

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN FRANCE AND PRINCIPALITY OF TRANSYLVANIA IN THE MID-16th CENTURY AND THE ALLIANCE PROJECT OF 1558¹

Victor V. VIZAUER

The Romanian Academy
George Barițiu Institute of History. Cluj-Napoca, Romania

e-mail: victor.vizauer@acad-cj.ro

Abstract

The article analyses the diplomatic relations between the Principality of Transylvania and France during the period 1541–1559, under the leadership of Queen Isabella Szapolya (Jagiellon). The political context is marked by the unstable balance of power among the Ottoman Empire, the Habsburgs, and the French kings, the latter being allies of the Turks. During this time, Francis I and Henry II sought to support Transylvania, viewing it as a strategic ally against the Habsburgs. Key moments include diplomatic missions, such as that of Bishop John Statileo to France, and the 1558 alliance project, which proposed a marriage between John Sigismund and a French princess, alongside French financial and military support. Although the plan was promising, conflicting interests among France, the Habsburgs, and the Ottoman Empire, as well as the political maneuvers of certain French and Transylvanian figures, prevented the alliance from materializing. Queen Isabella, a strong-willed leader, played a significant role in maintaining Transylvania's political autonomy, but internal and external challenges limited the success of her diplomatic endeavours. The good relations with France did not end with the queen's death, as they were continued by her son, Prince John Sigismund. The article highlights the complexity of diplomacy in 16th-century Europe and Transylvania's role in the geopolitical balance of Central Europe.

Keywords: Transylvania; France; alliance; 16th century; Ottoman Empire; Habsburg; diplomatic relations.

Introduction

Through this article, I aim to bring to the attention of researchers and history enthusiasts a topic that has been lesser explored, at least in Romanian historiography, namely the diplomatic relations between the young Principality of Transylvania and France. The period in question is the mid-16th century, specifically the years 1541–1559, focusing on the relations with France maintained by Queen Isabella Szapolya (Jagiellon) after the death of King John Szapolya (1540) until her own passing (1559), with particular emphasis on the 1558 alliance project between the two countries. Naturally, Transylvania's relations with France predated 1541 and did not end with the queen's death, as they were continued by John Sigismund Szapolya.

Why are the diplomatic relations between Transylvania and France important? These connections influenced Transylvanian politics in various ways regarding its position towards the two great neighbouring empires, the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires. This was because the French kings, initially Francis I (1515–1547) and later Henry II (1547–1559), were allies of

¹ Article History: Received: 07.04.2025. Accepted: 08.04.2025. Published: 15.05.2025. No funding was received either for the research presented in the article or for the creation of the article.

the Turks and enemies of the Germans. This situation fostered an affinity between the two countries, with France seeking to support Transylvania both in its relations with the Ottoman Porte and in its struggles against the forces of Ferdinand of Habsburg.

1. Franco-Transylvanian Relations between 1541 and 1558

As previously stated, the ties between Hungarian kings and France preceded the diplomatic relations cultivated by Queen Isabella. I will mention only the most recent diplomatic contacts between King John Szapolya (1526-1540) and Francis I, specifically those from 1538-1540. In 1538, an envoy of the French king, De Goys, visited the court of King John. Later that same year, the Hungarian king sent a delegation to Paris, led by the Bishop of Transylvania, Ioan Statileo (Horváth, 1872, p. 80).

Approximately two years later, shortly before King John's departure for Transylvania to suppress the rebellion of the voivodes Ștefan Mailat and Imre Balassa, another French envoy, Lacroix, arrived in Buda. After extensive discussions with John Szapolya, it was decided that István Werböczy would be sent to Paris along with the French envoy. However, George Martinuzzi – bishop of Oradea, royal treasurer and guardian (from 1540) of Prince John Sigismund – insisted that the same Bishop Ioan Statileo be sent instead. The bishop reluctantly accepted the mission, but only after Queen Isabella's persistent requests. It appears that he set out for Paris four to five weeks after King John had departed for Transylvania. On May 25, the king wrote to Ioan Statileo, who was still in France, informing him that he had successfully quelled Ștefan Mailat's rebellion (Zsalay, 1859, pp. 183-186; Horváth, 1872, p. 87 and footnote no. 2, p. 87; Szilágyi, 1866, p. 269; Szilágyi, 1876a, p. 4; Veress, 1901, pp. 71-72).

However, in July 1540, King John died. Shortly afterward, Ferdinand I of Habsburg, as King of Hungary, attempted to claim the country for himself, prompting the intervention of the Ottoman Porte. Leading a large army in the summer of 1541, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent arrived in Hungary, and on August 29, he occupied the capital, Buda, and the central part of the country, turning it into an Ottoman province. Transylvania, along with the territories of Hungary east of the Tisza River (known as *Partium Regni Hungariae* or simply *Partium*), was to form a separate state ruled by Queen Isabella, Brother George Martinuzzi, and Peter Petrovici, in the name of and until the coming of age of Prince John Sigismund Szapolya. From this moment on, the foreign relations of the new country were under the queen's jurisdiction. However, Brother George assumed full power, effectively sidelining Isabella from key decisions (*Album Oltardianum 1526-1629*, pp. 12-22; Possevino, 1913, pp. 70-73; Forgách, 1982, p. 5; Zsalay, 1859, pp. 187-196; Veress, 1901, pp. 177-194; Szilágyi, 1876a, pp. 4, 31, 93; Felezeu, 1996, pp. 75-76; Feneșan, 1997, pp. 83-97).

Another attempt at collaboration with the French is recorded a decade later, in 1551, shortly before the Habsburg takeover of Transylvania, facilitated by Bishop George Martinuzzi. In fact, as early as 1545, one of Francis I's envoys to Constantinople, Jean de Montluc, had emphasized the strategic importance of Transylvania for French policy in this part of Europe. He specifically considered the Principality to be the only viable support for a Hungarian and Romanian revolt (Tocilescu & Odobescu, 1886, doc. VIII, p. 4).

Returning to the year 1551, correspondence between Brother George and Ferdinand of Habsburg reveals that Martinuzzi requested the archduke to capture a Dominican monk named Augustinus, who was allegedly heading to France to represent Isabella's interests. His mission is not explicitly detailed, but Brother George was concerned that this embassy might create

complications² that might, in turn, delay Transylvania's transition to Habsburg rule. George Martinuzzi had been actively working towards this political shift for some time.³

The measures taken by Brother George to prevent the strengthening of relations between Isabella and the King of France were carried out in a context in which Suleiman the Magnificent had withdrawn his support for Martinuzzi as early as the previous year, branding him a traitor and a scoundrel. In the *firman* sent to Queen Isabella, Count Peter Petrovici, and other lords and cities of Transylvania at the end of July 1550, the sultan informed them of his decision to remove Brother George from the leadership of the country. The decree also mentioned that the French king had alerted him to certain actions of Brother George, describing him as disloyal, accusing him of amassing wealth for himself – even though he was a friar – rather than for the queen and her son, of keeping soldiers constantly in his service, of seizing the best estates and fortresses for himself, and of plotting to expel the widow and son of King John Szapolya from the country in order to bring Transylvania under the authority of Ferdinand of Habsburg.⁴ Earlier, on April 24 of the same year, the French ambassador in Constantinople, d'Aramon, wrote to King Henry II that the sultan had decided to ensure the loyalty of Transylvania, Moldavia, and Wallachia in his struggle against the Germans (Charrière, 1850, p. 114; Tocilescu & Odobescu, 1886, doc. IX, pp. 4-5).

