

Family Archives in the 16th Century. The Mikola Family Archive

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Abstract: In April 1573, after the death of the head of the family, Ferenc Mikola, the elders of the Mikolas gathered in Someşeni to take over the family archive from his widow. The action carried out according to the custom, but also to the legislation of the country took place in the presence of witnesses, later a proving act being issued. The present study aims to investigate the process of handing over the noble family archives in Transylvania from the end of the Middle Ages and during the sixteenth century. In this context, the ways of keeping and ordering the charters during the researched period, as well as the circumstances of the formation of the noble family archives will be examined. The focus will be on the presentation of a case study, that of the Mikola family archive. Starting from the charter issued in April 1573, we shall briefly present the Mikola family, their family archive, but also the witnesses of the archive's transmission. Among the latter, we shall pay a special attention to Ferenc Dávid, the parish priest of Cluj and superintendent. The second title carried by the religious reformer shall provide the opportunity to reflect on the formation of the Reformed and Unitarian Churches in Transylvania.

Keywords: Mikola family, family archives, Mikola archive, preservation of the charters, Transylvania, 16th century, Unitarian Church.

Abstract: Arhive familiale în secolul al XVI-lea. Arhiva familiei Mikola. În aprilie 1573, după moartea capului familiei, Ferenc Mikola vârstnicii familiei Mikola s-au adunat la Someşeni pentru a prelua de la văduva acestuia arhiva familiei. Acţiunea desfăşurată potrivit cutumei, dar şi legislaţiei ţării a avut loc în prezenţa martorilor, ulterior eliberându-se şi un act doveditor. Studiul de faţă îşi propune să cerceteze procedeul predării arhivelor familiare nobiliare din Transilvania de la sfârşitul Evului mediu şi pe

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parcursul secolului al XVI-lea. În acest context vor fi prezentate modalitățile de păstrare și ordonare a documentelor în perioada cercetată, precum și împrejurările formării arhivelor familiare nobiliare. Accentul va fi pus pe prezentarea unui studiu caz, cel al arhivei familiei Mikola. Pornind de la documentul din aprilie 1573, vom prezenta pe scurt familia Mikola, arhiva familiei, dar și martorii acțiunii de predare a arhivei. Dintre aceștia din urmă îi vom acorda o atenție deosebită lui Ferenc Dávid, preotul paroh al orașului Cluj și superintendent. Titlul din urmă purtat de reformatorul religios va oferi ocazia să reflectăm și asupra formării Bisericilor Reformate și Unitariene din Transilvania.

Cuvinte cheie: familia Mikola, arhive familiale, arhiva Mikola, păstrarea documentelor, Transilvania, secolul al XVI-lea, Biserica Unitariană.

Introduction

An important event took place in one of the several Someșeni (Szamosfalva) manors of the Mikola family in the spring of 1573. The men of the Mikola family of Szamosfalva, Pál, Imre and Farkas visited Anna Melith, widow of the late councilor Ferenc Mikola, with very important matter which directly concerned the Mikolas: handing over the family archives.¹ Ferenc Mikola, an educated man of his age, with a significant political career and a nice family, left behind a holographic last will written in Hungarian in which he made arrangements for his loved ones and for his belongings, took care of his servants and the payment of his debts. However, he made no mention of the family archives.² Let me quickly add: not because he forgot or considered unimportant to make arrangements about the family archives, on the contrary. The document collections of noble families had such a great importance that their preservation was regulated by a national law, of which Ferenc Mikola obviously was aware. He was certain thus that the fate of the archives guarded by him until that time, as the senior of the family, would be properly taken care of by the

¹ Arhivele Naționale ale României, Direcția Județeană Cluj [National Archives of Romania, Cluj County Directorate of National Archives, henceforth: NAR, Cluj], Fond fideicomisionar Jósika [The entailed archives of the Branyicskai baron Jósika family, henceforth: The Jósika archives], Seria 1 - Documente medievale [Series 1 - Medieval documents], No. 149, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00255-1-149 (accessed on 27 March 2021).

² Ferenc Mikola wrote his last will in Someșeni (Szamosfalva, today part of Cluj-Napoca) on 19 December 1560, in his own handwriting in Hungarian. NAR, Cluj, The Jósika archives, Series 1 - Medieval documents, No. 88, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00255-1-88 (accessed on 27 March 2021). Published in Kinga S. Tüdős (ed.), *Erdélyi nemesek és főemberek végrendeletei* [The last wills and testaments of the Transylvanian nobles and aristocrats] / Erdélyi Testamentumok II/ (Marosvásárhely: Mentor, 2006), 70-73.

members of his family. And he was not wrong about that. Before we move on to present the circumstances of the transfer of the Mikola family archives in 1573, let us provide a survey of the situation of the family archives at the end of the Middle Ages and during the 16th century, including the issue of preservation and legal regulations of family document collections.

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Charters were documents proving a completed legal matter, issued under regulated circumstances, which secured some right of their owner. Due to their legally binding nature, their preservation was a matter of great care, both in the Middle Ages and in the Early Modern period, therefore they could become the most important primary sources for these periods of Hungarian history. Authentic or – to a lesser extent – forged documents were preserved in original, in copies or in transcriptions. The charters were mostly written in Latin during the Middle Ages, and primarily in Hungarian and Latin in the Early Modern period, and were very varied in content: from diplomas issued by high dignities (the king, the voivode, the prince) which granted a privilege, ordered the instatement into possession, or summoning to law, etc., to declarations before any kind of authority, like purchase, pawning or even last wills. Since all of these, regardless of type and content, could have played a part in preserving one's rights over their estates, recovering one's illegally appropriated properties, and could even be decisive in proving one's inheritance rights in case of the extinction of a branch of a family, they were treasured assets of every family. The carefully preserved and growing family archives were handed down from generation to generation, which is why the medieval and early modern family archives have been preserved to this day. Even if no great changes have affected the practice of their preservation (the old family archives of the nobility are handled very carefully even today in state and private archives), there have been significant changes in the reasons for their preservation. Before the mid-nineteenth century, they were especially guarded because of their legally binding nature, consecrating their property rights. The urbanial compensation in the late nineteenth century in Transylvania changed the situation, and the documents of property rights only maintained their historical value. The family archives which had been closed off before from the eyes of unauthorized strangers, distant relatives,³ as well as from the public eye, including researchers, gradually

³ "Vigyázni kell reájok (ti. a Dersófi famíliára, akik Wass Dezső maradékai lennének – írta 1817-ben Wass Dániel testvéreinek), hogy a familia archivumába be ne üssék az orrokat, mert idővel familiánknak káros lehetne" [It must be taken care of them (namely to the Dersófi family, who were supposed to be the descendants of Dezső Wass – wrote in 1817 Dániel Wass

became public, to the great delight of experts. For instance, the Wass family gave the permission for research and even lent out documents from their family archives, although it wasn't always a good idea, as some of them could get lost.⁴ Even if these so carefully preserved documents have gained "inutilia", "nihil valoris" character for property rights insurance,⁵ they have become, and still are important historical sources for historiography.

