was concluded among the factions within the Croatian and Slavonian nobility at the end of 1530, due to Ottoman pressure, which was damaging both sides. This temporarily put the feuds to an end and it seems that Gaspar received a pardon and resumed his services in Croatia proper, serving within the captaincy of Senj, controlled by the Habsburg supporters. He probably received some assistance from Karlović (who died in 1531) and Jurišić.

After a hiatus of two years, Gaspar reappeared once again in 1532, when Sanudo recorded two of his successful anti-Ottoman actions during the summer. Before

⁵¹ Emilij Laszowski, ed., *Monumenta Habsburgica Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae, Slavoniae*, vol. I (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1914), 319; Klaić, *Povjest Hrvata*, III/1, 94-95; Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, V, 120.

⁵² Laszowski, *Monumenta Habsburgica*, I, 389.

⁵³ Šišić, *Acta Comititalia*, I, 260.

22 June 1532, around 200-300 Turkish horsemen and 800 infantrymen attacked the vicinity of Rijeka and Senj. But, as they were making a camp on their way home, the Habsburg forces from Senj, headed by captain Gaspar Perušić (who had 400 horsemen and some infantrymen), attacked them suddenly, took most of their booty and killed many Turks in the process. The Turks from Obrovac said that they had sent 15 men to the raid and only four of them returned.⁵⁴

Just days after, in early July 1532, in the period when the town of Klis (Latin: Clissa) temporarily came in the possession of Nicholas Querini, the agent of Ludovico (Alvise) Gritti, Ottoman ally and supporter of Zápolya, Peter Kružić, the castellan and count of the town, organised an action to relieve the pressure directed against Klis. It is not certain if he was initially aware of the dangers coming from Gritti's men, but with the support of the Habsburg commanders John Katzianer, a certain Toda, and Gaspar Perušić, Peter vanquished the Ottoman forces near Glamoč and in the areas of Unac and Grahovo (today in Bosnia and Herzegovina), after which Ferdinand's troops returned to Senj with a significant booty of war. This was the second pillaging Turkish army, supported by the *vlach* auxiliary troops, that Perušić defeated within a few weeks.⁵⁵ Ivan Jurković has suggested that Toda, mentioned as one of the Habsburg commanders, was Gaspar's brother Theodore, but at least in Sanudo's report, it does not seem the two were brothers. Toda whose identity we cannot specify at the moment was mentioned after Katzianer and before Kružić, while Gaspar Perušić "of Krbava" was the last person in the list.

After the battle, there is no data on Perušić's whereabouts. It would be safe to assume that he returned to Senj or its vicinity. Yet again, he may have gone to Klis with Kružić, since two years later, interestingly, we find him in Transylvania with Gritti, whose men Kružić drove out of Klis in August 1532 as pro-Zápolya and pro-Ottoman oriented. At a certain point in time between 1532 and 1534, Gaspar made another radical political move. According to Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, it seems that King Ferdinand was the first one who entrusted the administration of the Nyitra diocese to Bálint Török, of the Győr and Szombathely diocese to Paul/Pavle Bakić, of the Cenad/Csanád diocese to Gaspar Perušić, and of the Pécs/Pečuh diocese to John Saracen (around 1534).⁵⁶ However, at almost the same time Gaspar was mentioned, together with John/János Dóczy, Orbán Batthyány and

⁵⁴ Sanudo, "Izvodi za jugoslavensku poviest", 158; *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto*, LVI, 467; Gligor Stanojević, *Senjski uskoci* (Beograd: Vojnoizdavački zavod, 1973), 18.

⁵⁵ Sanudo, "Izvodi za jugoslavensku poviest", 166-167; *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto*, LVI, 616-618; Per-ojević, *Petar Kružić*, 138; Ivan Jurković, "Veliki i osobit razbojnik' u službi pape – Petar Kružić, kapetan najjužnijeg dijela protuosmanskoga obrambenog sustava Hrvatske", *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 25 (2007): 158.

⁵⁶ Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, "Priorat Vranski sa vitezi templari i hospitalci sv. Ivana u Hrvatskoj", *Rad Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 82 (1886): 51.

Francis/Ferenc Dobó, as one of the most important nobles of the Realm who supported Governor Ludovico Gritti, a trusted man of Sultan Süleyman.⁵⁷ It was his service to Gritti that first brought him to Transylvania. At the end of March 1534, Perušić, leading a group of 200 horsemen, joined Antonio Gritti, son of Ludovico, in Oradea/Nagyvárad. From Oradea they travelled towards Cluj, Braşov, and later to Mediaş, where the adventurous Venetian merchant, the senior Gritti, was captured and executed by the soldiers of Peter/Petru Rareş, voivode of Moldavia.⁵⁸

Perušić is mentioned in the work of Tranquillo Andronico (Andreis), a descendant of the Dalmatian noble family Andreis from Trogir, who performed several diplomatic missions in the service of John Zápolya. Later he entered the service of Ludovico Gritti and accompanied him to Transylvania in 1532 and 1534. On 29 September 1534, he witnessed the bloody death of his master Gritti in Mediaş and almost lost his own life in the events.⁵⁹ When describing these events, Andreis mentions Perušić as one of the most trusted servants of Gritti, who gave him the command of 300 horsemen and entrusted him with the protection of his son, Antonio. Nevertheless, when Gritti was captured, Perušić and all the other nobles betrayed him and fled Mediaş.⁶⁰

After the death of Ludovico Gritti, Gaspar Perušić became one of the most trusted supporters of bishop Martinuzzi, his kinsman. As it was already mentioned, there are several sources indicating that the two of them were related, but it is not clear in what way.⁶¹ Juraj Utišenović Martinušević, better known as George Martinuzzi, became a leading figure in the Hungarian political environment in the decades following the battle of Mohács. He was able to gather important offices in the eastern parts of the former kingdom and was well known for his ability to negotiate with both the Ottomans and the Habsburgs. He also built an extensive network of trusted followers (*familiares*) among whom many were nobles of South-Slavic, mostly Croatian and Serbian origin. Perušić was, arguably, his most important supporter who maintained his loyalty until the death of his master.

⁵⁷ Nicolaus Istuanffius [Miklós Istvánffi], *Regni Hungarici historia: post obitum gloriosissimi Matthiae Corvini Regis XXXIV quo Apostolicum hoc Regnum Turcarum potissimum armis barbare invasum, libris XXXIV: rerum in Pannonia, Dalmatia, Transsilvania, Moldavia, Bosnia, Illyrico, ceterisque confinibus integrum ultra seculum, ab Anno 1490. gestarum locupletissimis exacte descripta* (Coloniae Agrippinae: Sumptibus Henrici Rommerskirchen Bibliopolae, 1724), 128; Gizella Nemeth Papo, Adriano Papo, *Ludovico Gritti: Un principe-mercante del Rinascimento tra Venezia, i Turchi e la corona d'Ungheria* (Mariano del Friuli: Edizioni della Laguna, 2002), 53.

⁵⁸ Maria Holban, ed., *Călători Străini despre Țările Române*, vol. I (Bucureşti: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1968), 359; Radu Constantinescu, *Moldova şi Transilvania în vremea lui Petru Rareş: Relaţii politice şi militare (1527-1546)* (Bucureşti: Direcţia generală a arhivelor, 1978), 72.

⁵⁹ Holban, *Călători Străini*, I, 242-243.

⁶⁰ Holban, *Călători Străini*, I, 254-255.

⁶¹ Papo, Nemeth Papo, *Frate Giorgio Martinuzzi*, 24, note 5.