Between 1551 and 1556, the ties between the French and Queen Isabella continued in Poland, in the various locations where the queen resided. During these years, Isabella and her son found their most significant supporter in Henry II of France (Marczali, 1935, p. 89; Makkai, Mócsy, 1986, p. 439). The representatives of the King of France at the Ottoman Porte acted against the Habsburgs, carrying out diplomatic efforts in support of Isabella and her son, John Sigismund, to reclaim the throne of Transylvania. This restoration was favourable to France, as it weakened the Habsburgs by causing them to lose a territory that Ferdinand of Habsburg considered important and necessary in the context of his rivalry and conflicts with the Turks in Hungary.

After Transylvania came under the authority of King Ferdinand, Queen Isabella and Prince John Sigismund left for Poland in August 1551 (though they remained in Košice until the summer of 1552), and Brother George was assassinated on December 17, 1551. However, the situation in the country was not as the Germans had hoped. By early 1552, the Transylvanians had grown weary of the Habsburgs' so-called *Christian aid* represented by General Giovanni Battista Castaldo, a Milanese noble, and his mercenaries (6,000 or 7,000 in number; it was said that when they left Transylvania, they transported stolen goods from the locals in over 50 wagons). There was open talk about bringing back Queen Isabella and John Sigismund. This plan was wholeheartedly supported by both the sultan and the King of France. In 1552 alone, the Ottoman Porte sent around 20 letters to the Transylvanian estates and cities, as well as to certain nobles, urging them to expel the Germans and restore John Sigismund and Queen Isabella to the country (Feneşan & Feneşan, 2013, doc. 31-51, pp. 162-213; doc. 58, pp. 225-226; Ribier, 1666, pp. 407-408; Charrière, 1850, pp. 184-185; Tocilescu & Odobescu, 1886, doc. XV, p. 8; Possevino, 1913, pp. 78-82). There was also an exchange of letters between the sultan and the Habsburgs regarding the former's intention to restore the queen and her son to the country (Veress, 1929, doc. 97, pp. 84-85). Meanwhile, the King of Poland was preparing to recruit soldiers to reinstate his nephew on the throne of Transylvania (Veress, 1929, doc. 101, p. 88).

² Letter dated July 12, 1551 (Károlyi, 1881, doc. CLX/b, pp. 247-248).

³ Regarding Martinuzzi's negotiations with Ferdinand for the entry of Transylvania under Habsburg control, see Veress, 1891, pp. 274-328; Oborni, 2020, pp. 226-232.

⁴ For the full text of the *Firman* see Szilágyi, 1876, pp. 307-311.

Therefore, Ferdinand suspected that this was the real reason why Isabella was dissatisfied with the estates in Silesia that she had received from him in exchange for ceding Transylvania – rather than their poverty, as was officially claimed. Since she spent most of her time in Poland with her brother and mother, King Sigismund Augustus and Queen Bona, Ferdinand believed that her discontent was not due to the estates' poor condition. After all, Frankenstein Castle was considered a beautiful and pleasant residence. Thus, the situation was favourable for Isabella to voice her complaints to Ferdinand regarding the dire state of the estates she had received, whose revenues were significantly lower than the amounts initially promised by the Habsburgs. Fearing that, out of disappointment, the queen might wish to return to Transylvania, a new 17-point agreement was reached between Ferdinand and Isabella at the end of August 1552. Among other things, it was promised that an investigation into the estates' revenues would be conducted, and that, if necessary, additional properties would be granted to supplement them. Discussions on these issues continued into the following year. Moreover, due to the poverty of Oppeln (Opole, Poland), the queen insisted that she was compelled to reside mostly in Poland. This made the idea of returning to Transylvania increasingly appealing to her – especially since Prince John Sigismund had begun to reproach his mother for agreeing to cede Transylvania. Ultimately, the situation developed towards the very outcome that Ferdinand had been trying to avoid at all costs (Hatvani, 1859, doc. 272-276, p. 22-34; Szilágyi, 1876a, pp. 347-379, 380-443; Veress, 1901, pp. 331-355; Possevino, 1913, p. 83).⁵

Decisive for the acceptance of the idea of the queen's return to Transylvania was the visit of Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, ambassador of the French king Henry II, who offered French intervention with the sultan for the restitution of the parental estates to Prince John Sigismund. Additionally, at the order of the Ottoman Porte, envoys from the voivodes of Moldavia and Wallachia came to Isabella, prompting her to re-establish contact with the Transylvanian estates.

Meanwhile, the queen reassured Ferdinand, who, in turn, advised her to be cautious about the French king and eventually resolved the issue of Isabella's revenues by granting her the principality of Ratibor. However, in December 1552, the king of France once again assured Isabella of his support for the young prince's return to the Transylvanian throne.⁶

Then, in August 1553, the French ambassador to the Porte, Gabriel de Luels, sent a letter to the nobles and Szekler estates, informing them that he had intervened with the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha, after which the sultan reconfirmed that he would grant Transylvania only to John Sigismund Zapolya. To achieve this, Transylvanian supporters were to take steps to facilitate the return of Queen Isabella and John Sigismund. Additionally, King Henry II asked Sigismund Augustus, the king of Poland, to also assist in this matter (Feneşan & Feneşan, 2013, doc. 76, pp. 264-265).

Even the voivode of Moldavia, Alexandru Lăpuşneanu, assured the Transylvanian nobles of his support for the return of King John's son to Transylvania (Veress, 1929, doc. 172, pp. 131-132; doc. 189-191 and 193, pp. 143-146). In January 1554, one of the French king's envoys, dressed in Hungarian attire, arrived in Constantinople alongside two of Isabella's envoys and one from Peter Petrovici to advocate for the queen's cause and to prevent the planned marriage between Prince John Sigismund and one of King Ferdinand's daughters,

⁵ For details on the new agreement between Ferdinand and Isabella, see Veress, 1901, pp. 351-355; Szádeczky, 1888, pp. 3-6. See also Căzan, Denize, 2001, p. 273 passim; Makkai, Mócsy, 1987, pp. 431-435; Felezeu, 1996, pp. 78-79; Feneşan, 1997, pp. 150-154.

⁶ Two letters addressed by King Henry II to Peter Petrovici (December 20, 1552) and Queen Isabella (December 25, 1552), in *Magyar történelmi okmánytár, a Brüsseli országos levéltárból és a burgundi könyvtárból* [Hungarian Historical Document Collection from the National Archives in Brussels and the Burgundian Library]. Összeszedte s lemásolta in Hatvani, 1858, doc. 253 and 254, pp. 359-361; Veress, 1929, doc. 164, p. 126; Veress, 1901, pp. 356, 358.

proposing instead the hand of a French princess (Szalay, 1858-1859, doc. nr. LXIII, pp. 174-176; Ribier, 1666, pp. 488-489; Veress, 1901, p. 378; Szilágyi, 1876a, p. 459).