Document preservation and / or the keeping of the charters

The careful preservation of charters was a general custom which, according to Katalin Péter, was characteristic not just for the wealthiest families, but also for the smallest villages and / or simplest people.⁶ However, whatever social stratum we are talking about, the preservation of charters was no easy task, as they were always exposed to natural disasters and various man-caused destructions. The difference between the two was, most importantly, that while natural disasters were very hard to fight – for instance, a fire which swept through a settlement could very easily devastate such documents,⁷ man-made causes could have often been

to his brothers) to not trust their nose into family archives because in time could be harmful to our family]. Apud András W. Kovács, 'A cegei Wass család a középkorban' [The Wass family of Cege], *Erdélyi Múzeum*, 66.1-2 (2004): 3, note 13. In just half a century, however, the situation has changed radically.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

⁵ Alfréd Czobor, 'A családi levéltárak a középkorban' [The family archives in the Middle Ages], *Levéltári Közlemények*, 18-19 (1940-1941): 380-440, especially 382.

⁶ The issue of composing and preserving the documents by individuals belonging to serfdom as a mass was discussed by Katalin Péter. See Eadem, 'Jobbágy egyének az írásbeliségben a 17. század eleji Magyarországon. 300 éves visszatekintéssel' [Serf individuals in literacy at the beginning of the 17th century Hungary. With a 300 year retrospection], in Lajos Geccsényi – Lajos Izsák (eds.), *Magyar történettudomány az ezredfordulón. Glatz Ferenc 70. születésnapjára* [Hungarian history at the turn of the millennium. For the 70th birthday of Ferenc Glatz] (Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, 2011), 243-252; Eadem, 'Az egyszerű ember, az oklevelek és a levéltárak a 16-17. századi Magyarországon – háromszáz éves visszatekintéssel' [The simple man, the documents and the archives in the 16th-17th century Hungary – with a 300 year retrospection], *Történelmi Szemle*, 53.3 (2011): 335-349.

⁷ The judge and prefect of the town of Făgăraș (Fogaras, Fogarasch) held a court of law in 1579, where it was said that the deeds of the estates that the trial was about were burnt in the parish of the market town of Făgăraș. Zsolt Bogdándi – Emőke Gálfi (eds.), *Az erdélyi káptalan jegyzőkönyvei 1222-1599* [The records of the Transylvanian chapter 1222-1599] /ETA VIII. 1/ (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 2006), no. 257. There were charters concerning the entire community which could have been lost in fire, and therefore they wanted to rewrite their privileges. This was the case of the salt transporters of Dés in 1591, who stated that their privileges granted by former princes, which they had previously used unproblematically, were lost in the last fire that burnt the majority of their settlement. Tamás Fejér – Etelka Rácz – Anikó Szász (eds.), *Az erdélyi fejedelmek Királyi Könyvei I. 1569-1602. Báthory Zsigmond Királyi Könyvei 1582-1602* [The *Librii Regii* of the Transylvanian princes I. 1569-1602. The *Librii Regii* of

easily avoided. Alfréd Czobor⁸ and then Zsigmond Jakó⁹ listed in a Hungarian and Transylvanian context, respectively, all the circumstances that could have contributed to the dropping number of family archives, from war devastations to the arbitrary measures of neighbours or family members. Unfortunately, the 16th century, with its stormy and frequent military events, often led to the decimation of family archives. Right at the beginning of the century, György Dózsa's peasant war tested the guarding of Transylvanian noble family archives. That was when the Thoroczky family's archives preserved at the castle of Colțești (Torockószentgyörgy) was destroyed. The "crusaders" did such a thorough work in the castle that only fragments of parchment and seals remained of the former archives.¹⁰ After the lost battle of Mohács, the competition between the two candidates for the Hungarian throne was the cause of division of the nobility, while after the death of Prince John Sigismund there were the enmities between the camps of Stephen Báthory and Gáspár Bekes. The political arena is interspersed with conspiracies to take over the political power, and then the outbreak of the Fifteen Years' War turned the anti- and pro-Turkish parts of the country against each other. All these conflicts led to clashes and power struggles which caused a great deal of suffering and damage to the people of Transylvania. It therefore comes as no surprise that we can repeatedly read about the loss of documents. Charters lost in the "past times of crisis" are mentioned before June 1568,¹¹ others lost in "these troubled times" are reported in 1569,¹² records of property rights were lost

Sigismund Báthory 1582–1602] /ETA VII. 3/ (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 2005), no. 1069, 1623 (henceforth: *Báthory Zsigmond Királyi Könyvei*). The same fate befell the market town of Torda. In 1602, it was mentioned that "the privileges they were granted by the old Hungarian kings and earlier princes of Transylvania were destroyed in these times of war in the time of the fire that almost completely devastated their settlement". *Báthory Zsigmond Királyi Könyvei*, no. 1907.

⁸ Czobor, 'A családi levéltárak', 396–411.

⁹ Zsigmond Jakó, 'Az erdélyi levéltárügy története' [The history of the Transylvanian archives matter], in Idem, *Írás, levéltár, társadalom. Tanulmányok és források Erdély történelméhez* [Writing, archives, society. Studies and sources for the history of Transylvania] /Magyar Történelmi Emlékek. Értekezések/ (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2016), 40–42.

¹⁰ Zsigmond Jakó – Antal Valentiny (eds.), *A torockószentgyörgyi Thorotzkay család levéltára* [The archives of the Thorotzkay family of Torockószentgyörgy] /ENML 1./ (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 1944), 6–7; apud Jakó, 'Az erdélyi levéltárügy', 41, note 81.

¹¹ Tamás Fejér – Etelka Rácz – Anikó Szász (eds.), *Az erdélyi fejedelmek királyi könyvei I. 1569–1602. János Zsigmond Királyi Könyve 1569–1570* [The *Librii Regii* of the Transylvanian princes I. 1569–1602. The *Liber Regius* of John Sigismund 1569–1570] /ETA VII. 1/ (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 2003 (henceforth: *János Zsigmond Királyi Könyve*), no. 54.

¹² *Ibid.*, no. 183, 209, 214.

in May 1570 during the “previous troubled times”,¹³ yet other charters disappeared because of the “troubled times past” are again mentioned in 1583.¹⁴ At the turn of the century, it was Basta’s army which, in the 16th century, caused the most damage and destruction to family and other archives.¹⁵ In 1648, when transcribing an earlier charter dated 1592, they mention that the original document was damaged when it was hidden in a newly built and still damp wall during Basta’s plunder.¹⁶ In other cases, the reason of loss was merely human neglect.¹⁷ However, sometimes charters were willfully impaired, especially if unclear property rights were involved.¹⁸ The owners tried to replace the charters damaged or destroyed for various reasons: from the mid-16th century, they increasingly asked for and received new donations by hereditary right from the princes to replace their lost¹⁹ or burnt²⁰ records, thus trying to secure their property rights.