Although he was already well established in Zápolya's eastern kingdom, we find Gaspar Perušić once again in Slavonia in 1537/1538, shortly before and shortly after the Peace of Oradea, which ended the civil war in Croatia and Slavonia and established a continuous rule of the Habsburg dynasty over these kingdoms.⁶² The sequence of events cannot be fully understood, but it seems that Perušić came back from Banat, where he was administering the territory of the Cenad diocese, and re-entered the service of the Habsburg faction, but soon, once again, Ferdinand's bans of Croatia and Slavonia, Peter Keglević and Thomas Nádasdy, started to doubt his allegiance. On 30 January 1538, they informed the king that the situation in Croatia and Slavonia had not improved with the assembly held at Križevci and that it would not change unless the king himself helped his supporters with money and manpower, since many nobles were entering Venetian service or considering to support Ferdinand's rival. The wayward nobles sent an envoy to John Zápolya: it was Gaspar Bartaković, who had come back from John's camp. Bartaković was possibly Perušić's brother-in-law. His mission was to convince the Croatian nobility that they would be safer from the Turks as Zápolya's supporters. There were several other persons mentioned as defectors from Ferdinand – Wolfgang of Zemche, Ladislaus of Ervencze, and finally Gaspar Perušić, "who also came back from John [Zápolya] and was paid by [Nicholas] Jurišić for two months' service with 100 horsemen, but has now defected for the second time and gone back to John".⁶³

After the Peace of Oradea, on 1 and 12 May 1538, in two reports given to Ban Thomas Nádasdy by his colleague, Ban Peter Keglević, concerning the assembly at Zagreb and the preparations for it, Gaspar Perušić is also vaguely mentioned – both times in the same context. Namely, Nicholas Jurišić sent some reports to the bans concerning the warfare with the Turks along the border, on the river Sava and on the southern borders generally. At that time, intensive fighting took place around Dubica and Jasenovac. Keglević said that some Jurišić's reports to the bans were outdated and that he had displayed some resentment while mentioning the following nobles: Gaspar Perušić, Gregory Farkašić, and (probably Michael/Mihovil) Glavina.⁶⁴ This vague account cannot be fully put into context since, by then, the civil war had ended, at least officially, and Perušić should have already gone back to Zápolya's part of the Realm. In fact, the communication between the bans and Jurišić may have been just a reflection of the deteriorating situation on the border with the Ottomans after Katzianer's defection. Jurišić might have been held responsible for his bad judgment when he decided to enlist the wayward nobles once again in the Habsburg cavalry. They proved to be

⁶² On the Peace of Oradea, see: Klaić, *Povjest Hrvata*, III/1, 132-133; Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, V, 168.

⁶³ Ferdo Šišić, ed., *Acta Comititalia Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae, Slavoniae*, vol. II (Zagreb: Jugoslaven-ska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1915), 161-162.

⁶⁴ Šišić, *Acta Comititalia*, II, 204, 222.

good as fighters against the Turks, but not in their allegiance to King Ferdinand's cause. Yet, that is just an assumption. It remains certain that, at the time of John Zápolya's death (1540), Gaspar Perušić was permanently in his service and the service of his leading courtiers. He had probably left Croatia for good even before Katzianer's murder in 1539.

Gaspar the Younger's Later Career in Transylvania

From 1537 until 1550, Perušić was commander of the Cenad fortification and possibly administrator of the estate belonging to the same bishopric. He was followed in this office, for a short while, by Peter/Péter Nagy, before the fortress was conquered by the Turks during the same year (1550).⁶⁵ Perušić was not only a military commander, but also acted as an agent of Martinuzzi in other matters. In 1544, he had a decisive role in the intervention against the protestant preacher Stephen/István Szegedi Kis, who was chased away from his home in Szeged, and his books (more than 200) were confiscated.⁶⁶ In 1549, Gaspar was involved in a lawsuit with the widow of a Serbian noble, Marko Jakšić, who was accused of capturing a serf from the village of Pecica/Pečka, in the domain of the bishopric of Cenad.⁶⁷

According to a register of expenses from 1550, made by bishop Martinuzzi, the defence of Cenad was entrusted to Perušić and other servants (*familiaries*). The Croatian nobleman received 200 florins for his personal retinue, while an additional sum of 500 florins was dispatched to the other servants of the bishop in Cenad, as the payment for two months. The document also refers to 25 infantry guards (*Chanadium peditibus*) who were probably residing inside the fortress as a permanent garrison. A certain *Petrus porkolab* and two other vice-castellans are also mentioned in the document.⁶⁸

After conquering Buda in 1541, the Ottoman sultan gave the eastern parts of the Hungarian kingdom to John Sigismund, the minor son of the deceased King

⁶⁵ Juhász, *A Csanadi Püspökség*, 85; Samu Borovszky, *Csanád vármegye története 1715-ig*, vol. II (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1897), 78-79.

⁶⁶ Adrian Magina, *De la excludere la coabitare: Biserici tradiționale, Reformă și Islam în Banat* (Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română. Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2011), 69; Bálint Kis, *A Békés-bánáti református egyházmegye története (1836)*, eds. László Gilicze, László Kormos (Békéscsaba: Békés Megyei Levéltár; Szeged: Csongrád Megyei Levéltár, 1992), 74; László Földvári, "Szegedi Kis István reformátori működése a Tiszamelléken", *Protestáns Szemle* 6 (1894): 489.

⁶⁷ Hadrianus Magina, coll. et ed., *Acta et Documenta partes regni Hungariae inferiores concernentia* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega, 2020), 210-212; Juhász, *A Csanadi Püspökség*, 94; Borovszky, *Csanád vármegye*, II, 178.

⁶⁸ Árpád Károlyi, "Fráter György levelezése és egyéb öt illető iratok: negyedik közlemény", *Történelmi tár* 2 (1879), no. 3: 507-508; Árpád Károlyi, *Fráter György levelezése* (Budapest: Az Athenaeum R. Társulat Könyvnyomdája, 1881), 192-193; Földvári, "Szegedi Kis István", 488, note 1.

John Zápolya. Three advisors, who were delegated to rule until his coming of age, were also appointed: Queen Isabella (his mother), Peter Petrović/Petrovics, and Martinuzzi. They were unable to cooperate for a long time, and while Petrović remained a loyal supporter of the queen, the ambitious Martinuzzi had his own plans.

In 1550, the two factions were already engaged in open military conflict. While Petrović himself besieged some fortifications that were under the control of the bishop, namely Vințul de Jos/Alvinc, Brănișca/Branycska, and Hunedoara/Vajdahunyad, Nicholas Crepović/Csrepovics, with an army of 8,000 Serbs from Lipova/Lippa and Timișoara/Temesvár, besieged the fortress of Cenad, which was defended by Perušić. Martinuzzi, unwilling to lose control over such an important fortification, sent Thomas/Tamás Várkocs to aid Perušić. The army of Crepović was taken by surprise and easily defeated.⁶⁹ The siege began in the middle of October, and Crepović was aided by Turkish troops. Várkocs arrived with his army, of about 3,000 men, at the end of the month. So, it would seem that Perušić was able to resist for about two weeks before the help arrived. Várkocs succeeded in contacting the commander of Cenad through one of his spies and they managed to coordinate their actions against the besiegers.⁷⁰ Ascanio Centorio degli Hortensii describes this siege in great detail, underlining the importance of Perušić's resistance from inside the fortification of Cenad, which allowed Várkocs to mobilise the troops from the vicinity of Oradea and come to his aid. Várkocs approached the fortified city by night and was able to gather information on the situation of the besieging army. He initiated the assault two hours before dawn. The surprise attack was enough to disband the Serbian soldiers that were attempting to take Cenad.⁷¹

The Habsburgs assumed control over Transylvania one year later, in 1551. An army of foreign mercenaries, commanded by General Giovanni Battista Castaldo, was sent to enforce the new administration. Martinuzzi was officially on the Habsburg side, but he never broke his contacts with the Ottoman officials. Given the new political situation, military confrontations with the Turks were inevitable, and were concentrated in the south-eastern part of the Transylvanian

⁶⁹ Istvanffius, *Regni Hungarici historia*, 182; Papo, Nemeth Papo, *Frate Giorgio Martinuzzi*, 128-129; Borovszky, *Csanád vármegye*, II, 77-78; László Szalay, ed., *Verancsics Antal, M. Kir. helytartó, esztergomi érsek, Összes munkái*, VII, Monumenta Hungariae historica, Scriptorum X (Pest: Eggenberger Ferdinánd Magyar Akadémiai Könyvtáránál, 1865), 121-122; Ognjeslav Utišenić, "Životopis kardinala brata Gjorgja Utišenića, prozvanoga Martinusius", *Rad Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 53 (1880): 65-66; Lajos Kropf, "Castaldo Erdélyben", *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 9 (1896), no. 1: 53.

⁷⁰ Gergely Csiffáry, "Várkocs Tamás egri várkapitány emlékezete", *Agria: Az Egri Múzeum Évkönyve – Annales Musei Agriensis* 40 (2004): 233.