Also, in the year 1554 (with discussions extending into 1555), the idea of an alliance with France was once again brought to the table, although it seems that discussions had already begun in 1552 (Horn, 2012, p. 97) or were a continuation of the attempts from 1551. Specifically, it was a matrimonial alliance viewed from a dual perspective. The plan considered a French princess for John Sigismund and a prince for Queen Isabella, while both the French and the Polish worked toward reinstating the two at the head of Transylvania. While the Poles operated from the shadows, the French were much more visible, especially due to the open conflict between Henry II and Emperor Charles V (Szalay, 1858-1859, doc. CXIII, p. 337; Szilágyi, 1876a, p. 467; Szádeczky, 1888, pp. 66-67; Căzan & Denize, 2001, p. 278).⁷

In March 1555, Ferdinand of Austria was informed that an envoy of the French king had presented Queen Isabella with a proposal for a matrimonial alliance and assistance in reclaiming the lost territories of Transylvania and Hungary. In addition to marrying one of Henry II's daughters, Prince John Sigismund was to receive a sum of money (from the French bank in Constantinople) to finance a war against the Germans (Szádeczky, 1888, pp. 89-90).

Besides the French ambassador to the Ottoman Porte, Michel de Codignac – who was in constant contact with Antonius Verancsics and Franciscus Zay, the Habsburg envoys in the Ottoman capital – a French royal agent, Jacob Cambray, passed through the territories controlled by Peter Petrovici and made a visit to Transylvania. There, he addressed a substantial letter to the Transylvanian estates, urging them to bring back John Sigismund (Szilágyi, 1876a, pp. 467-468; doc. nr. XVII, pp. 532-536).

In the context of the actions undertaken by the Turks to bring Transylvania back under their suzerainty by reinstating the young John Sigismund as prince – the prince was urged to hasten his return to Hungary, as the banner had already been sent to him and was received by Peter Petrovici, who was also granted Lugoj, Caransebeș, and other fortresses – we encounter, once again, the French ambassador Martines. Through his skilful maneuvers, he expedited John Sigismund's appointment as King of Hungary and Transylvania during the divan held on April 11, 1555, in Amasya (Asia Minor). Isabella's envoy, Ferenc Csanádi, was also present at this meeting. The sultan informed Ferdinand I about these developments, as John Sigismund's reinstatement on the Transylvanian throne was deemed necessary for concluding peace between the Ottoman Porte and the Habsburgs, whose negotiations were already underway. In the autumn of the same year, the dragoman Mahmud and the French ambassador, Jacob Cambray, were in the fortress of Lesko in Poland, where Queen Isabella had retreated from Sanok due to the plague. The two also informed Ferdinand's envoys at the queen's court about these events (Ribier, 1666, pp. 555-590; Hatvani, 1859, doc. 278-280, pp. 37-44; Veress, 1929, doc. 197, pp. 148-149; Feneșan & Feneșan, 2013, doc. 89 and 90, pp. 295-299; doc. 117, pp. 358-366; Veress, 1901, p. 395-396; Szilágyi, 1876a, pp. 468-469, 472-473).

At the beginning of 1556, Martines was once again sent on a mission to Isabella at the request of his colleague Codignac, bringing the queen letters from the sultan along with good news. These messages referred to her imminent return to Transylvania and the reinstatement of her son, John Sigismund, as prince. Before Christmas in 1555, on December 23, the

⁷ See the letter / report of the ambassadors from the Porte, Antonius Verancsics and Franciscus Zay, to Ferdinand of Habsburg (King of Hungary), dated September 25, 1554, in Szalay, 1858-1859, doc. CXIII, pp. 333-338.

Antonius (Antal) Verancsics (1504-1573) was a humanist, historiographer, prelate (provost of Alba Iulia, Transylvania; bishop of Esztergom, Hungary) and politician (royal lieutenant in Hungary), ambassador of Ferdinand I of Habsburg to Constantinople; he left behind numerous letters, reports and writings of a historical nature – Szalay, Wenzel, 1812-1891. For the humanistic and historical work of Antonius Verancsics, see Gyulai, 2021, pp. 197-212.

For an analysis of the political and military situation in Europe during these years, including the conflict between Charles V and Henry II, see Guitman, Korpás, Tóth, Szabó, 2019.

Transylvanian estates gathered in Târgu Mureș, where they openly sided with John Sigismund. In February 1556, envoys László Kemény, representing the Hungarians, János Sombori, for the Székelys, and Thomas Bomel, the notary of Sibiu, on behalf of the Saxons, officially informed King Ferdinand of this decision and asked for his approval. Without waiting for a response from the Austrians, another assembly was held in Turda after Easter, attended by the sultan's envoy. The estates formally asked Peter Petrovici to take control of Transylvania in the name of John Sigismund, whom they elected as "prince and king," declaring him their "natural lord" on March 12. Meanwhile, Queen Isabella and the prince moved their residence closer to the Hungarian border, settling in Lviv (Lvov, Lemberg; today in Ukraine), following favourable news from the Ottoman Porte and Transylvania. Given these developments, Ferdinand of Habsburg realized he could no longer retain Transylvania and thus relinquished his claims, reasoning that it was preferable for the country to be ruled again by the Szapolyai family (Christian rulers) rather than becoming a Turkish province. Isabella and John Sigismund left Lviv only on September 23, traveling through Maramureș, then Baia Mare and Dej – with the support of troops from the voivodes of Moldavia and Wallachia (Veress, 1929, doc. 201, 202 and 204, pp. 159-162) –, on October 22, they finally arriving in Cluj (*Chronica Civitatis Schaesburgensis*, p. 92; Ribier, 1666, pp. 637-642; Feneșan & Feneșan, 2013, doc. 119, pp. 375-383; doc. 122 and 123, pp. 391-399; Szilágyi, 1866, pp. 334-335; Veress, 1901, pp. 401-406, 418-422; Szilágyi, 1876a, pp. 473-475, 479-481, 488; Szádeczky, 1888, pp. 92-95; Căzan & Denize, 2001, p. 281).⁸

Despite all the attempts between 1551 and 1556, King Ferdinand was unable to send the necessary financial and military aid to maintain Habsburg power in Transylvania. The European political and military context – his brother, Emperor Charles V's conflicts with the opposition in the Protestant German states and their ally, the French king Henry II, as well as Charles' attempt to secure the title of Holy Roman Emperor for his son, the future King Philip II of Spain, at Ferdinand's expense (Charrière, 1850, p. 133; Lócsei, 1841, pp. 225-227; Guitman, Korpás, Tóth & Szabó, pp. 253-293; Luis de Ávila y Zúñiga, 2022) – demanded his attention and resources elsewhere. This allowed the Transylvanian supporters of the Szapolya family to bring back King John's heir and his mother.

Additionally, in the anonymous account titled *Succesi Del Hungharia del 1551*, the financial and military difficulties faced by Ferdinand's envoy in Transylvania, Gian Battista Castaldo, in maintaining control over the country are described (Cristea, 2007, pp. 5-25).