Despite the intentional or accidental destruction, the examples show that great care was taken to preserve the documents.²¹ Their survival over several generations and centuries shows that they were not used daily, not moved from place to place, not manipulated all the time, but kept in some kind of storage holders and only retrieved when necessary. While documents were initially kept in sacks and leather bags,²² later on the chests became the usual place for storing and keeping

¹³ *Ibid.*, no. 310.

¹⁴ Bogdándi – Gálfi (eds.), *Az erdélyi káptalan jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 333, 340; *Báthory Zsigmond Királyi Könyvei*, no. 411; *János Zsigmond Királyi Könyve*, no. 91, 355.

¹⁵ Jakó, ‘Az erdélyi levéltárügy’, 42.

¹⁶ Bogdándi – Gálfi (eds.), *Az erdélyi káptalan jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 916.

¹⁷ In 1578, Comşa Moţoc claimed in front of the court of law of the Castellan of Făgăraş that he owned a quarter of the boyar’s estate of Săsciori (Szescsor, Sassenberg), adding that they lost their letter of privilege due to their own negligence. *Ibid.*, no. 246.

¹⁸ In 1591, when the wife of Péter Piski of Tövis, Slavna, protested that her husband sold the house in Tövis which was inherited by her son from her first, late husband, against the knowledge and will of his son, for 24 forints with all its benefits, attachments and deeds, she also thought it was important to emphasise that she also wanted to prevent the buyer from purchasing it, or **to damage or lose the charters** (emphasis mine, M. L. M.). *Ibid.*, no. 818.

¹⁹ For example: *Ibid.*, no. 176, 186, 242, 253, 254, 368, 400–401, 599.

²⁰ *Báthory Zsigmond Királyi Könyvei*, no. 780.

²¹ See more on this subject: Jakó, ‘Az erdélyi levéltárügy’, 44–45; Czobor, ‘A családi levéltárak’, 385–386.

²² Bálint Ila, ‘Magánkancelláriai ügyintézés és magánlevéltári rendszer a XVII. század első felében’ [Private chancellery administration and private archival system in the first half of the 17th century], *Levéltári Közlemények*, 26 (1955): 135, 137. Charters kept in sealed leather bags were reported in 1351, while in 1427 the privileges for the estates of the Cluj-Mănăstur (Kolozsmonostor) convent were placed in a leather holder. Klára Dóka – Veronika Müller – Magdolna Oszkó Réfi (eds.), *A magyar levéltártörténet kronológiája 1000–2000* [The chronology of the Hungarian history of archives 1000–2000] (Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltár, 2000), 37, 44.

documents, because they were easy to handle, to transport and to adapt to changes of residence.²³ Keeping the documents in bags or sacks and then in the chests, in addition to the extra security factor, also fulfilled a very important practical aspect: the different coloured bags and sacks made it easier to find one's way in the chest.²⁴ Looking at the specific location, we see that family archives containing a small number of documents were usually kept in the family's own house. The wealthier landowners chose one of their castles for the same purpose, the Bánffys, for example, first decide on Ideciu (Idecs), then Valcău (Valkó) and Gilău (Gyalu).²⁵ Others saw fortified towns as a suitable protection for their treasured documents. Thus, in the 16th century, we increasingly see family charter chests in Cluj (Koložsvár, Klausenburg) or other Transylvanian towns,²⁶ left in the hands of trustworthy, good people. In the presence of a witness, the three chests of family charters were deposited for safekeeping at János Asztalos, a resident of Szappan Street in Cluj, by Anna Baládfi, wife of Mihály Radó.²⁷ Similar custodial functions could also be performed by certain ecclesiastical institutions, such as monasteries and places of authentication. This was the case, in 1592, of the Dely brothers Ferenc and Miklós of Sárd, also known as Kunvit, who placed the charter regarding the estate of Blăjeni (Blezsény) and the last will of their deceased third brother Farkas, a *familiaris* of the voivodal court and steward of Cristopher Báthory, "according to their common will into the sacristy of Alba Iulia (*in hanc sacristiam Albensem*) for safekeeping".²⁸

Charters were not only kept safe, at times at the cost of great efforts, but also cared for, with a permanent attention to their condition, and also

²³ In 1587, there is a mention about three chests full of deeds (*tres cistas seu arcas litteris, litteralibus instrumentis refertas*), preserved in Cluj. Zsolt Bogdándi (ed.), *A koložsmonostori konvent fejedelemség kori jegyzőkönyvei* [The convent records of Cluj-Mănăstur from the age of principality], vol. I. 1326–1590 /ETA X. 1/ (Koložsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 2018), no. 629. In 1590, we are informed that the late István Gyulafi kept the charters related to his estates in four chests. *Ibid.*, no. 786.

²⁴ According to the Mihály Kabos' list of movables from June 1587 kept in the house of the late Antal Ferenczi in Cluj, "there were charters and privileges in two bags, one bag being from green bagazia, while the other from white linen". The two bags of charters with the rest of the movable property was in a big chest. *Ibid.*, no. 618. Cf. Jakó, 'Az erdélyi levéltárügy', 45.

²⁵ Jakó, 'Az erdélyi levéltárügy', 43.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 43–44 with further examples for Bistrița (Beszterce, Bistritz), Sighișoara (Segesvár, Schässburg), Brașov (Brassó, Kronstadt), Sibiu (Szeben, Hermannstadt).

²⁷ Bogdándi (ed.), *A koložsmonostori konvent fejedelemség kori jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 629.

²⁸ Bogdándi – Gálfi (eds.), *Az erdélyi káptalan jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 882. We have knowledge about the charters preserved in the sacristy of Alba Iulia (Gyulafehérvár, Weissenburg/Karlsburg) chapter in 1572 and 1585 as well (*Ibid.*, no. 215, 425), and also in the sacristy of the Cluj-Mănăstur (Koložsmonostor) convent in 1559 (*Ibid.*, no. 192).

by their transcription, in order to preserve the original. For instance, János Balásfi, *requisitor* of Alba Iulia (Gyulafehérvár, Weissenburg/Karlsburg), transcribed the double folio sized parchment charters found in the sacristy of the Chapter of Transylvania in 1588, in order to preserve the text of the obscure and disintegrating documents.²⁹ The transcriptions made for various reasons, the so-called *transsumptum*, which were preserved in large numbers in family archives as well, could not replace the original charters, as their legal value was lower than that of the originals.³⁰

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In time, the charters collected and preserved developed into family archives; the beginnings of these are usually placed around the second half of the thirteenth – early 14th century.³¹ The archives which were occasionally called *archivum*, but generally *conservatorium* also had the function of treasuries, or the other way round: the archives were part of a family's treasury.³² Therefore, the family archives preserved, in addition to records, all other things of value for the family.³³ However, the archives were primarily the repositories of the legal documents of the family concerning property and other legal rights. Beginning with the Middle Ages, only the title charters were actually considered archival material, which also shows their primary importance, therefore these types of documents were preserved in the largest number. No surprise then, that the collection of family charters were usually not termed archives, but usually named after the content – charters of privilege, documents of property or other rights – as *litterae et litteralia instrumenta*.³⁴ As family archives primarily contained title deeds, the most important cause for their development was the acquisition of new estates, thus the family archives

²⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 591. Cf. no. 4–10.