⁷¹ Ascanio Centorio degli Hortensii, *Commentarii della guerra di Transilvania* (Vinegia: Appresso Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari, 1566), 48-49.

frontier. The most important military achievement of the Habsburgs, in 1551, was retaking the fortress of Lipova, and Martinuzzi played an important role in securing this strategic victory. Perušić was also among the officers of the besieging army, sharing command over 300 Serbian soldiers with his former enemy, Nicholas Crepović.⁷²

The Habsburg army was unable to take Lipova by force, so Martinuzzi was given authority to negotiate with the commander of the Ottoman garrison, Uliman bey. According to several testimonies made during the so-called “Martinuzzi trial”, Perušić was the main negotiator on the Christian side. He was often accompanied by other Croatian nobles from Martinuzzi’s retinue, such as Peter Koriáth/Petar Korlatović and George Melics/Juraj Melić.⁷³ Although these missions were performed with the approval of Castaldo, there were some witnesses who claimed that Martinuzzi’s men encouraged the Turks to resist and brought them food and provisions in secret.⁷⁴ At a certain point during the negotiations, Perušić agreed to enter the fortress as a hostage while some Turkish envoys were being sent to the Christian camp.⁷⁵ All sources indicate that the Ottoman officers trusted him. When an agreement was reached, Perušić was entrusted with the preparation of carriages necessary for the journey of the Ottoman garrison to Belgrade.⁷⁶

On 17 December 1551, Martinuzzi was assassinated by the soldiers of the two Habsburg commanders in Transylvania, Castaldo and Sforza Pallavicini. Taken by surprise, Perušić and the other members of the bishop’s retinue were unable to act in his defence.⁷⁷ After the deed was done, Paul Bank, accompanied by 2,000 horsemen, took the body of Martinuzzi to Alba Iulia, where it was buried.⁷⁸

Perušić and many other supporters of the late bishop (Peter/Péter Pázmán, John/János Bartaković, Michael/Mihály Deák, George/György Horvát, Thomas Varkócs, Gabriel/Gábor Bethlen, Ladislaus/László Wass, Ladislaus Edenffy, George Bethlen, and George Melić) gathered in Oradea in January 1552. They kept contact with both the Habsburgs and the Ottomans, and waited to see how the events would unfold.⁷⁹ Plans to remove the Habsburgs from Transyl-

⁷² Károly Czimer, “Temesvár megvétele 1551-1552”, *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 6 (1893): 197; Adriano Papo, “La bataglia di Lippa, 1551”, *Studia Historica Adriatica ac Danubiana* 8 (2015), no. 1-2: 68.

⁷³ Papo, Nemeth Papo, *Frate Giorgio Martinuzzi*, 311; Juhász, *A Csanadi Püspökség*, 96.

⁷⁴ Papo, Nemeth Papo, *Frate Giorgio Martinuzzi*, 398.

⁷⁵ Papo, “La bataglia”, 107.

⁷⁶ Istuanffius, *Regni Hungarici historia*, 190; Papo, “La bataglia”, 99.

⁷⁷ On the size of the retinue of Martinuzzi, see: Teréz Oborni, “Fráter György szervitorainak és familiárisainak jegyzéke a Castaldo-Kódexben, 1552”, *Fons* 25 (2018), no. 4: 443, note 25.

⁷⁸ Centorio, *Commentarii*, 147-148.

⁷⁹ Samu Barabás, “Erdély történetére vonatkozó regesták 1551-1553, Első Közlemény”, *Magyar Történelmi Tár* 14 (1891), no. 3: 447.

vania were already in motion. Kara Ahmed (second vizier and the conqueror of Timișoara in 1552) sent letters to Perušić and other important Transylvanian nobles, asking them to pledge their loyalty to John Sigismund Zápolya and to chase out the German troops from the country.⁸⁰ It is a proof that, by this time, Gaspar Perušić was considered a member of the local nobility. He was, after all, a middle ranking landowner in the county of Bihor/Bihar, owning 40 fiscal units (*porta*) in the village of Hosszúpalyi.⁸¹ He was also related to the Losonczi Bánffy family, through a matrimonial alliance: Catherine, daughter of Gaspar Perušić, was married to Stephen Bánffy of Losoncz. According to a document issued in July 1553, Nicholas, Stephen, and Michael Bánffy pledged 32 land plots and a house, which formerly belonged to Stephen Sereďy, in the village of Nușfalău/Nagyfallu, to Perušić, their kinsman. The pledge was made for a considerable sum of 800 florins. The document also states that the Bánffy brothers, and probably Perušić as well, were part of a noble faction that rebelled against the Habsburg rule in Transylvania and supported the Zápolya family.⁸² Without help from the Ottoman Empire, the Transylvanian rebellion of 1553 was easily quelled by the newly appointed voivodes, Stephen Dobó and Francis Kendi.⁸³

Perušić did not suffer any serious consequences because of his involvement in the anti-Habsburg movement. In 1553, Matthew/Mátyás Zabardyi was appointed the new bishop of Oradea and he held this position until 1556. Perušić entered his service as the captain of the troops. At the time, the bishop had a small contingent of 850 soldiers at his disposal.⁸⁴ Beside military service, the Croatian nobleman also performed diplomatic missions for his new master. In 1555, the bishop of Oradea sent two envoys to Andrew/András Báthory – his military commander Perušić and the captain of the Gyula fortress, Stephen Henyey. Their mission was to inform Báthory about the imminent return of the son of King John Zápolya from Poland and the strong support he enjoyed at the Ottoman court.⁸⁵ The Habsburgs were slowly losing control over the eastern parts of the

⁸⁰ Samu Barabás, “Erdély történetére vonatkozó regesták 1551-1553, Második Közlemény”, *Magyar Történelmi Tár* 14 (1891), no. 4: 652; Horn, “Magyar végvári tisztek”, 101.

⁸¹ Iván Nagy, *Magyarország családai czimerekkel és nemzékrendi táblákkal*, vol. IX (Pest: Kiadja Ráth Mór, 1862), 246; Ferenc Maksay, *Magyarország birtokviszonyai a 16. század közepén*, vol. I (Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltár kiadványai, 1990), 209.

⁸² Romania (hereafter: RO) – Serviciul Județean al Arhivelor Naționale ale României, Cluj (hereafter: SĴANRC) – Fond 320 – Fond familial Bánffy (hereafter: FFB) – Seria 1, Documente medievale (hereafter: S1), no. 33.

⁸³ Florin Nicolae Ardelean, *Organizarea militară în principatul Transilvaniei (1541-1691): Comitate și domenii fiscale* (Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2019), 245-246.

⁸⁴ Vince Bunyitay, *A váradi püspökség története alapításától jelenkorig*, vol. I (Nagyvárad: [s.n.], 1883), 415.

⁸⁵ “Venerunt ab episcopo varadiensis duo legati magna auctoritate, Peruszicz dictus, prefectus militum eiusdem episcopi et Enyc [=Benedick] Ystwan, capitaneus in Dzyula, ad dominum Batori.” Nicolae Iorga, *Studii și documente cu privire la istoria românilor*, vol. XXIII, Acte străine din arhivele Galiției,

former Hungarian kingdom, and Perušić was ready to reaffirm his loyalty to the Zápolya family.

At this stage of our research, we have been unable to identify the moment when Gaspar Perušić pledged his loyalty to the new ruler of Transylvania. It is also unclear if he received any important office after 1556. However, his new political orientation was clearly revealed during an event that took place in 1558 – the assassination of Francis Bebek and the two Kendi brothers (Alexander/Sándor and Francis). In 1556, Francis Bebek joined the Zápolya faction, thus bringing the counties of Gömör and Torna under this faction's control.⁸⁶ Soon afterwards, he began plotting against Queen Isabella. The recently returned ruler of Transylvania did not hesitate to take drastic measures against her rivals. She turned to some of her trusted servants, asking for help: to Meinhard/Menyhért Balassa, Thomas Daczó, Stanislaw Nyssowsky, and Gaspar Perušić.