At the first assembly of the estates, convened and even opened by the queen after her return to Transylvania, held in Cluj and beginning on November 1, 1556, the dragoman Mahmud was also present. After spending three years at Isabella's court – having been sent to Poland in the spring of 1554⁹ – he returned to Adrianople, where the sultan was residing. After informing the sultan, Mahmud also presented him with a letter from the queen, in which she asked Suleiman to write to the King of France to request the hand of one of his daughters for John Sigismund. At the beginning of January 1557, a spy of Ferdinand of Habsburg informed him about the queen's request (Ribier, 1866, pp. 590-592; Veress, 1901, p. 426; Szilágyi, 1876b, pp. 3-4; Szádeczky, 1888, pp. 95-96; Feneșan & Feneșan, 2013, doc. 125, pp. 402-403; Feneșan, 1997, p. 258).

⁸ For more and various details regarding the actions of the Transylvanians and the return to Transylvania of John Sigismund and Queen Isabella, see Chronik des Hieronimus Ostermayer, pp. 58-61; Szilágyi, 1876a, pp. 477-488; Feneșan, 1997, pp. 151-160.

Regarding the special reception in Cluj of the queen and the prince, see Szilágyi, 1876b, p. 3.

⁹ See the *Firman* of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent to the Transylvanian voivodes Ferenc Kendy and István Dobó, dated March 4-5, 1554, in Feneșan & Feneșan 2013, doc. 86, pp. 288-290; see also the letter of ambassador Michel de Codignac to King Henry II of April 3, 1554, in Ribier, 1666, p. 490; Charrière, 1850, p. 317 and Tocilescu & Odobescu, 1886, doc. XVII, pp. 9-10.

As a natural consequence of the good relations between Isabella's family members and even herself with the French, who supported her even during the period in which she was, together with John Sigismund, far from Transylvania (1551-1556), the queen saw in an alliance with France and the intervention of the French ambassadors in Istanbul the possibility of recovering for Transylvania the territories occupied by the Porte in Banat and on the western border (Szilágyi, 1866, p. 338; Szilágyi, 1876b, p. 27; Veress, 1901, p. 441). Initially, attempts were made to recover some fortresses – Timișoara, Lipova, Orșova, etc. conquered by the Ottomans during the anti-Habsburg campaigns of 1551-1552 (Feneșan & Feneșan, 2013, doc. 22, pp. 127-134; doc. 40, pp. 182-184; doc. 46, pp. 200-202; doc. 49, pp. 206-207; Charrière, 1850, pp. 169-170, 173, 176, 199, 201, 218, 224-225; Feneșan, 1997, pp. 147-151; Feneșan, 2014, pp. 19-22; Ágoston, 2014, p. 72; Hegyi, 2019, p. 312) – through diplomatic channels, but the Porte always refused, and finally accepted to discuss this request on the condition that the Transylvanians occupy the fortresses of Gyula (Hungary) and Oradea (Romania) themselves. The estates understood quite quickly that this was not feasible; therefore the recovery of Timișoara, Lipova, Orșova (in Banat, Romania) and Becicherec (today in Vojvodina, Serbia) was no longer in sight.¹⁰ Thus, the only solution remained to appeal to French influence.

Queen Isabella's desire to create a matrimonial alliance with France also had precedents in her Polish family. This was the case with the attempts of her mother, Bona Sforza, to achieve an alliance between France and Poland, especially after 1524, when she inherited her mother's territories in southern Italy (Bari, Rossano), which were threatened by the Papal States and the Spanish Habsburgs. Therefore, an alliance directed against the latter was important, first and foremost. Given the fact that the relationship between Queen Bona and her daughter was very close¹¹, it is likely that the queen mother also instilled in Isabella the idea of an alliance with the main enemies of the Habsburgs in Western Europe.

The rather complicated situation in which Transylvania found itself in 1558 – contributed to by the coronation of Ferdinand as Holy Roman Emperor on 14 March 1558, which increased the resources that the Austrians could put at the service of their own interests, even if these resources were sometimes not easy to mobilize, and the imperial title brought with it new problems to solve in the west (Fazekas, 2019, pp. 180-181) – meant that the French alliance was taken very seriously, its necessity extending beyond the recovery of border territories, namely to resistance against the Austrian attempts to bring Transylvania back under their control. In turn, the French saw in Transylvania an important ally against the Habsburgs, on the latter's eastern borders (Szilágyi, 1876b, p. 34).

2. The Franco-Transylvanian Alliance Project of 1558

Isabella promptly appealed to the aforementioned French assistance, and they raised the issue with the Porte of restoring to Transylvania certain fortresses and territories occupied by the Turks. To support these efforts, the queen convened the Assembly of the country in early 1557, following the advice of Sultan Selim II. During this session, Christopher Báthory – a man of distinguished education and future voivode of Transylvania (1575-1581) – was appointed envoy and then sent to Paris in the autumn of the same year. His mission was to propose an alliance between France and Transylvania through the marriage of John Sigismund to a French princess. The Transylvanian envoy was well received at the French court, and the terms of the alliance were drafted swiftly. The main points were as follows: John Sigismund

¹⁰ Antonius Verancsics' letter to the Palatine of Hungary, Tamás Nádasdy, dated September 19, 1558, in Szalay, 1865, doc. XCV, p. 239; Feneșan & Feneșan, 2013, doc. 131, pp. 416-420; Szilágyi, 1866, p. 338; Szilágyi, 1876b, pp. 27-28.

¹¹ Horn, 2012, p. 43. For the relationship between Queen Isabella and her mother Queen Bona, see Veress, 1901, pp. 15-22 and Molnár, 2020, pp. 163-172.

was to marry one of Henry II's daughters; the French king was to intervene with the Ottoman Porte to secure the return of Transylvanian fortresses located on the near side of Tisza river, which had been handed over after the occupation of Buda, but later reoccupied by the Turks due to the 'cunning of Brother George'; France was to provide military aid of 5000 florins annually for five years. In the spring of 1558, Christopher Bathory returned from Paris. Accompanying him to Transylvania – via Venice, Ragusa and Belgrade – was Pierre Louis de Martines, who was sent as an ambassador (Felmer, 1780, p. 163; Szalay, 1854, p. 314; Szilágyi, 1866, pp. 338-339; Szilágyi, 1876b, pp. 33-34; Veress, 1901, p. 460 and footnotes 4-5, p. 460; Feneşan, 1997, pp. 258-262; Horn, 2012, footnote 238, pp. 97-98).

Regarding the financial and military aid in the alliance project, there is an inconsistency: some sources mention financial aid and 5,000 soldiers for five years (Szilágyi, 1866, p. 339), others refer to funds for maintaining 5,000 soldiers annually for five years (Veress, 1901, p. 460; Szilágyi, 1876b, p. 34), while some indicate only an annual aid of 5,000 florins for five years (Feneşan, 1997, p. 261; Horn, 2012, footnote 238, pp. 97-98).

Similarly, regarding John Sigismund's future French wife, the sources are contradictory: some claim she was to be one of Henry II's daughters (Szilágyi, 1866, p. 339; Veress, 1901, p. 460; Szalay, 1854, p. 314; Feneşan, 1997, p. 258; Horn, 2012, footnote 238, pp. 97-98), while others mention a niece (Szilágyi, 1876b, p. 34) or even a sister (*sororem Regis Galliae*: Felmer, 1780, p. 163). It is possible that different people from the French royal family were considered before a final decision was made.