³⁰ Sándor Kolosvári – Kelemen Óvári – Dezső Márkus (eds.), *Werbőczy István Hármaskönyve* [The Tripartitum of István Werbőczy] /Corpus Juris Hungarici. Magyar törvénytár 1000–1895/ (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1897), II. 15. (De transumptis literarum, et privilegiorum, quod sit sentiendum?) (henceforth: *Tripartitum*) Cf. Imre Szentpétery, *Magyar oklevéltan* [Hungarian diplomatics] (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1930), 80, 248.

³¹ Czobor, 'A családi levéltárak', 383.

³² *Ibid.*, 384–385.

³³ In July 1587, the record of the movable and immovable properties of Zsigmond Suselity mentions a green chest in which, besides charters described in detail, there was a box with pagan coins, a white purse with small change, silver necklace, gilded buttons, textiles and even rock sugar, and empty bags for coins; and in a white chest there were golden cups with lids decorated with flowers, silver spoons with flowery handles, headpieces, silver jugs, textiles, and among these "a register about the estate of Péter scribe", and a "fassional" letter, unsealed. Bogdándi (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent fejedelemség kori jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 625.

³⁴ Czobor, 'A családi levéltárak', 383; Jakó, 'Az erdélyi levéltárügy', 35.

grew in parallel with the number of acquired estates. The process could also be reversed, of course: if the number of estates dropped, the family archives became slimmer, as the charters followed the estates: they always accompanied the properties they referred to.³⁵ In addition to the title deeds, they also carefully preserved the documents of legal actions on estates (summonses, adjournments, protests, judgments), which served as further support to prove ownership.³⁶ Reports on the transfer of family archives rarely mention the type of deeds. A fortunate exception is the list of the goods and real estate of Zsigmond Suselity from July 1587, which offers a detailed description of the content of his charters: who it comes from, who wrote it, whether or not it is sealed, if it is, how many seals it has, and last but not least, their types: quittances, pledge letters, or *missilis, preceptoria, relatoria, obligatoria, evocatoria*, etc., in originals or copies.³⁷ The migration of title deeds most often due to donations, purchases or exchanges also explain how the documents of certain families ended up in the archives of other families. Other causes might have also added up to the changes in family archives, as deeds could also change their owners in case a line of the family died out or in case of distaff lines.

The legal regulations on the preservation of documents were drawn up in the beginning of the 16th century. Vladislas II's charter issued on November 19, 1514, which enforced the collection of laws and customary law of royal judge István Werbőczy,³⁸ was published in Vienna some years

³⁵ E. g. in 1500 Ilona Keresztes, wife of Miklós Nagy of Esztény, sold her part of the *predium* with the pertaining charters for 60 golden forints to Péter Dés of Temesel. Zsigmond Jakó (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent jegyzőkönyvei, 1289–1556* [The convent records from Cluj-Mănăştur, 1289–1556] / *A Magyar Országos Levéltár Kiadványai II/* (2 vols, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1990), vol. 1, no. 3147.

³⁶ András W. Kovács (ed.), *A Wass család cegei levéltára* [The archives of Wass family of Cege] (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 2006), no. 141.

³⁷ Bogdándi (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent fejedelemség kori jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 625.

³⁸ Known as the VIIth decree of Vladislas II. Sándor Kolosvári – Kelemen Óvári – Dezső Márkus (eds.), *1000–1526. évi törvényczikkek* [Articles of laws, 1000–1526] / *Magyar törvénytár. Corpus Juris Hungarici* / (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1899), 705–741. According to András Kubinyi, the resolutions of this diet were not sanctioned by the king even eight months later, in July 1515. The date of 19 November 1514 means only that an antedated deed was issued after royal confirmation. Idem, 'Werbőczy Mohács (1526) előtti politikai pályafutása' [The political carrier of Werbőczy before Mohács (1526)], in Gábor Hamza (ed.), *Tanulmányok Werbőczy Istvánról* [Studies on István Werbőczy] / *Magyar Felsőoktatás Könyvek 21/* (Budapest: Professzorok Háza, 2001), 74. Kubinyi's theory seem to be supported by recent researches, see Gábor Mikó, 'Az 1514. évi Lukács-napi országgyűlés törvénykönyvének megszületése. A dekrétum eredeti változata' [The born of the code issued by the diet on the day of Saint Luke in 1514. The original version of the decree], in Norbert C. Tóth – Tibor Neumann (eds.), *Keresztesekből lázadók. Tanulmányok 1514 Magyarországról* [From crusaders to rebels. Studies

later, in 1517, with the title *Tripartitum*. Among the legal norms applied in everyday practice, this collection of law contains details on what matters must be taken care of in writing, what a valid deed must contain, what secures the validity of the charters, how the authenticity of a document can be established, and what is the punishment for keeping a charter secret. It also gave dispositions about the family archives, which must be safeguarded by the eldest son / eldest brother.³⁹ This decree was actually the recording in writing of a long existing customary law, which is already documented for an earlier period. In 1474, the charters of the Wass family, according to the general custom of the age, were preserved by the oldest male family member at that time, László Wass, kept in a chest closed with the seal of the other family members as well.⁴⁰ Werbőczy's regulations on family archives were also mentioned later on. Mihály Bánffy's widow Katalin Bojnicsit specifically referred to it in January 1555, when she handed over the privileges and other documents of her estates to her late husband's relatives in the market town of Bonțida (Bonchida), saying "because the documents are always kept safe by the oldest [male] relative".⁴¹ It is important to mention that the transfer happened in the presence of witnesses, usually at the house of the person who had kept the documents before. This was the case of Katalin Bojnicsit as well, who transferred the title deeds for the properties of the late Mihály Bánffy to his relatives, István, Pál and János Bánffy of Losoncz in the presence of four noble judges at his house in Bonțida. The significance of this transfer is also indicated by the fact that the relatives had to obtain a letter of reassurance from the convent of Cluj-Mănăstur (Kolozsmonostor), with a bond of 1000 florins.⁴² As the above case shows, the charters were often left with the widows, and were later reclaimed by the deceased husband's next of kin.⁴³

The ways and possibilities of the migration of family archives, whatever their content was, were strictly regulated, and rooted in the idea of the symbiosis between the property right and the charter attesting to it.

about Hungary in 1514] /Magyar Történelmi Emlékek. Értekezések/ (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2015), 271–317.

³⁹ *Tripartitum*, I. 42. (Quod literalia instrumenta frater natu major conservabit)

⁴⁰ W. Kovács, 'A cegei Wass család', 31.

⁴¹ "... considerando et animo sepius revolvendo, quod universe littere privilegiales factum qualiumcumque bonorum et iurium possessionariorum tangentes iuxta regni consuetudinem apud fratrem natu maiorem teneri et conservari debeant." Jakó (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent jegyzőkönyvei*, vol. 2, no. 5341.

⁴² *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 5341.

⁴³ See for more details Czobor, 'A családi levéltárak', 436–438 and Jakó, 'Az erdélyi levéltárügy', pp. 37–39, who follows also the resolutions taken by the diet at the end of the sixteenth and the first half of the 17th century to preserve family charters.