The assassination of Bebek, in which Perušić was directly involved together with Daczó, took place in Alba Iulia, in the beginning of September 1558. A band of 200 horsemen and 300 infantrymen, Polish and Serbian mercenaries, were camped outside the town walls and provided cover. The two nobles entered the quarters of Francis Bebek during the night and attacked him. They managed to defeat him after a long and exhausting sword fight. In the meantime, Balassa attacked the Kendi brothers and eliminated them.⁸⁷ The assassination of Bebek is the last major political event in which Gaspar Perušić was involved. We do not know the exact date of his death, but this was probably the last stage of his long political and military career. The life and deeds of Gaspar Perušić are emblematic for the period of turmoil marked by the dissolution of the medieval kingdom of Hungary. Perušić was forced to adapt to the constantly shifting political situation, and he did it with a significant amount of success. His life experience included some spectacular turning points such as Turkish captivity, involvement in a political assassination, and finding a new home a long distance away from his birthplace.

Vechii Prusii și a Țărilor de Jos (București: Editura Ministerului de Instrucție publică, 1913), 66, doc. LXXIII. In 1555, Gaspar was also mentioned as a witness in document issued by the Convent of Cluj-Mănăștur – RO-SJANRC – fond 8 – Fond familial Kemény de Ciumbrud (hereafter: FFKC) – Seria 1, Documente Medievale, no. 85.

⁸⁶ *History of Transylvania*, vol. I, eds. László Makkai, András Mócsy (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 633.

⁸⁷ Szalay, *Verancsics Antal*, VII, 238-243; Sándor Szilágyi, ed., *Monumenta Comitalia Regni Transylvaniae*, vol. II (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1877), 41; Endre Veress, *Izabella királyné 1519-1559* (Budapest: A Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1901), 332; Gabriel-Virgil Rusu, *Gherla: cetatea lui Martinuzzi* (Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română. Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2013), 71.

The Heirs of Gaspar Perušić the Younger in Transylvania – Catherine, Anna and Matthew Perušić

The ability of Gaspar Perušić the Younger to integrate in the Transylvanian political and social framework benefited his children – Catherine, Anna/Ana, and Matthew/Mate.

According to the available sources, Catherine appears to have been the eldest child of Gaspar Perušić the Younger. A document issued in 1549 (see document no. 2 in the appendix) refers to a trial between Catherine, widow of Stephen Tamási, and Ladislaus Tamási. The subject of the dispute was the possession of Miheșu de Câmpie/Meehes in the Mureș/Maros Székely seat (“...*domina actrix perstitisset nam genitor eiusdem domine actricis, Egregius scilicet Gasparus Perwssyth certis diebus, in possessione predicta Meehes...*”). The same source states that Catherine was married for the second time to Stephen Losonczy Bánffy (“...*Stephanus Banffy dominum et maritum domine actricis...*”).⁸⁸ Ten years later, in 1559, the trial was finally concluded in favour of Catherine (*generosa domina Catharina Perwssyth*), wife of Stephen Bánffy (“...*egregio Stephano Banffy Losonczy de Nagyfallu...*”). Ladislaus Mikola de Zamosfalwa, a vice-lieutenant of Queen Isabella Zápolya, was entrusted with the execution of this sentence.⁸⁹ Catherine outlived her second husband too, and in 1569, she represented her minor son, who inherited two villages previously belonging to his father’s estates: Aluniș/Mogyorokereke and Sâncraiu/Kalotazentkyral, both in the county of Cluj.⁹⁰

Anna Perušić was married to John/János Farkas, a member of the Harinnai Farkas family,⁹¹ and they had five sons: Thomas, Stephen, John, Francis, and Michael, and a daughter – Christina. On 13 July 1589, Prince Sigismund Báthory issued a charter giving the estate of Rugonfalwa (present-day Rugănești), which was previously a part of the domain of the Odorhei/Udvarhely fortress, to Anna and her five sons who were struck by the misfortune of losing their father.⁹²

Matthew Perušić, following in his father’s footsteps, had an impressive military and political career. In the contemporary sources from the later part of his life, he was often referred to as *Kendteleki Perusith Máté*. Kendtelke (present-day Chintelnic) was a village in the domain of the Gherla/Szamosújvár fortress.⁹³ He

⁸⁸ RO-SJANRC – fond 353 – Fond familial Haller (hereafter: FFH) – Seria 2, no. 29a, f. 4.

⁸⁹ RO-SJANR-353-FFH-S2, no. 69, f. 2.

⁹⁰ RO-SJANRC-320-FFB-S2, fascicula H, no. 13A.

⁹¹ Iván Nagy, *Magyarország családai czimerekkel és nemzékrendi táblákkal*, vol. V (Pest: Kiadja Ráth Mór, 1859), 54-55.

⁹² Tamás Fejér, Etelka Rácz, Anikó Szász, eds., *Az Erdélyi fejedelmek királyi könyvei I: Báthory Zsigmond királyi könyvei 1582-1602* (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 2005), 316, doc. 1167.

⁹³ László Makkai, *Szolnok-Doboka megye magyarságának pusztulása a XVII. század elején* (Budapest: Erdélyi Tudományos Intézet, 1942), 100.

received this possession from Michael the Brave and it was confirmed to him by Sigismund Báthory. He was also styled with the epithet *egregius*, specifying his noble rank.

Unclear passages in the writings of Lajos Szádeczky and Nicolae Iorga connect Matthew Perušić with the Serbian despots, stating that Matthew was, through his mother, a descendant of the despots, yet quoting no particular source.⁹⁴ It is mostly considered that Gaspar the Younger's wife was from the Bartaković family, thus indirectly linking Gaspar and Martinuzzi. It remains possible that Matthew's mother indeed belonged to a family descended from the Serbian despots, and that it was, perhaps, Gaspar the Younger's second marriage. Yet, it is also very vague to which family this claim would relate – Branković, Berislavić, Bakić, or Božić – since all of them held the title of Serbian despots at some point, and the Jakšići, influential in Transylvania, were also connected with the above-mentioned families. Iorga made an observation that notable members of the Serbian family Branković of Ineu – brothers Sava (Orthodox metropolitan of Transylvania) and George (titular despot of the Serbs) – who lived in the 17th century were famous for unsubstantiated claims of their own genealogical links with the famous Brankovići of Serbia (the family became extinct in its male line in 1502). However, he did not directly suggest that Perušić's connections with the despots were equally false.⁹⁵

One of the earliest documents concerning Matthew Perušić indicates that he built his early career as a *familiaris* of Stephen Báthory (prince of Transylvania 1571-1586 and King of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth 1575-1586). For his faithful service he was rewarded with Galoşpetreu estate in the county of Bihar.⁹⁶ His Croatian origin was known among his contemporaries, but it did not obstruct him during his career. Wolfgang Bethlen in his work *Historia de rebus Transylvanicis* makes a clear statement on this subject: "*Mattheus Perusith, Gasparis filius, Praetorianorum Peditum Caerulatorum, sub Andrea Principe, Capitaneus, qui e Dalmatiae urbe Scardona, in Transsylvaniam, evocante Georgio Monacho, ingressus fuerat.*"⁹⁷

After the death of Stephen Báthory, in 1586, Perušić continued to serve the legitimate heir on the Transylvanian throne, Stephen's nephew Sigismund Báthory. In the first years of his reign, the new ruler struggled with a strong internal opposition. Matthew Perušić was among the few nobles who supported him during this

⁹⁴ Lajos Szádeczky, *Erdély és Mihály vajda története, 1595-1601: oklevéltárral* (Temesvár: Nyomatott a csanád-egyházmegyei könyvsajtón, 1893), 196; Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Românilor din Ardeal și Ungaria* (București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1989²), 181.

⁹⁵ Iorga, *Istoria Românilor*, 181.

⁹⁶ RO-SJANRC-8-FFKC-S1, no. 182 (the attestation from 1589).