An obstacle arose due to the French ambassador to the Ottoman Porte, De la Vigne, who, upon learning about the possible marriage between John Sigismund and a French princess, questioned the necessity of the Franco-Transylvanian alliance. In a letter sent from Adrianople on December 28, 1557, he advised his sovereign not to send his own daughter to Transylvania but to consider Miss Rohan instead. He even suggested that, if necessary, her name should be changed, but with great caution (Ribier, 1666, pp. 714-715; Szilágyi, 1876b, p. 33; Feneşan, 1997, pp. 259-260).

By late spring, an imminent conflict arose with the ruler of Moldavia over the fortress of Chioar (northern Transylvania), for which he had obtained a *firman* from the Ottoman Porte. Although Isabella had promised to return the domain to him, she had no intention of complying. In response, the Moldavians attacked and plundered the Land of Bârsa (southern Transylvania). In this context, the queen convened the country Assembly in Alba Iulia between June 5 and 21, 1558. During the meeting, it was also decided to mobilize the army, with the possibility that John Sigismund would also personally participate to cleanse *Partium* of Ferdinand's allies and also to secure the success of the alliance with France. The French ambassador, Martines, was also present at the assembly, where he read the terms of the alliance project and urged an intensification of military actions against the Habsburgs. During the same assembly, some nobles – notably the Kendy brothers, Ferenc and Antal, as well as Ferenc Bebek – expressed concerns regarding the ruler's education, especially in military matters, given that he had already turned 17. As a result, they sought to reduce the queen's power and even proposed relocating her residence to Oradea, arguing that the estates could no longer support her large expenses. This move also aimed to distance the young ruler from his mother's influence. However, in July, when the army was summoned, the situation took an unexpected turn. The French ambassador attempted to mediate the internal disputes in Transylvania, aligning himself with the nobles who advocated for a greater role in the prince's education. Sándor Szilágyi suggested that these developments raised suspicions for the queen, concerns that were further reinforced by her Polish advisors. Isabella realized that the alliance with France would effectively transfer power to John Sigismund, thereby sidelining her from governance. Consequently, the alliance no longer served her interests. She refrained from mentioning it

while Martines was in Transylvania, and upon his departure, he received only vague promises (Szilágyi, 1876b, pp. 34-39; doc. VIII, pp. 93-100; Veress, 1901, pp. 461-462; Szilágyi, 1866, p. 339).

It seems that the turn of events in Transylvania was favourable for the French ambassador to the Ottoman Porte, De Vigny, who was striving to provoke a Turkish naval attack against King Philip II of Spain on one hand, and to thwart the conclusion of a lasting peace between the Turks and the Austrians on the other. In Istanbul, a rumour circulated – spread by Bebek's men and the Kendy brothers, whom Antonius Verancics called *triumviratus pestilentissimus* [the pestilential triumvirate] –, that Isabella was negotiating with Ferdinand, an action the Turks sought to prevent, even by force. De Vigny reported this to the French court, specifically stating that he did not want France to be seen as a party to any agreement between Transylvania and the Habsburgs, should such an agreement come to fruition. As a result, Martines left the Transylvanian court for Istanbul, while Isabella sent envoys to the Porte to refute the rumours spread by the rebellious Transylvanian nobles (Szalay, 1865, p. 239; Szilágyi, 1876b, pp. 39-40). Reports of negotiations between Transylvania and the Austrians regarding a peace agreement appear to have been true, even though they ultimately led nowhere. During the winter of 1558-1559, amid ongoing border skirmishes where victory alternated between the two sides, negotiations began in Vienna, this time mediated by the King of Poland, Sigismund August, Isabella's brother. The Polish king, through his envoy Martin Cromer, urged Ferdinand to honour previous agreements and to grant Isabella a place where she could retire in accordance with her royal status, considering her illness. The emperor accepted the Polish proposal on the condition that Isabella's captains respect the peace and refrain from attacking Ferdinand's partisans, as has been done by the captain of the Tokaj fortress in Hungary. However, no satisfactory agreement was reached that would secure a lasting peace (Veress, 1901, pp. 460-461).

The aforementioned nobles who spread rumours unfavourable to the queen and the French alliance in Constantinople – Ferenc Bebek and the Kendy brothers – were punished after their return to Transylvania. The queen summoned them to Alba Iulia so that they could also hear the sultan's message, brought by a *çavuş*, and consult with her. On the night of September 1, 1558, the three were killed by Melchior Balassa's men – whom the queen had allied with in the meantime and whose services she used –, on the grounds that they had returned from Constantinople with poison to assassinate the queen and her son, and, if that failed, to kill them by force of arms (Szalay, 1865, doc. XCV, pp. 238-243; *Album Oltardianum 1526-1629*, pp. 23-24; Possevino, 1913, p. 86; Szilágyi, 1876b, pp. 40-42; Veress, 1901, pp. 462-464).

Towards the end of 1558, Isabella's health problems worsened, which led her – besides the fact that military actions were not yielding the desired results – to seek help from her brother, King Sigismund August, as previously mentioned, in order to conclude peace with the Habsburgs. Ferdinand agreed to initiate negotiations but feared that Isabella would not accept anything without the knowledge and consent of the Ottoman Porte. However, the sultan, in turn, was in favour of peace, but only for five years, whereas Isabella preferred an agreement without a time limit. This time, Ferdinand even insisted on expediting the negotiations, believing that the queen's death would not derail the process. Thus, the marriage of John Sigismund to a princess from the House of Habsburg was also reconsidered (Veress, 1901, pp. 474-476), effectively ruling out the proposed marriage to a French princess from the previous year.

In June 1559, the queen convened the Assembly of the country in Alba Iulia, particularly since Mihály Gyulai had returned from the Porte with favourable news regarding the peace negotiations with the Austrians. The estates urged the queen to immediately send a

message to Ferdinand, which she did. The Transylvanian envoys were supposed to meet with the Austrians and Poles at the Chapter of Zips (present-day Slovakia), but the peace negotiations collapsed before they could properly begin due to Ferdinand's excessively harsh demands. He insisted that Transylvania renounce all its possessions in *Partium* and cede to the Habsburgs Maramureş with Hust and the salt mines, as well as Munkács (Mukacevo, today in Ukraine), Tokaj and Kisvárdá (Hungary). However, the Turks refused to accept such terms, despite the Austrian envoys in Constantinople doing everything possible to press the issue (Veress, 1901, pp. 477-478).

Nonetheless, there was still a chance for peace between the Transylvanians and the Germans, and in this matter, French influence was evident. As early as the first part of 1559, the French ambassador to the Ottoman Porte, De Vigny, expressed the view that peace should be concluded between Transylvania and the Habsburgs, particularly since Ferdinand was also the Holy Roman Emperor. Thus, it was preferable for Henry II not to have him as an enemy. Additionally, De Vigny recognized the strategic importance of Transylvania for French policy in the region. The situation was also favourable due to the signing of the peace between the Habsburgs and the Ottoman Empire on January 31, 1559, which also included Transylvania. The treaty stipulated that Isabella and John Sigismund should not be disturbed in their possessions (Veress, 1901, pp. 473, 477; Căzan & Denize, 2001, p. 286). However, the peace desired by the queen did not materialize during her lifetime.