The consequence was that, as the estates originally belonged to the entire clan, the deeds in the family archives attesting to these estates were also under common ownership. And although the clans were later divided into branches and families, the common ownership had been preserved both for the old estates, the monastery of the clan, and for the family archives. Thus, they could not be separated theoretically, and, what's more, they could only be handled in the presence and with the agreement of all owners. We have mentioned the example of the Wass family before. Their family archive, kept in the second half of the 15th century by the oldest family member in a chest, was sealed by all the other owners, so the content of the chest could only be handled if they were all present.⁴⁴ Like the estates, the title deeds were also treated differently depending on whether they secured the rights of ancestral or acquired estates. For this reason, they took extra care not to give away the deeds in their original form and to make sure the distaff line of the family would get only the transcription. This is what the *Tripartitum* also prescribes.⁴⁵ It is uncertain what happened in the cases when there was no male heir or no direct heir. Katalin Péter assumes that, in those cases, the family archives were transferred to various central institutions.⁴⁶ Zsigmond Jakó thought that the family archives followed the fate of the family's ancestral estates, and just as the estates were inherited by the Crown, so were the deeds as well.⁴⁷ However, if just one branch of the family or clan died out, their estates and – although there is no mention of that, but supposedly also – the family archive were inherited by the other blood relatives.⁴⁸

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When Imre, Farkas and Pál Mikola arrived on 5 April 1573 to the manor of their deceased relative, Ferenc Mikola, in Someşeni, their visit was fortunately not motivated by the extinction of some branch of the family. The reason was less dramatic, but just as important: they had to take over the family archive from Anna Melith, the widow of their deceased senior relative, Ferenc Mikola. The quittance issued by all the three of them mentions that the documents were legally in the possession

⁴⁴ W. Kovács, 'A cegei Wass család', 31.

⁴⁵ *Tripartitum*, I. 42. 3. (Quod literalia instrumenta frater natus major conservabit)

⁴⁶ Péter, 'Az egyszerű ember, az oklevelek és a levéltárak', 348, especially note 50.

⁴⁷ Jakó mentions the example of Simon, son of Mihály, son of Radó of Kentelke, who died without an heir and left his letters in a small chest to the Crown. Jakó, 'Az erdélyi levéltárügy', 35. However, when the ruler, Sigismund of Luxemburg, donated these estates to Dávid Lack of Szántó, he also handed over the charters belonging to them. *Ibid.*, 36.

⁴⁸ Czobor, 'A családi levéltárak', 429.

of Ferenc Mikola as the senior, the oldest member of the family. After his death, this duty and the supervision of the estates befell the Mikolas. To honour their duty, they came to take over the family archive from their sister-in-law in front of witnesses. At this time, the archive of the Mikola family, as it could be expected and as it was indeed mentioned by the three Mikolas, mostly consisted of the title deeds securing the family's property rights, of many types: "privilege on parchment with hanging seal, donations, statutes, letters of pawned estates, pawned land and all trials" (*"hártyákon való figgő pecsétes privilegium, donatiok, statutiok, zálagos jószágról való zálagos határról [?] való és minden processusról való levelek"*), that is, legal documents about the estates. We do not know the number of these documents, the Mikolas did not mention it, but they did observe that they examined "with their own eyes", before the witnesses and Lady Anna, the widow of their late brother, and although they do not make note of it, they also had to count them, because they declared that they received them "with none missing". They explained that they did all this "according to the last will of their deceased brother [Ferenc Mikola]" (*"az megholt urunk bátyánk [Mikola Ferenc] testamentoma szerint"*) which is a little strange, since his last will, written in 1560, did not mention any charter.⁴⁹ He may have written another will during the over ten remaining years of his life, especially since his family also grew.⁵⁰ However, the archive of the Mikola family could not have been very rich. Almost 100 years earlier, the Mikola family archive fell victim to the conflict between the family and the town of Cluj. On 1 and 2 May 1488, some 2000 armed citizens of Cluj attacked the Someşeni manor houses of the Mikola family. As a result of the investigation undertaken by István Telegdi, vice-voivode of Transylvania, the extent of the damages was known, and estimated to ten thousand golden florins. The damage also included the deeds and other documents, some of which were taken away, and some were torn into small pieces and thrown into the Someş (Szamos) River.⁵¹

⁴⁹ NAR, Cluj, The Jósika archives, Series 1 - Medieval documents, no. 88, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00255-1-88 (accessed on 27 March 2021.) Cf. note 2.

⁵⁰ He disposed of his wife, of his two little daughters and of his two stepchildren. The family will be expanded with another girl, Judit, and a boy, János. Cf. note 62.

⁵¹ Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára [National Archives of Hungary], Budapest, Diplomatikai Levéltár [Collection of pre-1526 charters] 27072. It could have been a consequence of the matter that a large part of the town and the parish church burnt down the next year, in 1489, and Ferenc Mikola was suspected to be behind it. Elek Jakab (ed.), *Oklevéltár Kolozsvár története első kötetéhez* [Chartulary for the first volume of Cluj history] (Buda: Magy. Kir. Egyetemi Könyvnyomda, 1870), vol. 1, 289–291.

The Mikola family

In the following, let us meet the characters in this charter. **Ferenc Mikola** of Szamosfalva was mentioned in the quittance of 5 April 1573 as the oldest member of the family, who had already deceased at that time. As a significant and decisive character of the political and religious events of the 1550s and 1560s, he could obviously not escape scholarly attention,⁵² so there is no need for his detailed presentation, I would just add new information to his already known life path.

His father was László Mikola,⁵³ *comes* of Cluj (Kolozs) County (1530),⁵⁴ vice-voivode and *comes* of the Székelys (1537),⁵⁵ royal vice-regent (1543),⁵⁶ vice-regent of the queen and vice chief judge of Transylvania (1545),⁵⁷ and from 1542 to his death member of the princely council;⁵⁸ his mother was probably Anna Kemény.⁵⁹ This relationship proved to be fruitful, which was quite important for the survival of the family; a line of boys were born: Ferenc, István, Imre and Farkas. Since after the death of his father in 1554,⁶⁰ Ferenc inherited social status rather than wealth, he had to make a good match. After a short and childless marriage,⁶¹ he had a second chance with lots of possibilities. Anna Melith, despite her relatively young age, was already twice widowed before she married Ferenc, which was important for him for two reasons. Anna Melith came to this marriage with considerable wealth inherited from the two previous husbands, Miklós Baranyai and Mihály Bánffy of Losonc, and also with two sons, Miklós

⁵² For his short biography see Ildikó Horn, 'Politikusportrék János Zsigmond udvarából' [Politician portraits from the court of John Sigismund], in Eadem, *Tündérország útvesztői. Tanulmányok Erdély történelméhez* [The mazes of Fairyland. Studies on the history of Transylvania] (Budapest: ELTE BTK, 2005), 76–79; Eadem, *Hit és hatalom. Az erdélyi unitárius nemesség 16. századi története* [Faith and power. The history of the Transylvanian Unitarian nobility in the sixteenth century] (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2009), 211–213.