⁹⁷ Wolfgang Bethlen, *Historia de rebus Transylvanicis*, Tomus Quintus (Cibinii: Typis & sumptibus Martini Hochmeister, 1789), 408.

difficult period. In the beginning of August 1591, Perušić was sent on a diplomatic mission in Wallachia by the prince. His objective was to deliver the gifts of the Transylvanian ruler to the Turkish envoy, Kürth aga.⁹⁸ A few years later, when the authority of the prince was significantly consolidated, Perušić was rewarded for his services. In 1593, he received a wooden house outside the walls of Alba Iulia, in the street of the Blessed Virgin (see document no. 3 in the appendix).⁹⁹

By 1594, Matthew Perušić was in possession of a large estate in the Odorhei Székely seat, consisting of the villages of Farcád, Pálfalva, Várallya, and Farkaslaka.¹⁰⁰ The same year, Prince Báthory wrote a letter to the captain of the Odorhei fortress, Benedict Mindszenti, in which he recognised Perušić's right to make common use of some forests and mountain areas that were on the fiscal estate.¹⁰¹

In 1594, Sigismund Báthory joined the Habsburgs in the "Long Turkish War" (1593-1606). He was able to initiate negotiations with his ally only after he had crushed a strong internal opposition with the help of his uncle, Stephen Bocskai. Perušić was also among those who supported the Transylvanian prince during this time of internal strife. In 1596, he was serving in the court cavalry of Sigismund Báthory.¹⁰² His presence in the close entourage of the prince enabled him to further expand his estates in the Odorhei seat. On 11 May 1597, Báthory gave Perušić another village that was previously part of the fiscal estate, Bisericani/Szentlélek.¹⁰³ This estate was given to him and his heirs, but if he had none, it would go to Michael Apafi, his nephew by a sister (*ex sorore nepoti suo*). Matthew's investiture in the possession was partly disputed by some neighbouring nobles, but the issue was settled.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Sándor Szilágyi, ed., *Monumenta Comititalia Regni Transylvaniae*, vol. III (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1877), 276, note 2.

⁹⁹ "...cum vero attentis et consideratis fidelitate et fidelibus servitiis egregii Matthaei Perwssiitt, familiaris aule nostrae, qua ipse nobis et huic regno in omnibus occasionibus summa cum animi sui promptitudine exhibuit, et impendit, ac in futurum quque exhibiturus et impensurus est. Totalem et integram domum ligneam acialem, extra muros huius civitatis nostra Albensis, in platea Bodogazzonii ucza vocata..." HU-MNL OL-1526 Utáni Gyűjtemény (R szekció), no. 64, d. 2, 0124. The house was also mentioned in a document issued later, in 1606. András Kovács, *Gyulafehérvár város jegyzőkönyvei* (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 1998), 52, 188.

¹⁰⁰ Judith Balogh, *A székely nemesség kialakulásának folyamata a 17. század első felében* (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 2005), 54; Attila Sunkó, "Az erdélyi fejedelmek udvari hadai a 16. században", *Levéltári Közlemények* 69 (1998): 119.

¹⁰¹ Samu Barabás, *Szekely Oklevéltár 1219-1776* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1934), 322-324, doc. 178.

¹⁰² Sunkó, "Az erdélyi fejedelmek", 119-120, note 119.

¹⁰³ Barabás, *Szekely Oklevéltár*, 337-340, doc. 180.

¹⁰⁴ Barabás, *Szekely Oklevéltár*, 337-346, doc. 180. On the connection between Matthew Perušić and the Odorhei seat, see also: RO-SJANRC – fond 378 – Fond familial Kornis – Seria 1, Documente Medievale, no. 325.

It is interesting that there is no Michael, in this generation, mentioned in the available (though, admittedly, outdated) genealogies of the Apafi family. The head of the family was Gregory/Gergely Apafi, whose second wife was, conspicuously, named as Anna Despot. If we remember the supposed despot ancestry of Matthew Perušić, one needs to pose a question – could this be Anna, sister of Matthew Perušić, widowed by 1589, who had a son called Michael Farkas? It is entirely a speculation, but it may be possible that Anna remarried to Gregory Apafi, who could have adopted her son from her first marriage. Yet again, in this conjecture, it would remain unexplained why she would use the surname Despot, even if she did descend from the Serbian despots, and not her paternal surname Perušić.¹⁰⁵

As the war progressed and the ambitious ruler of Transylvania engaged the Ottomans on several fronts (in Moldavia, Wallachia, and the Banat region), Mate Perušić was entrusted with a position of higher responsibility in the hierarchy of the Transylvanian army. In the summer of 1597, he was leading a large contingent, consisting of 3,000 soldiers, towards Wallachia. His objective was to help Voivode Michael the Brave, ally of Sigismund Báthory, in his attempt to stop the advancement of a Tartar army that was heading towards Hungary. Erich Lassotha, the *mustermeister* sent by Emperor Rudolf II, met Perušić in Braşov. There Lassotha inspected his soldiers and paid their wages. Moses/Mózes Székely, leading 1,000 soldiers, was also in the vicinity of Braşov and had the same mission.¹⁰⁶

Losing faith in his ability to rule Transylvania and achieve victory in his confrontation with the Turks, Sigismund Báthory gave up the throne. In 1599, he was succeeded by his cousin, Cardinal Andrew Báthory, who enjoyed the support of the Polish court and was willing to accept Ottoman suzerainty. This political change did not affect Perušić. The new Transylvanian prince gave him a higher military position – captain of the court infantry.¹⁰⁷ Andrew Báthory had a short reign in Transylvania. The ruler of Wallachia, Michael the Brave, initiated a campaign in Transylvania during the month of October 1599, with the purpose of bringing the principality back to the anti-Ottoman league. A pitched battle took place between the two opposing armies on the battlefield of Şelimbăr, near Sibiu, where the Transylvanian army suffered a crushing defeat. Matthew Perušić was on the battlefield and commanded 600 soldiers of the court infantry (*kék darabontok*) on the left flank of the Transylvanian army.¹⁰⁸ Soon after the

¹⁰⁵ Iván Nagy, *Magyarország családai czimerekkel és nemzékrendi táblákkal*, vol. I (Pest: Kiadja Friebisz István, 1857), 50-51.

¹⁰⁶ Andrei Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării Românești, Acte și scrisori (1596-1599)*, vol. V (București: Cartea Românească 1932), 78, doc. 52; Maria Holban, ed., *Călători Străini despre Țările Române*, vol. IV (București: Editura Științifică, 1972), 61.

¹⁰⁷ Zsolt Trócsányi, *Erdély központi kormányzata. 1540-1690* (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1980), 340.

¹⁰⁸ Sándor Szilágyi, ed., *Szamosközy István történeti maradványai 1566-1603*, vol. II: 1598-1599, *Monumenta Hungariae Historica* 2, *Scriptores* 28 (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1876), 323 (“Ho-

battle, Perušić pledged his allegiance to the new ruler of Transylvania, Michael the Brave. He was not the only Transylvanian noble who came to support the Wallachian prince during the first phase of his reign, and he was richly rewarded for his political choice. On 7 January 1600, Perušić received two villages near the fortification of Gherla, Jichișu de Sus/Felsőgyékényes and Cutca/Kötke.¹⁰⁹ Both possessions were previously owned by the Wass family.¹¹⁰ In a confirmation of Michael the Brave's charter by the Transylvanian estates, made in September 1600, it was stipulated that if the two above-mentioned estates were returned to the Wass family, Perušić would be compensated with Arcalia, another estate in the county of Dăbâca/Doboka.¹¹¹

On 1 May 1600, Michael the Brave rewarded Matthew once again for his services to the Christian cause against the Turks. Among Perušić's military exploits were attacks on the Turkish forts on the Danube (namely Rusçuk, present-day Ruse in Bulgaria, and ensuing fight with *Dresztor bey*), the liberation of Brăila, and participation in the Battle of Călugăreni against Koca Sinan pasha (all in 1595, when Matthew was among the Transylvanian soldiers sent by Sigismund Báthory to assist the ruler of Wallachia). For the services stated above, Michael the Brave rewarded Perušić with the possessions Chiraleș/Kerlés and Chintelnic/Kendtelke in the county of Dăbâca, which previously belonged to Nicholas/Miklós Bornemisza, who breached the trust of Michael the Brave. The estates were given to Matthew and his heirs, and in case he died without an heir, they were to be inherited by his wife Sophia/Zsofia Thorny and her heirs.¹¹²

During the last phase of the Long Turkish War, Transylvania was affected by political instability. Rulers changed almost every year and the estates were constantly wavering between the two political options, the Habsburgs or the Ottomans. Perušić was able to adapt successfully to this constantly shifting situation, a lesson he had probably learned from his father. In a letter of Erich Lassotha to Archduke Matthias, from 21 February 1601, Perušić was mentioned among the nobles who sided with Stephen Csáky of Cheresig and had betrayed Michael the Brave in the fall of 1600. This rebel faction was willing to accept Sigismund

rum dux Mathaeus Perussith, acris vir animi et praestabilis..."); Lajos Szádeczky, *Erdély és Mihály vajda története*, 78; Stephanus Szamoskozy (Zamosius), "Erdély története – Istoria Transilvaniei 1598-1599, 1603: Cartea a V-a, Partea a V-a", in: *Mihai Viteazul în conștiința europeană*, vol. 2, *Cronicari și istorici străini secolele XVI-XVIII* (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1983), 174.