Conclusions. Why did the Franco-Transylvanian Alliance Project Fail?

It is known that the good relations between Transylvania and France did not end with the death of Queen Isabella, being continued by her son. For example, ten years after Isabella's death, in 1569-1570, Prince John Sigismund raised the subject of his marriage to a French princess again. The situation was somewhat similar to that of 1557-1558. This time, John Sigismund was negotiating to recover the fortresses of Baia Mare, Arduş and Cehul Silvaniei from Ferdinand I of Habsburg. When the talks reached an impasse, the Transylvanians asked for help from the Turks, but the idea of a French marriage also resurfaced. The Transylvanian ambassadors to the Porte, Gaspar Békés and Mihály Gyulay, asked for the sultan's support to obtain the hand of Margaret of Valois for John Sigismund. Not only did the Turks make promises, but the Grand Vizier Sokollu also sent the dragoman Mahmud to King Charles IX in Paris. The marriage would have been an additional argument in favour of John Sigismund's claim to the Polish throne. But it seems that the Viennese origins of the renegade Mahmud had an influence, and he did not take his mission seriously; instead, he maintained relations with Emperor Maximilian II. Thus, this attempt also ended without result (Hurmuzaki, 1891, doc. DLXXII, pp. 590-591; Szilágyi, 1876b, pp. 272, 274; Feneşan, 1997, pp. 262-263).

Let us return to the reasons why the alliance plan of 1558 did not materialize. Several components of the reason or reasons that led to the abandonment of the alliance with France can be observed. First of all, there is the coronation of Ferdinand of Habsburg as Holy Roman Emperor on March 14, 1558, which also prompted King Henry II to no longer wish to prolong the conflict with him. Then, there was the peace concluded between the Porte and the Holy Roman Emperor on January 31, 1559, which also included Transylvania. Thirdly, with the peace between the Transylvanians and the Austrians, the idea of John Sigismund's marriage to a princess of the House of Habsburg could be revived, which would have further strengthened peace and understanding in the long term. The fact that the Franco-Habsburg and Ottoman-Habsburg conflicts had died down, at least temporarily, also led to the cessation of hostilities between the Transylvanians and the Austrians, making the envisaged alliance between France and Transylvania – explicitly directed against the Habsburgs – lose its initial strategic value.

After the discussions of 1558, it was no longer mentioned, and negotiations with the French were replaced by those with Ferdinand and Maximilian of Habsburg.

The opinion that the queen did not want to leave the reins of the country's leadership in the hands of her son and for this reason, did not agree to the proposed alliance (Szilágyi, 1876b, p. 39; Horn, 2012, p. 86) seems to have a real basis, although the illness from which Isabella had been suffering for some time had removed her from the political scene. She had even begun to show disinterest in the affairs of the country, increasingly leaving these problems to the young John Sigismund, the queen striving to participate only in receiving ambassadors and celebrations (Veress, 1901, p. 469).

However, to take this reason into account, a more detailed analysis is needed, and a few things need to be pointed out. At the time, there was a trend against those who came from abroad and reached a position of power – a well-known example would be Bishop George Martinuzzi, hated by many Transylvanian nobles. In the case of women, it was even 'more serious' if, on top of that, they had a Renaissance education. This was, for example, the situation of Queen Isabella's mother, Bona Sforza – who received an education in history and law and spoke fluently, along with Italian, Latin, and Spanish –, who was criticized both in Poland and in Hungary. She was said to be a witch, a creator of poisons, and to have had countless lovers. Isabella, daughter of the Polish king Sigismund the Elder and the aforementioned Italian princess, was raised and educated by her mother, from whom she would have acquired her character, customs, and lifestyle. Some contemporaries, mainly partisans of the Hungarian kings of the House of Habsburg, describe Isabella as corrupt, scheming, easily influenced by foreign advisors (primarily by the Polish ones, but also by the envoys of the Ottoman Porte), greedy for power, and she was accused of not taking into account the interests of the Hungarians. Because she was a widow, she could no longer fulfil the 'position' of a bad-advising wife. Of these accusations, the one that hurt her most was probably the accusation that she had been a bad mother and that because of the education she imposed on John Sigismund, he did not become a ruler as expected. Finally, it is very likely that some accusations and descriptions were projected from her mother. Even if these negative opinions come either from private correspondence or from writings subsequent to the queen's death, they were certainly based on certain stories and rumours that had been circulating since Isabella's lifetime. However, there are also numerous contemporaries who are positive about Isabella's way of being, praising her vast culture, elegance, pleasant character, as well as the courage with which she faced her fate, which had become difficult after the occupation of Buda by the Turks (1541) (Veress, 1901, pp. 38, 45-47, 54-56, 65, 72-74; Steinmacher, 2015, pp. 355-357; Oborni, 2009, pp. 21-43; Horn, 2012, pp. 39-55; Molnár, 2020, pp. 163-172).¹²

Beyond the malice spread by some opponents and the image of a woman eager for power, Isabella was also perceived outside the country as a person with prestige and an active role on the political scene of the time, this also resulting from the inclusion in *Süleymānnāme* (*History of Suleiman*, written around 1558 by Arifi) of an image in which the queen with the child John Sigismund in her arms stands before the sultan in the imperial tent, near the Buda fortress. The image also suggests the power and greatness of the sultan. It is also worth noting that other contemporaries write that the minor John Sigismund was taken before Suleiman by his nanny and not by Isabella (Mroziwicz, 2020, p. 86). Isabella's desire to exercise power in the country was certainly influenced and fuelled by the fact that until 1556, upon her return to Transylvania from Polish exile, she was not in charge of state affairs, because the reins of power were in the hands of Brother George – bishop of Oradea, treasurer and deputy

¹² For detailed information regarding members of Queen Isabella's wider family and their influence on her and John Sigismund, see Horn, 2012, pp. 39-55.

(*locumtenens*) of John Sigismund, the elected king of Hungary – who in 1551 had already handed over the country to Archduke Ferdinand (Papo, Németh, 2012, pp. 57-66; Oborni, 2020). Only after returning to Transylvania in the autumn of 1556, to whose achievement the rulers of Moldavia and Wallachia also made their military contribution at the Sultan's command (Szilágyi, 1866, pp. 330-335; Benda, 1944, p. 41), and certain aspects being mentioned above, was the moment favourable for Isabella to effectively exercise power, even if in the name of her still minor son. In the Assembly of the country held between November 25 and December 7, 1556 in Cluj, the estates placed the entire leadership in the hands of Isabella – the legally crowned queen of Hungary –, as regent with full powers until her son John Sigismund came of age (Szilágyi, 1876b, p. 5; Szilágyi, 1866, p. 335; Oborni, 2009, p. 23).

As a result of these descriptions and “images” of Isabella, one must seriously consider – in addition to the other reasons listed – the possibility that her desire to retain power led to the loss of interest in allying with a great European power, such as France.