⁵³ Incorrectly Ferenc II Mikola. *Erdélyi testamentumok*, vol. 2, 198.

⁵⁴ Jakó (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent jegyzőkönyvei*, vol. 2, no. 4326.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 4592.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 4797.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 4850, 4941.

⁵⁸ Ildikó Horn – Andrea Kreutzer – András Péter Szabó (eds.), *Politika és házasság. Menyegzőre hívogató levelek a 16. századi Erdélyből* [Politics and marriage. Invitation letters for wedding from sixteenth century Transylvania] /TDI Könyvek 2/ (Budapest: ELTE BTK, 2005), p. 27.

⁵⁹ Horn, *Hit és hatalom*, p. 211. In 1549, Fruzsina Bywtlhy was mentioned as the spouse of László Mikola. Jakó (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent jegyzőkönyvei*, vol. 2, no. 4941.

⁶⁰ Horn, *Hit és hatalom*, 211.

⁶¹ The question of the council of the town of Sibiu addressed to the council of Bistrița in December 1546 probably refers to the abovementioned first marriage of Ferenc Mikola. The Sibiu council asked the Bistrița council to inform them whether they wanted to send a wedding present for the wedding of the vice-regent's son László Mikola separately or together with the Saxon nation. Horn – Kreutzer – Szabó (eds.), *Politika és házasság*, 26–27.

Baranyai Jr. and Menyhért Bánffy, which could raise the hopes of Ferenc Mikola that he might have male heirs as well. And he was right. After a boy named László, who died as a child, there came three girls, Kata, Anna and Judit, followed by the long-awaited son, János.⁶² Moreover, as the stepfather and tutor of the two other underage boys, Ferenc Mikola was also the handler of their wealth, so the prestige he inherited from his father was doubled with wealth on behalf of his wife and stepsons.

When he returned from his studies abroad at the University of Vienna,⁶³ Ferenc Mikola planned on advancing in the political structures of the Principality, which he did in small steps. In 1555, his name appeared in connection with local affairs, first as the executor of the will of scribe (*deák*) Gáspár Pesti,⁶⁴ then as an appointed judge in the case of the transferred archive of the abovementioned Katalin Bojnicsit.⁶⁵ Later, he was a *servitor* of Queen Izabella, and the chief of the Ocna Sibiului (Vizakna, Salzburg) chamber,⁶⁶ after which he reached his highest office in 1562 as princely councillor.⁶⁷ His connections network proves that although it was extensive and included well-known personalities, he was not a significant figure of national politics, in fact, in 1565-1567, he was a second-row politician of Prince John Sigismund.⁶⁸

⁶² The data for the family “picture” was mostly provided by the protagonists themselves, Ferenc Mikola and Anna Melith, through their last wills. Ferenc Mikola wrote his Hungarian language will with his own hand on 19 December 1560 in Someșeni, the beneficiaries of which were his wife Anna Melith and their two daughters, Kata and Anna (Judit and János were not yet born), and his two stepsons. NAR, Cluj, The Jósika archives, Series 1 – Medieval documents, no. 88. Cf. note 2. The pregnant Anna Melith (Melÿk), in her last will written in Hungarian on 3 February 1558, mentions her two previous testaments, considering the new one a completion for the previous two. NAR, Cluj, The Jósika archives, Series 1 – Medieval documents, no. 78. www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00255-1-78 (accessed on 27 March 2021). According to this, her last will in Latin written on 12 May 1559 was the fourth in the line. *Ibid.*, no. 83. www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00255-1-83 (accessed on 27 March 2021). Anna Melith compiled her goods in 1576, her 14 page inventory in Hungarian was dated on 13 February in Someșeni. *Ibid.*, no. 170. www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00255-1-170 83 (accessed on 27 March 2021)

⁶³ Miklós Szabó – Sándor Tonk, *Erdélyiek egyetemjárása a korai újkorban 1521–1700* [The peregrination of the Transylvanians in the early modern period 1521–1700] /*Fontes rerum scholasticarum IV/* (Szeged: József Attila Tudományegyetem, 1992), no. 499.

⁶⁴ Jakó (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent jegyzőkönyvei*, vol. 2, no. 5338.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 5341.

⁶⁶ Horn, *Hit és hatalom*, 211.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 212.

⁶⁸ For more details about the connection network that Horn called the Mikola circle, see *Ibid.*, pp. 212–213. Cf. Eadem, *A hatalom pillérei. A politikai elit az Erdélyi Fejedelemség megszülárdülésének korszakában (1556–1588)* [The pillars of power. The political elite in the consolidation period of the Transylvanian Principality (1556–1588)] (Budapest: Thesis manuscript, 2012), pp. 104, 140 (accessed on 25 March 2021).

The Transylvanian Principality saw a series of confessional changes within a short period of time, and Ferenc Mikola was one of the first adepts who accepted and supported the Anti-Trinitarian teachings of Ferenc Dávid from the beginning, which the parish priest of Cluj started to preach from January 1566. At the same time, in that period of ideologically burdened religious and political struggles, there was a need of thoughtful people supporting the protestant unity and reconciliation, like Ferenc Mikola. No wonder that in the following year Ferenc Dávid dedicated his *Rövid útmutatás* (Short guide)⁶⁹ to him, and the solemn celebrations at the transfer of the church in the central square of Cluj to the followers of Ferenc Dávid were also officiated by Ferenc Mikola together with István Cserényi.⁷⁰ In the mirror of these events, it is not surprising that one of the witnesses for the handover of the Mikola family archive was Ferenc Dávid, as parish priest of Cluj and superintendent, but we might also assume that he was also present as an admirer of his deceased patron, or even as a good old friend. The time of his death is uncertain, it is usually placed after 1567,⁷¹ around 1568.⁷² To my knowledge, we can still push the date of his death a couple of years forward, as he was granted a new estate on 7 March 1570,⁷³ and his name appears in a trial on 15 May 1571.⁷⁴ As far as I am aware, this is the last evidence about him.

⁶⁹ „Tenedek kedig Krisztusban Jézusban szerelmes uram, ajánlani akartam ez rövid írást két okért, első, hogy tennenmagadat vigasztalhasd az igazságnak esméretivel, mert az vetélkedésnek elejétől fogva gyűlölséges volt az te neved.” Ferenc Dávid, *Rövid útmutatás az Istennek igéienec igaz értelmere, mostani szent haromságról tamadó vetélkedésnek megfeytesere es itelesere hasznos es szűkséges* [Brief guidance...] (Albae Iuliae, 1567), in Gedeon Borsa et al. (eds.), *Régi magyarországi nyomtatványok* [Old Hungarian prints] (4 vols, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó-OSZK, 1971–2012), vol. 1, no. 233. Cf. Ferenc Dávid, *Rövid útmutatás, 1567* [Brief guidance, 1567], ed. by Katalin Németh S. (Budapest: Magyarországi Unitárius Egyház, 1985), 9.

⁷⁰ Horn, *Hit és hatalom*, 213.