¹⁰⁹ RO-SJANRC-8-FFKC-S1, no. 221, no. 222; Andrei Veress, *Documente privitoare la Istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării-Românești, Acte și Scrisori (1600-1601)*, vol. VI (București: Cartea Românească, 1933), 4, doc. 4; Károly P. Szathmáry, *A Gyerömonostori B. Kemény-Család idős, fejedelmi, ágának okmánytára* (Pest: Eggenberger Nándor M. Akad. Könyvtársál, 1871), 30, doc. XI.

¹¹⁰ András W. Kovács, *The History of the Wass de Czege Family* (Hamburg: Edmund-Siemers-Stiftung, 2005), 105, note 527.

¹¹¹ RO-SJANRC-8-FFKC-S1, no. 223.

¹¹² Szádeczky, *Erdély és Mihály vajda története*, 338-339.

Báthory once again as their prince.¹¹³ The self-proclaimed leader of this group, Csáky, was able to involve Perušić in his plot by guaranteeing that he would keep all his possessions, including those received from the Romanian voivode.¹¹⁴ On 18 September 1600, at Mirăslău, Perušić was once again on the battlefield, leading a detachment of Székely soldiers in the army of Stephen Csáky and his Habsburg allies led by General Giorgio Basta.¹¹⁵ The Transylvanian noble of Croatian origin was once again on the winning side. Sigismund Báthory was re-elected as the ruler of Transylvania and Perušić was among his faithful servants.

It is not quite clear what was Perušić's standpoint when Basta and Michael the Brave united against Báthory in the summer of 1601. Yet, a few days after Báthory's defeat at Guruslău in early August 1601, Matthew Perušić was, according to Wolfgang Bethlen, present when general Basta's men murdered their ally, Michael the Brave, now considered redundant and dangerous, near Turda/Torda. Supposedly, Perušić and Louis/Lajos Rákoczi were in the tent, speaking with Michael (perhaps as representatives of Transylvanian nobility), when the voivode was attacked by Basta's agents. Rákoczi was wounded in the attack, but it is not entirely clear if Matthew reacted in any way. Bethlen only made a remark that, after Michael's head was severed, Perušić took a decorational part of the helmet of the murdered lord of Wallachia, adorned with sapphires, for eternal memory.¹¹⁶

Throughout these troublesome times, Perušić was constantly concerned with expending and consolidating his estates. His marriage to Sophia Thorny significantly increased his possessions.¹¹⁷ It seems that he returned to Báthory's camp, if he had ever genuinely left it,¹¹⁸ since on 15 April 1602 Prince Sigismund issued a document that was confirming the right of Matthew Perušić of Kendtelke and his wife Sophia, daughter of the deceased Thomas Thorny of Zentes,¹¹⁹ over several

¹¹³ Veress, *Documente*, VI, 321, doc. 301.

¹¹⁴ Szathmáry, *A Gyerőmonostori B. Kemény-Család*, 33-34, doc. XIII.

¹¹⁵ Lajos Szádeczky, "A Miriszlai ütközet az erdélyiek. Básta és Mihály vajda közöt. 1600 szeptember 18-án", *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 6 (1893): 440.

¹¹⁶ Bethlen, *Historia de rebus Transylvanicis*, V, 46; Szádeczky, *Erdély és Mihály vajda története*, 267.

¹¹⁷ We have been unable to identify the exact date of the marriage between Matthew Perušić and Sophia Thorny. However, the earliest document identified thus far referring to the married couple dates from 1598 and was issued by the wife of Sigismund Báthory, Maria Christina of Austria. The document refers to an inquiry made by Sophia Thorny regarding some of her estates ("...*nobilis dominae Sophiae Torny consortis egregii Mathias Perussit...*"). RO-SJANRC-8-FFKC-S1, no. 215.

¹¹⁸ According to a Saxon chronicle, after the battle of Guruslău, Matthew Perušić accompanied Sigismund Báthory to Moldavia, where the Transylvanian prince spent a short period in exile. Julius Gross, ed., "Auszug aus der Chronik von Simon Massa und Marcus Fuchs", in: *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Brassó*, vol. V (Brassó: Heinrich Zeidner, 1909), 308.

¹¹⁹ Thomas Thorny (Tornyai) was ban of Lugoj and Caransebeș and a strong supporter of the Unitarian confession. Adrian Magina, "The Unitarian Denomination in Banat in the 16th Century", *Transylvanian Rewiev* 13 (2004), no. 1: 7-8.

estates: Cămărașu/Pusztakamarás with the noble manor, Sâmboleni/Zombattelke, which had been confiscated during the rebellion of Gaspar Bekes and given to Thomas Thorny, Sânicosără/Pusztazentmiklós (all in the county of Cluj/Kolozs), as well as Fahid, Felső Olah Gald, and Alsó Magyar Gald (all in the county of Alba/Fehér). Perušić gained these estates through marriage, because Sophia was declared a legitimate male heir of her father (*in masculinum creata sexum vera legitimaque haeres*). The document also stated that Perušić lost two of his estates in the county of Dăbâca – Chintelnic and Chiraleș, which were given back to Nicholas Bornemisza when the fortress of Huszt was lost to the Habsburgs. By this document, the prince confirmed their possession over the above-mentioned estates because the original documents were lost.¹²⁰

The political and matrimonial choices of Matthew Perušić suggest that he was a very pragmatic person. He was able to sense the rapid changes of political context and always chose the right faction, until 1603. He made efforts to gain the trust of Giorgio Basta, the Habsburg governor of Transylvania, whom he met at the end of January 1603 to discuss a matter regarding an estate in the county of Dăbâca, Blăjenii de Jos/Alsó Balásfalva.¹²¹ However, during the following months, he joined Moses Székely, who was elected prince by a pro-Ottoman faction of the Transylvanian nobility. It proved to be his first and last political mistake, because on 17 July 1603, Matthew Perušić, son of Gaspar Perušić the Younger of Croatian origin, lost his life in the battle between Moses Székely and Radu Șerban, the ruler of Wallachia, near Brașov.¹²² Székely was also killed in the battle. Matthew died without leaving any direct heirs and thus the Transylvanian branch of the Perušić family was extinct in the male line, although their heritage lived on through the descendants of Matthew's sisters, Catherine and Anna.

Conclusions

The history of the Transylvanian branch of the Perušić family is a vivid depiction of the historical process of migration in the late medieval and early modern Europe. By gathering the existing information on the origins and careers of several members of this family, we have sought to identify the factors that determined

¹²⁰ Fejér, Rácz, Szász, *Báthory Zsigmond királyi könyvei*, 486-487, doc. 1868.

¹²¹ Endre Veress, *Basta György hadvezér levelzése és iratai (1597-1607)*, vol. II (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1913), 169, doc. 1181.

¹²² Istuanffius, *Regni Hungarici historia*, 489; Sándor Szilágyi, ed., *Szamosközy István történeti maradványai 1566-1603*, vol. III: 1603, *Monumenta Hungariae Historica 2, Scriptorum 29* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1877), 229; Nicolae Iorga, *Studii și documente cu privire la Istoria Românilor*, vol. IV: *Legăturile Principatelor Române cu Ardealul de la 1601 la 1699* (București: I.V. Socecă, 1902), XXXIV.

the choice of migration and, most importantly, the conditions that led to the successful integration of the family in their new homeland.