References:

Printed sources:

- Charrière, E. (1850). *Négociations de la France dans le Levant, Tome II* [Negotiations of France in the Levant, Volume II]. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale. URL: <https://archive.org/details/ngociationsdel02charuoft/page/n5/mode/2up> (Retrieved March 29, 2025).
- De Ávila y Zúñiga, L. (2022). *A császár háborúja Németországban* [The Emperor's war in Germany] (Guitman, B., Ed. & Trans.). Budapest: R E C I T I.
- De Hurmuzaki, E. (1891). *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor* [Documents concerning the history of the Romanians] (Vol. II/1, 1451-1575). București.
- De Hurmuzaki, E. (1894). *Documente privitoare la Istoria Românilor* [Documents concerning the history of the Romanians] (Vol. II/4, 1531-1552). București.
- Felmer, M. (1780). *Prima lineae M. Principatus Transsilvania historiam antiqui, medii et recentioris aevi exhibentes et illustrantes* [First outlines of the history of the Principality of Transylvania in Ancient, Medieval, and Modern Times]. Cibinii: Typis Barthianis. URL: <https://archive.org/details/primilineaempr00felmgooq/page/n7/mode/2up> (Retrieved March 30, 2025).
- Feneșan, C., & Feneșan, C. (2013). *Transilvania între Habsburgi și Poarta Otomană la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea (documente din arhiva Cancelariei de Stat de la Viena). Siebenbürgen Zwischen Habsburg und der Pforte um die Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts (Dokumente aus dem Archiv der Wiener Staatskanzlei)* [Transylvania between the Habsburgs and the Ottoman Porte at the middle of the 16th Century. Documents from the State Chancellery Archive in Vienna]. Timișoara: Cosmopolitan-Art.
- Forgách, F. (1982). *Emlékirat Magyarország állapotáról Ferdinánd, János, Miksa királysága és II. János erdélyi fejedelemsége alatt* [Memories about the status of Hungary under the reign of Kings Ferdinand, John and Maximilian and the Transylvanian reign of Prince John II]. A válogatás, szöveggondozás, a szövegmagyarázatok összeállítása és az utószó Kulcsár Péter munkája [Edition by Kulcsár P.]. (I. Borzák, Trans.). Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó.

- Goebel, J., & Wachsmann, G. (1840). *Chronica Civitatis Schaesburgensis 1514–1663* [Chronicle of the city of Sighișoara 1514–1663]. In G. J. Kemény (Ed.), *Deutsche Fundgruben der Geschichte Siebenbürgens* [German treasures for the history of Transylvania] (Vol. II, pp. 85–140). Klausenburg: Verlag von J. Tilsch und Sohn Buchhändler.
- Hatvani (Horváth), M. (1858). *Magyar történelmi okmánytár, a Brüsseli országos levéltárból és a burgundi könyvtárból* [Hungarian historical document collection from the National Archives in Brussels and the Burgundian Library] (Vol. II, 1538-1553). Pest.
- Hatvani (Horváth), M. (1859). *Magyar történelmi okmánytár, a Brüsseli országos levéltárból és a burgundi könyvtárból* [Hungarian historical document collection from the National Archives in Brussels and the Burgundian Library] (Vol. III, 1553-1608). Pest.
- Károlyi, Á. (1881). *Codex epistolaris Fratris Georgii: Frater György levelezése: 1535-1551*. [The Epistolary Codex of brother George: The correspondence of Frater György: 1535–1551]. Budapest: Az Athenaeum R. Társulat Könyvnyomdája.
- Löcsei, S. S. (1841, July 20). Magyar régiségek. Isabella Királynénak, Hruztánhoz, II-k. Szolimán Török Császár Fő Hadi Vezérjéhez írott Levele [Hungarian antiquities: The letter written by Queen Isabella to Hruztan, the Grand Vizier of Sultan Soliman II]. *Hon és Külföld*, 225-227. URL: https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/HonEsKulfold_1841/?pg=226&layout=s (Retrieved March 27, 2025).
- Ostermayer, H. (1839). *Chronik des Hieronimus Ostermayer* [Chronicle of Hieronimus Ostermayer]. In G. J. Kemény (Ed.), *Fundgruben der Geschichte Siebenbürgens* [Treasures of the history of Transylvania] (Vol. I, pp. 1–68). Klausenburg: Verlag von J. Tilch und Sohn Buchhändler.
- Possevino, A. (1913). *Transilvania (1584)* [Transylvania (1584)]. In A. Veress (Ed.), *Fontes Rerum Transylvanicarum* (Vol. III). Kolozsvár: Fontes Rerum Transylvanicarum.
- Ribier, G. (1666). *Lettres et memoires d'estat, des roys, princes, ambassadeurs, et autres ministers, sous les regnes de Francois premier, Henry II, et Francois II. Tome Second* [Letters and State Memoirs of Kings, Princes, Ambassadors, and Other Ministers during the Reigns of Francis I, Henry II, and Francis II. Volume II]. Chez I. Hotot; distributed by Francois Clovzier. Printed in Blois, published in Paris.
- Original held at *Lucian Blaga* Central University Library of Cluj-Napoca, Special Collections, C.V.3835. Available online: https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_qWTswSr32NYC/page/n3/mode/2up (Retrieved March 20, 2025)
- Szilágyi, S. (1876a). *Monumenta Comititalia Regni Transylvaniae: Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek* [Parliamentary records of the Principality of Transylvania] (Vol. I, 1540-1556). Budapest: A M. Tud. Akadémia Könyvkiadó.
- Szilágyi, S. (1876b). *Monumenta Comititalia Regni Transylvaniae: Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek* [Parliamentary records of the Principality of Transylvania]. (Vol. II, 1556-1576). Budapest: A M. Tud. Akadémia Könyvkiadó.
- Szalay, L. (1858-1859). Verancics Antal összes munkái [The complete works of Antonius Verancsics] (Vol. III, 1553-1554). *Monumenta Hungariae Historica: Scriptores IV: Magyar történelmi emlékek. Második osztály: Írók, IV*. Pest. URL: <https://archive.org/details/verancsicsantal03vera> (Retrieved March 10, 2025).

- Szalay, L. (1865). Verancics Antal összes munkái [The complete works of Antonius Verancsics] (Vol. VII, 1549-1559). *Monumenta Hungariae Historica. Scriptores X. Magyar történelmi emlékek. Második osztály: Írók, X.* Pest. URL: <https://archive.org/details/verancsicsantal07vera/page/n5/mode/2up> (Retrieved March 10, 2025).
- Szalay L., & Wenzel, G. (1812-1891). *Verancics Antal összes munkái* [The complete works of Antonius Verancsics] (Vol. I-XII). *Monumenta Hungariae Historica. Scriptores. Magyar történelmi emlékek. Második osztály: írók.* Pest / Budapest.
- Tocilescu, G. G., & Odobescu, A. I. (1886). *Documente privitoare la Istoria Românilor* [Documents concerning the history of the Romanians] (Suppl. I, Vol. I, 1518-1780). București.
- Veress, A. (1929). *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării Românești. Volumul I. Acte și scrisori (1527-1572)* [Documents concerning the history of Transylvania, Moldavia and Valachia. Volume I. Acts and Letters]. București: Cartea Românească.
- Von Trauschenfels, E. (Ed.). (1860). *Album Oltardianum 1526–1629*. In *Deutsche Fundgruben zur Geschichte Siebenbürgens [German treasures for the History of Transylvania]* (New Series, Vol. III, pp. 5–49). Kronstadt: Druch und Verlag von Johann Gött.