⁷¹ Horn, ‘Politikusportrék János Zsigmond udvarából’, 79. Most recently, Dóra Mérai also made this date probable. Eadem, ‘Síremlékek és patrónusok a templomtérben: a Mikola és a Gyerőfi család fejedelemség kori síremlékei’ [Funerary monuments and patrons in the church interior: Memorials of the Mikola and Gyerőfi families from the period of the Transylvanian Principality], in Péter Levente Szócs (ed.), *Arhitectura religioasă medievală din Transilvania. Középkori egyházi építészeti Erdélyben. Medieval Ecclesiastical Architecture in Transylvania VI* (Satu Mare/Szatmárnémeti: Editura Muzeului Sătmărean, 2020), 343.

⁷² Horn – Kreutzer – Szabó (eds.), *Politika és házasság*, 27.

⁷³ King John II instructs the men of the king to instate Ferenc Mikola and Pál Kapitány into certain estates in Hunedoara (Hunyad) County. NAR, Cluj, The Jósika archives, Series 1 – Medieval documents, no. 126. www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00255-1-126 (accessed on 23 February 2021). The charter was preserved in a transcription (transsumptum) from 12 March 1570. The children of the grantees, János Mikola and Katalin Kapitány, had to start a legal case against the Barcsai family, which extended to most of the seventeenth century, and a sentence was only reached in 1669. Pál Török, ‘Középkori magyar nemes családok Erdélyben. III. A

It seems that Ferenc Mikola made a conscious effort to create a family memorial. In the parish church of Someșeni, the centre of his estates which also gave the nobility prefix of the family, he had a tomb built for the memory of his father László and his son László who died as a child, with a Latin inscription and the family coat of arms. The pair of tombs erected in 1557 and 1559, today built into the southern wall of the nave, witnesses Ferenc Mikola's patronage by the inscription and also the importance of the place of burial of the Mikolas, by four other tombs.⁷⁵ One of these, with the right amount of caution, can be regarded as the memorial of Ferenc Mikola or one of his brothers. Since of all the Mikola brothers Ferenc was the one that had a career for which, according to the fragmentary Latin inscription of the tomb, he could be mourned by the entire Transylvania,⁷⁶ his name has the most chances to have stood in the place of the missing first name. All the more so since one of the brothers, Imre, had one daughter, Farkas had two daughters, István had no children we have knowledge about, so it could have been János, the son of Ferenc Mikola, who might have erected a memorial for his father, following the tradition of his grandfather, László Mikola, vice-voivode of Transylvania, and his father, Ferenc Mikola, councilor and patron of the church of Someșeni, where "the old and young Mikolas rest to see the holy land of God together".⁷⁷

Of the three **Mikolas** who took over the family archives, **Imre** and Farkas were the younger brothers of Ferenc, and he mentioned both of them in his will, along with his third younger brother, István, who was not included into the charter of quittance.⁷⁸ There is little information about Imre Mikola. It seems that he was active on the level of county administration. In 1563, on the orders of King John II, he appeared as a member of the committee which had to assess the house in Cluj which was given to Mihály Gyulai as a result of Ferenc Kendi's betrayal, since

sálfalvi Sálfi család' [Medieval Hungarian noble families in Transylvania III. The Sálfi family of Sálfalva], *Magyar Családtörténeti Szemle*, 8.9 (1942): 207. Cf. Bálint Kis, 'Az ismeretlen Rákócziak kérdéséhez' [To the question of the unknown Rákóczi family], *Turul*, 30.1 (1912): 180-181.

⁷⁴ NAR, Cluj, The Jósika archives, Series 1 – Medieval documents, no. 127, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00255-1-127 (accessed on 23 February 2021).

⁷⁵ Mérai, 'Síremlékek és patrónusok', 339-344.

⁷⁶ Mérai's suggestions for identification. When listing the brothers mentioned by name in Ferenc Mikola's last will (István, Farkas), Mérai leaves out Imre. *Ibid.*, 342-343.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 343.

⁷⁸ Ferenc Mikola repeatedly mentioned in his last will that he took good care of the family estates, he was a good brother, so he hopes that they will help and protect his widow and orphans. NAR, Cluj, The Jósika archives, Series 1 – Medieval documents, no. 88, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00255-1-88 (accessed on 25 February 2021).

they wanted to buy it back and returned it to the town.⁷⁹ In 1564 he was member of the court of justice of Cluj County,⁸⁰ in 1569 he appeared as a man of the king in the admonition and summons letter of King John II,⁸¹ while in 1572 Imre was mentioned as a man of the voivode.⁸² Ildikó Horn lists him among those Anti-Trinitarian noble family members who – mostly at a young age – activated as a completion of their studies in the minor and major chanceries for a shorter or longer period of time.⁸³ His wife was Kata Gerendi.⁸⁴ They had one daughter, who was mentioned as an orphan already in 1578. The little girl was taken under the guardianship of her mother's relative, János Gerendi, who did his best to protect her inheritance from the violent land-grabbing actions of his powerful uncle, Farkas Mikola.⁸⁵

The male lineage of the ancestors of **Farkas Mikola**,⁸⁶ mentioned as the son of the vice-voivode of Transylvania, László Mikola, can fortunately be reconstructed for three generations. In 1578, when the charters issued on 31 August and 10 December 1553, referring to some of the Mikola estates were transcribed on the request of Anna Melith, widow of Ferenc Mikola, in a privilege charter issued by Voivode Cristopher Báthory, Farkas was mentioned as the son of the late László, son of the late Ferenc, son of the late János Mikola Sr.⁸⁷ Similarly to his brother Imre, he was also active in county administration in the 1570s, as

⁷⁹ NAR, Cluj, Fond Primăria Municipiului Cluj-Napoca [The archives of Cluj], Seria A. Privilegii și acte [Series A. – Privileges and documents], Subseria A1. Privilegiile orașului [Subseries A1 – The privileges of the town], fasc. I/24, no. 131a (in Latin transcription from around 1696).

⁸⁰ Elek Jakab, *Kolozsvár története* [The history of Cluj] (3 vols, Buda–Budapest: Kolozsvár város közönsége, 1870–1888), vol. 2, 77–79.

⁸¹ Zsolt Bogdándi (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent fejedelemség kori jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 62.

⁸² NAR, Cluj, Fond familial Bánffy [The archives of the Bánffy family], Seria 2 – Instrumente contemporane de evidență și documente după instrumente contemporane de evidență [Series 2 – Tools of contemporary evidence and documents based on the tools of contemporary evidence], Subseria 2 – Documente ordonate după Registrul 2 [Subseries 2 – Documents ordered based on Register 2], fasc. UU, no. 9. www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00320-1-2-2-UU-9 (accessed on 26 March 2021).

⁸³ Horn, *Hit és hatalom*, 65.

⁸⁴ When Péter Gerendi asked for property division on 5 November 1568, Kata Gerendi, wife of Imre Mikola is also mentioned. NAR, Cluj, Fond familial Korda [The archives of Korda family], no. 5, fasc. 54, no. 21. www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00377-5 (accessed on 26 March 2021). – Based on the Romanian content excerpt because no image is attached.