Integration of the Perušić family in the Transylvanian nobility was facilitated by the fact that both Croatia and Transylvania were part of the former Realm of Saint Stephen. During his early career in Banat and Transylvania, Gaspar Perušić the Younger benefited from his family ties with Bishop Martinuzzi. At this stage, his Croatian origin was an advantage. Over the following decades, he was able to build strong relations with the local nobility, he held important offices in the area (captain of the Cenad fortress, captain of troops of the Bishop of Oradea) and, most importantly, he became a landowner in the region. Matthew Perušić further expanded the possessions of his family through marriage and faithful service to various Transylvanian rulers. Another important factor that contributed to the successful adaptation of the Perušić family in Transylvania was the ability of its members to make frequent and swift, but usually prudent political decisions. Both Gaspar and his son Matthew chose the right faction at the right moment during the events that led to the formation and consolidation of the Transylvanian Principality. Matthew's only wrong choice in this regard proved to be his last, which ended the Perušić family in the direct male line.

Appendix

Document no. 1

Gradec, 18 August 1502

Gaspar Perušić of Belay states that Duke and Ban John Corvinus has pledged him the castle of Ostrovica in the county of Bužani for the sum of 2,000 gold florins, with the obligation that Perušić's heirs serve the ban. Should they refuse to comply, they will be obliged to return the castle without refund. If the ban dies before the redemption of the pledge, his heirs will be able to redeem it for 1,000 instead of 2,000 florins. In case that Perušić dies, his heirs will be obliged to accept the redemption of 1,000 florins.

Nos Gaspar Perwsych de Belay recognoscimus tenoreque presencium significamus quibus expedit universis quod quia illustrissimus dominus Johannes Corvinus Liphovie dux ac regnorum Dalmacie, Croacie et Sclavonie banus, castrum Oztrowycza vocatum in comitatu de Bwsan existens et habitum, ratione duorum millium florenorum mediante suis litteris cum subscripcione manus sue proprie inscripsit et impignoravit, talimodo: quod nos perpetuis suis serviciis et nullius alterius vita nostra comite, sed neque heredes nostri insistere valeamus, sed semper sue illustrissime dominacioni heredibusque suis fideliter servire debebimus donec nos et heredes nostri castrum predictum possidebimus. Ubi autem nos et heredes nostri casu contingenti eidem domino nostro domino duci servire nollemus aut non curaremus, ex tunc absque predicta summa duorum millium florenorum eidem domino duci aut heredibus suis vobis cui comiserint castrum ipsum sine difficultate et remitencia aliquali semper reddere et restituere erimus obligati. Casu autem, quod deus avertat, si ipsum dominum ducem de hac vita decedi contingeret ex tunc nos castrum ipsum heredibus suis aut cui comiserit non pro duobus millibus florenorum sed tantummodo pro mille florenorum similimodo reddere et restituere erimus obligati. Ubi autem nos verisimiliter mori contingeret ex tunc heres noster, aut ipso domino duci aut heredibus suis aut cui comiserit pro predicta tantummodo summa mille florenorum restituere tenebitur et erit obligatus, harum nostrarum vigore et testimonio literararum mediante. Datum in civitate Montisgrecensi, feria quinta proxima post festum assumptionis beate Marie virginis, anno domini millesimo quingentesimo secundo.

Original on parchment, with a pendent seal containing the signet ring impression.

Kept at the Hungarian National Archives (HU-MNL OL-DL 37741).

Document no. 2

Someșeni (Szamosfalva), 1549

Longer fragment of a document by which an unknown high instance, most probably George Martinuzzi, the governor of Transylvania, suspends the litigation between Lady Catherine (daughter of Gaspar Perušić the Younger, widow of Stephen Tamási, and wife of Stephen Bánffy) and Ladislaus Tamási over the possession Meehes (Miheșul de Câmpie), pending the investigation regarding the return of Catherine's dowry.

...attracti mutasset et ad secundam vota se transtullisset domina actrix perstitisset, nam genitor eiusdem domine actricis, egregius scilicet Gasparus Perwssyth certis diebus in possessione predicta Meehes perseverando piscinam pro usu suo piscare fecisset ac deinde domina quoque actrix ad necessitatem celebracionis predictarum secundarum nupciarum suarum piscinam expiscari et pisces ad possessionem Zenthelek ubi nupcie sue facte fuissent ad[.]chi fecisset et in huiusmodi vectura ipsa quoque in causam attractus auxilium fecisset neque ante solutionem dotis ~~sue~~ domine actricis per eundem in causam attractum factam in usu et percceptione emolumenti molendini et piscine predictorum dominam actricem turbasset, que omnia idem in causam attractus probare vellet per testes. Hoc percepto procurator domine actricis subiunxit quod molendinum predictum usque ad tempus satisfaccionis dictis utile fuit et commodum attulit neque penuria aque molendino obfuit neque fec[.....]d domina actrix cumulari fecisset in specie restaret sed in causam attractus illud expendere feci[.....]i nunc in illo loco vinculus feci existeret non ex fero per expensas domine actricis falca[.....] causam actricem falcato et vinculato constaret. Sed licet domina actrix summam dotis sue [.....]averit tempore tamen attractis huiusmodi dotis sue coram eorum nobilibus tempor[.....] presentibus cum protestacione in causam attracto dixisset se velle quid summam dotis sue [.....]sionem eius onus mille florenorum per compositionem interiectum incurreret nichilo [.....] violencias modo premissis in actione eiusdem domine actricis positas eundem in causam [attractum] vellet que omnia et ipsa domina actrix probare vellet per testes, hoc vero quod in causam at[tractus]nturatores abegerit et grana tritici trituratione abstulerit causa literis suis ad prefatum Stephanum Banffy, dominum et maritum domine actricis, per eum datis domina actrix exificare parata esset. Sed quia partibus iusticia fieri non poterat nisi super parciis intencionibus per vos veritas inquiratur. Requiritur igitur vos et nichilominus vobis harum serie autoritate domini nostri gratiosissimi qua fungimur commitimus quatinus (!) acceptis presentibus sub oneribus alias in talibus observari solitis simul vel duo vestrum decimo quinto die a die presenti numerando ad possessionem predictam Meehes accedendo ibique universos testes quos partes ipse coram vobis duxerint nominando sub onere sedecim marcarum vestri in presenciam convocare, ab eisdemque ad fi-

dem eorum Deo debitam fidelitatemque Sacre Corone regni observandam super premissis parciū intencionibus sciatis, inquiratis et experiamini meram, plenam acque omnimodam certitudinis veritatem. Et post hec vos seriem huiusmodi rescite veritatis ut fuerit expedita nobis ad proxime futuram congregationem dominorum regnicolarum sive generalem sive partialem fide vestra mediante referre vel rescribere debeatis et teneamini. Secus non facturi. Praesentibus perlectis exhibenti restitutis. Datum in Zamosfalwa, termino in prenotato, anno domini millesimo quingentesimo quadragesimo nono.

Original on paper (the first part of the document is missing and there is a large laceration in the mid-left section) with remains of an impressed seal in green wax.

Kept at the Romanian National Archives, Cluj County section, Haller Family Fond, Series 2, no. 29a, f. 4 (RO-SJANRC-353-FFH-S1, no. 29a, f. 4).

Document no. 3

Alba Iulia, 10 February 1593

Sigismund Báthory gives a house in Alba Iulia, outside of city walls, to *egregius* Matthew Perušić, for his faithful service. The house is made of wood and is situated in the square called the Blessed Virgin Street (*Bodog Azzony ucza*). It previously belonged to an extinct lineage, the last owner being late Barbara, daughter of Sigismund Grolliay and Sophia Dombit. The donation is issued to Matthew and all his successors and the gift is exempt of all taxes.