Books and studies:

- Ágoston, G. (2014). *Európa és az Oszmán hódítás* [Europe and the Osman Conquer]. Budapest: HM Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum.
- Benda, K. (1944). Erdély politikai kapcsolatai a román vajdaságokkal a XVI. és XVII. Században [Political relations of Transylvania with the Walachian Voivodships in the 15th and 16th Centuries]. *A Magyar Történettudományi Intézet Évkönyve, II*, 35-73.
- Căzan, I., & Denize, E. (2001). *Marile puteri și spațiul românesc în secolele XV-XVI* [The Great Powers and the Romanian region in the 15th-16th centuries]. București: Editura Universității din București.
- Cristea, O. (2007). Succesi del Hungharia del 1551: Lupta pentru Transilvania (1551-1552) într-un izvor contemporan inedit [The successes from Hungary from 1551: The fight for Transylvania (1551-1552) in a contemporary unpublished source]. *Revista istorică, XVIII*(1-2), 5-25.
- Makkai L., & Mócsy A. (1986). *Erdély története. Első kötet: A kezdetektől 1606-ig* [The history of Transylvania. First volume: From the beginnings to 1606]. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.
- Fazekas, I. (2019). The Central European Habsburg Monarchy in the middle of the sixteenth century: Elements of cohesion and division. In P. Fodor (Ed.), *The battle for Central Europe: The siege of Szigetvár and the death of Süleyman the Magnificent and Nicholas Zrinyi (1566)* (pp. 179-192). Budapest: Research Centre for Humanities. Leiden / Boston: Brill.
- Felezeu, C. (1996). *Statutul Principatului Transilvaniei în raporturile cu Poarta Otomană (1541-1688)* [The statute of the Principality of Transylvania in its relations with the Ottoman Porte (1541-1688)]. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană.
- Feneșan, C. (1997). *Constituirea principatului autonom al Transilvaniei* [The establishment of the autonomous Principality of Transylvania]. București: Editura Enciclopedică.

- Feneşan, C. (2014). *Vilayetul Timișoara (1552-1716)* [The Vilayet of Timișoara]. Timișoara: Editura Ariergarda.
- Guitman, B., Korpás, Z., Tóth, F. B., & Szabó, J. (2019). A magyarországi török várháborúk nemzetközi háttere, 1547-1556 [The international background of the Hungarian Castle Wars]. *Világtörténet*, 9(41) / 2, 253-293.
- Gyulai, É. (2021). Két udvar vonzásában: A historikus Verancsics Antal [In the attraction of two Courts: the historical Antonius Verancsics]. In E. Békés, P. Kasza & G. Kiss Farkas (Eds.), *Latin nyelvű udvari kultúra Magyarországon a 15-18. században* [The Latin court culture in Hungary in the 15th-18th centuries] (pp. 197-212). Szeged: Lazi Kiadó.
- Hegyí, K. (2019). Ottoman defence system in Hungary. In P. Fodor (Ed.), *The battle for Central Europe. The siege of Szigetvár and the death of Süleyman the Magnificent and Nicholas Zrinyi (1566)* (pp. 309-319). Budapest: Research Center for Humanities. Leiden / Boston: Brill.
- Horn, I. (2012). *A hatalom pillérei: A politikai elit az Erdélyi Fejedelemség megszilárdulásának korszakában (1556-1588)* [The pillars of power: The political elite during the era of the strengthening of the Principality of Transylvania]. Budapest: Akadémiai doktori értekezés.
- Horváth, M. (1872). *Utyeszenich Frater György (Martinuzzi bibornok) élete* [The life of brother George Utyeszenich (Bishop Martinuzzi)]. Pest: Kiadja Ráth Mór.
- Marczali, H. (1935). *Erdély története* [History of Transylvania]. Budapest: Káldor Könyvkiadóvállalat.
- Molnár, M. F. (2020). Isabella and her italian connections. In A. Máté & T. Oborni (Eds.), *Isabella Jagiellon, Queen of Hungary (1539-1559)* (pp. 163-172). Budapest: Research Centre for the Humanities.
- Mroziewicz, K. (2020). The sixteenth-century depictions of Isabella Jagiellon and their reception in Poland and Hungary. In A. Máté & T. Oborni (Eds.), *Isabella Jagiellon, Queen of Hungary (1539-1559)* (pp. 77-101). Budapest: Research Centre for the Humanities.
- Oborni, T. (2009). Izabella királyné erdélyi udvarának kezdetei (1541-1551) [The beginnings of the Transylvanian court of Queen Isabella]. *Történelmi Szemle*, LI(1), 21-43.
- Oborni, T. (2020). *Georgius Monachus contra Reginam: Queen Isabella and her reign over the Eastern Kingdom of Hungary (1541-1551)*. In A. Máté & T. Oborni (Eds.), *Isabella Jagiellon, Queen of Hungary (1539-1559)* (pp. 209-234). Budapest: Research Centre for the Humanities.
- Papo, A., & Németh, G. (2012). György Martinuzzi Utyeszenics, primo principe di Transilvania? [George Martinuzzi Utyeszenics, the First Prince of Transylvania?]. In V. Dáné, T. Oborni & G. Sipos (Eds.), „... éltünk mi sokáig két hazában...”. *Tanulmányok a 90 éves Kiss András tiszteletére*, [Studies in Honour of András Kiss at his 90th Birthday] (pp. 57-66). Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó / Debrecen University Press.
- Steinmacher, K. (2015). Az idegenből jött uralkodónő, Jagelló Izabella (1519-1559) alakja a magyar kulturális emlékezetben [Isabella Jagiellon's, the Ruler come from Abroad, Depiction in the Hungarian Cultural Memory]. *Publicationis Universitatis Miskolciensis, Sectio Philosophica*, XIX(1), 353-368.
- Szalay, L. (1854). *Magyarország története* [History of Hungary] IV. Lipcse: Geibel Károly tulajdona.

- Szalay, L. (1859). *Adalékok a magyar nemzet történetéhez a XVI-dik században* [Contributions to the history of the Hungarian nation in the 16th century]. Pest: Ráth Mór.
- Szádeczky, L. (1888). *Izabella és János Zsigmond Lengyelországban. 1552-1556. Levéltári források alapján* [Isabella and John Sigismund in Poland. 1552-1556. Based on archival sources]. Budapest: Kiadja a Hg. Czartoryski alapítványból a M. T. Akadémia.
- Szilágyi, S. (1866). *Erdélyország története* [History of Transylvania]. I. Pest: Kiadja Heckenast Gusztáv.
- Veress, E. (1901). *Izabella királyné 1519-1559* [Queen Isabella 1519-1559]. Budapest: A Magyar Történelmi Társulat Kiadása.