Nos Sigismundus Bathory de Somlio, princeps Transsylvaniae et Siculorum comes etc. memoriae commendamus tenore presentium significantes quibus expedit universis, quod nos cum ad nonnullorum dominorum consiliariorum nostrorum singularem intercessionem nobis propterea factam; tum vero attentis et consideratis fidelitate et fidelibus servitiis egregii Matthaei Perwssytt familiaris aulae nostrae quae ipse nobis et huic regno in omnibus occasionibus summa cum animi sui promptitudine exhibuit et impendit ac in futurum quoque exhibituris et impensuris est totalem et integram domum ligneam acialem extra muros huius civitatis nostrae Albensis, in platea Bodog Azzony ucza vocata, e regione domus nobilis Andreae Nehez Albensis vicinitatibusque domorum egregii Thomae Matyws, similiter familiaris aulae nostrae, ab una ac providi Georgii Kadar Albensis parte ab alia, in comitatu Albensi Transsylvaniae existenti habitam, quae alias nobilis quondam Barbarae puellae filiae egregii quondam Sigismundi Grolliay ex nobili olim domina Sophia Dombit, filia nobilis dudum Joannis Dombit, consorte sua susceptae praefuisset, sed per mortem et defectum seminis eiusdem ad nos consequenterque collationi nostram iuxta veterem et approbatam regni legem et consuetudinem devoluta esse perhibetur et redacta. Totum

item et omne ius regium si quod in eadem domo etiam aliter qualitercunque existeret aut eadem et idem nostram ex quibuscunque caussis, viis, modis et rationibus concerneret collationem, simul cum cunctis suis utilitatibus et pertinentiis quibuslibet, terris, scilicet arabilibus, cultis et incultis, agris, pratis, pascuis, campis, foenetis, sylvis, nemoribus, montibus, vallibus, vineis, vinearumque promontoriis, aquis, fluviis, piscinis, piscaturis aquarumque decursibus, molendinis et eorundem locis. Generaliter, vero, quarumlibet utilitatum et pertinentiarum suarum integritatibus, quovis nominis, vocabulo, vocitatis ad eandem et idem de iure et ab antiquo spectantibus et pertinere debentibus sub suis veris metis et antiquis limitibus existentibus memorato Matthaео Perwssit ipsiusque haeredibus et posteritatibus universis generose dedimus, donavimus et contulimus, ymo damus, donamus et conferimus iure perpetuo et irrevocabiliter tenendum, possidendum, pariter et habendum, salvo iure alieno. Pro ampliori vero favoris et munificentiae nostrae erga eundem Matthaеum Perwssith declaratione domum praescriptam ab omni censuum, taxarum et contributionum nostrarum, tam ordinariarum quam extra ordinariarum subsidiique et lucri Camerae nostrae solutione, servitiorum quorumlibet plebeorum et civilium exhibitione, decimarum pensione, hospitum denique condescensione in perpetuum eximendum, supportandum, libertandum et nobilitandum duximus, prout eximimus, supportamus, libertamus et nobilitamus praesentium per vigorem. Quocirca vobis magnificis, egregiis, nobilibus, comitibus, vice comitibus, iudicibusque nobilium comitatus Albensis ac Emerico litterato Zikzay, provisorio nostro Albensis, nec non Caspari Sibrick equitum et Stephano Lazary peditum nostrorum aulicorum capitaneis, decimatoribus, distributoribusque hospiciorum, item prudentibus, circumspectis, iudici et iuratis civibus civitatis nostrae Albensis, modernis et futuris presentes visuris committimus et mandamus firmiter quatenus vos quoque a modo deinceps domum praefatam ab omni censuum, taxarum et contributionum nostrarum solutione, servitiorum quorumlibet plebeorum et civilium exhibitione, decimarum pensione, hospitumque condescensione in perpetuum exemptam, supportatam et nobilitatam habere, neque propterea eundem Matthaеum Perwssit haeredesque et posteritates ipsius universas in persona, rebus, bonisque suis quibusvis turbare, molestare et damnificare praesumatis, nec sitis ausi modo aliquali. Secus non facturi. Praesentibus perlectis exhibenti restituti. Datum Alba Juliae, die decima mensis Februarii, anno Domini millesimo quingentesimo nonagesimo tertio.

Sigismundus Bathory

Wolfgang Kowachoczy,

cancellarius

Georgius Theoreok

Original on paper, with an impressed seal containing the signet ring impression over a piece of paper.

Kept at the Hungarian National Archives (HU-MNL OL-R, no. 64, d. 2, 0124).

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Od Hrvatske do Transilvanije: Rat, migracija i prilagodbene strategije na primjeru obitelji Perušić (15. – 17. stoljeće)

Sažetak

U članku se prikazuje povijest plemenite hrvatske obitelji Perušić kroz pregled života i karijere njezinih vodećih muških predstavnika u tri generacije, počev od prve pojave u izvorima sredinom 15. stoljeća pa sve do izumiranja muške linije u Transilvaniji 1603. godine. Sva trojica čelnika obitelji – Gašpar Stariji, Gašpar Mlađi i Mate – bili su mahom karijerni vojnici koji su vodili konjaničke i pješačke postrojbe, boreći se dijelom protiv Osmanlija, a dijelom protiv drugih kršćanskih plemića u građanskim ratovima koji su se odvijali u Hrvatskoj, Slavoniji, Ugarskoj i Transilvaniji od konca 15. do početka 17. stoljeća. Gašpar Stariji bio je hrvatsko-dalmatinski banovac u vrijeme banova Matije Gereba, Ladislava Egervarskog, Ivana Bota i Emerika Derenčina, a vjerojatno i neku godinu nakon Krbavske bitke. Obnašao je također i druge dužnosti – porkulaba i kaštelana u Rmnju, kaštelana u Bjelaju, Ostrovici Bužanskoj i Perušiću te bužanskog župana i ujedno vojskovođe. Nakon Krbavske bitke nastojao je organizirati obranu, a čini se da je pred kraj života prenio svoju djelatnost u okolicu Zadra, možda upravo u Perušić Benkovački. Umro je u Zadru 1507. Njegov stariji sin Gašpar Mlađi kretao se isprva u krugu knezova Kurjakovića Krbavskih i izvorno je bio pristaša Habsburgovaca. Borio se s Osmanlijama u Hrvatskoj barem od 1525. do 1532. godine, sa značajnim uspjehom, premda je 1525. bio nakratko zarobljen u Bagu (današnjem Karlobagu). Od 1529. je bio uvučen u građanski rat u Slavoniji, više puta mijenjajući stranu koju je podupirao (Ferdinand Habsburški, zagrebački biskup Šimun Erdódy, Ludovico Gritti, Ivan Zapolja). Dugo je uživao povjerenje Nikole Jurišića i u svim je sukobima predvodio konjicu. Konačno se opredijelio za kralja Ivana Zapolju oko 1538. i trajno odselio na istok. Do 1550. je boravio u sjevernom Banatu (točnije u Cenadu), a kasnije je prešao u Transilvaniju/Sedmogradsku, gdje je stekao brojna imanja (uglavnom u Bihorskoj županiji), služeći nekolicinu *de jure* i *de facto* vladara Zapoljinih teritorija, uključujući još jednog istaknutog Hrvata – velikovaradinskog biskupa Jurja Utišenovića Martinuševića. Sudjelovao je u ubojstvu Franje Bebeke u Erdeljskom Biogradu (Alba Iulia) 1558. godine, po naredbi kraljice Izabele. Smatra se da je bio oženjen kćerkom Bartaka Utišenovića, a zna se da je imao barem troje djece – kćeri Katarinu i Anu te sina Matu (možda iz više brakova). Katarina je bila udana za Stjepana Tamásija, a zatim za Stjepana iz znamenite transilvanijske obitelji Losonczi Bánffy, a Ana za Ivana iz obitelji Harinnai Farkas

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(postoji mogućnost da se kasnije preudala). Gašparov sin Mate, posljednji muški član ove grane obitelji Perušića, proveo je svoj život u vojnoj službi različitih transilvanijskih vladara (predstavnik obitelji Báthory, vlaškog gospodara Mihaja Hrabrog, Mojsija Székelya i dr.), gotovo uvijek se pridružujući pobjedničkoj strani u čestim sukobima. Postao je kapetan transilvanijskoga dvorskog pješaštva 1599. godine, a zbog zasluga mu je dodijeljena kuća u sjedištu Transilvanijske kneževine, Erdeljskom Biogradu. Tijekom vremena je, pored starih obiteljskih, stekao i nove posjede u sekeljskom sjedištu (*szék*) Odorhei/Udvarhely te u županijama Dăbâca/Doboka, Cluj/Kolozs i Alba/Fehér. Brak sa Sofijom Thorny zaključio je prije 1598. godine, ali nije ostavio potomstvo. Poginuo je u bitci blizu Braşova 1603. godine, boreći se na strani Mojsija Székelya (koji je također poginuo) protiv vlaškog vladara Radua Şerbana. Nadživjeli su ga potomci njegovih sestara Katarine i Ane.

Ključne riječi: Gašpar Perušić Stariji, Gašpar Perušić Mlađi, Mate Perušić, obitelj Perušić, Hrvatska, Transilvanija, plemstvo, migracije, ratovanje u ranom novom vijeku