⁸⁵ Horn, *Hit és hatalom*, 261.

⁸⁶ 6 November 1578. Bogdándi (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent fejedelemség kori jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 159.

⁸⁷ 25 November 1578. NAR, Cluj, The Jósika archives, Series 1 – Medieval documents, no. 218, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00255-1-218 (accessed on 20 January 2021).

a man of the voivode.⁸⁸ However, as mentioned earlier, he gained fame through his land deals, which were often not without excesses. From the end of the 1570s onwards, his name is frequently mentioned in pledge⁸⁹ and litigation cases,⁹⁰ loan transactions⁹¹ and the sale⁹² of his own estates and those of his family. In 1582, his house of Filpișu Mic (Szászfülöpös, Klein-Phlepsdorf) was mentioned.⁹³

Farkas Mikola married twice. His first marriage with Ilona Kabos⁹⁴ seems to have been childless. His second wife was Sára Hagymási,⁹⁵ with whom he had two daughters, Fruzsina and Borbála, mentioned in 1587. At this time, the girls were orphans for both parents, raised by their cousin János Mikola, Ferenc Mikola's son as their protector.⁹⁶ Farkas also lived in Someșeni, like his older brother Ferenc. Before 9 January 1583, the death of Farkas Mikola, his noble estate next to the garden of Pál Mikola is mentioned, as the place where he lived in Someșeni before his passing away.⁹⁷ He made his last will before his death, lying in bed with illness. We

⁸⁸ First on 16 October 1572: NAR, Cluj, The archives of the Bánffy family, Series 2 – Tools of contemporary evidence and documents based on the tools of contemporary evidence, Subseries 2 – Documents ordered based on Register 2, fasc. UU, no. 9, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00320-1-2-2-UU-9, and then on 25 October 1577: Bogdándi – Gálfi (eds.), *Az erdélyi káptalan jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 243. On 26 November 1576, he appears with Pál Mikola in the voivode's estate registration order. NAR, Cluj, Fond familial Suky [The archives of Suky family], Seria 1 – Documente medievale [Series 1 – Medieval Documents], no. 266, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00423-1-266 (accessed on 20 January 2021).

⁸⁹ 12 June 1576. The pledge affair of Ilona Kabos, wife of Farkas Mikola. Bogdándi (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent fejedelemség kori jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 80; 6 November 1576. Anna Melith pledges the Iuriu de Câmpie (Őr) from Cluj County and Farkas Mikola also figures. NAR, Cluj, The Jósika archives, Series 1 – Medieval documents, no. 175, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00255-1-175 (accessed on 20 January 2021).

⁹⁰ His name appears again together with Pál Mikola in November 1577 in a case of the Mikola of Szamosfalva and Gyerőffy families regarding the boundaries of their estates and the town of Cluj. NAR, Cluj, The archives of Cluj, Series A. – Privileges and documents, Subseries A1 – The privileges of the town, no. 240, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00001-A-1-240; NAR, Cluj, The archives of Cluj, Series A. – Privileges and documents, Subseries A2 – Acte fasciculate [Subseries A2 – Bunched documents], fasc. 4, no. 6, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00001-A-2-4-6 (accessed on 20 January 2021).

⁹¹ 26 September 1578. Bogdándi (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent fejedelemség kori jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 140.

⁹² 3 November 1578. He sells the half part of the Cara (Oláhkara) estate. *Ibid.*, no. 154.

⁹³ Horn – Kreutzer – Szabó (eds.), *Politika és házasság*, 163.

⁹⁴ 12 June 1576. Bogdándi (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent fejedelemség kori jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 80.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 442, 459.

⁹⁶ The prefect of the castle of Făgăraș made an agreement with the *familiares* of the castle in the name of János, son of Ferenc Mikola in the case of the guardianship of Fruzsina and Borbála, the daughters of the late Farkas Mikola from her late wife Sára Hagymási. *Ibid.*, no. 590.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 380.

have two records of this. First, his nephew, János son of Ferenc Mikola, protested on 9 January 1583 that the late Farkas Mikola had made a deal with his wife, and enforced it in his testament.⁹⁸ Then, in September 1584, his widow, Sára Hagymási confessed that her husband had made his last will as a bedridden sick man.⁹⁹

We have detailed evidence about **Pál Mikola**, similarly to Farkas, from the aforementioned charter from 1578, according to which Pál is the son of the late János, son of the late István, son of the late János Mikola Sr.¹⁰⁰ A decade later, Pál is mentioned as a son of the late János Mikola of Szamosfalva from his wife, the late Ilona Kabos, daughter of Mihály Kabos and Anna Dienesi.¹⁰¹ The appointed judges wrote about Pál and his older sister Anna in 1568 that “they are all from the same father and mother, and the siblings were the children of the late nobleman János Mikola”.¹⁰² He was probably still underage in 1557, because in the agreement with the Ádámos (Adămuș) estate of László Mikola of Ádámos he was represented by his tutor Ferenc Mikola.¹⁰³ As a grown man, he married Borbála Szentegyedi. The invitation to their wedding, addressed to the judge and council of Bistrița (Beszterce, Bistritz) by the father of the bride at the beginning of January 1580, betrays that the ceremony took place a month later.¹⁰⁴ In the first five years of their marriage they had three daughters: Zsuzsanna, Margit and Erzsébet.¹⁰⁵ In 1587, several instructions were formulated about some of the estates in case Pál Mikola would die without a male heir.¹⁰⁶ A similar situation occurred a year later. When the widow of

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 381.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 459.

¹⁰⁰ 25 November 1578. NAR, Cluj, The Jósika archives, Series 1 – Medieval documents, no. 218, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00255-1-218 (accessed on 25 January 2021).

¹⁰¹ Bogdándi (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent fejedelemség kori jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 592.

¹⁰² Anna might have been the older, because they called each other “néném” (my older sister) and “öcsém” (my younger brother) in the same document. The siblings reached an agreement over some estates in Alba (Fehér) and Târnava (Küküllő) Counties. Parts of the estates were pawned earlier to Orsolya Mikola, wife of János Temesváry, and now they are under the tutelage of Ferenc Mikola. NAR, Cluj, The Jósika archives, Series 1 – Medieval documents, no. 295 (in transcription from 1585), www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00255-1-295 (accessed on 25 January 2021). Published by Attila Szabó T., ‘Erdélyi szövegemlékek 1552–1560 tájáról. Mikola Orsolya és Mikola Pál egyezséglevele 1557’ [Transylvanian textual monuments from around 1552–1560. The letter of agreement of Orsolya Mikola and Pál Mikola 1557], *Magyar Nyelv*, 68.2 (1972): 224.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Horn – Kreutzer – Szabó (eds.), *Politika és házasság*, 143. Cf. *Urkunden-Regesten aus dem Archiv der Stadt Bistritz in Siebenbürgen*, begründet von Albert Berger, hgg. Ernst Wagner (3 vols, Köln–Weimar–Wien: Böhlau, 1986–1995), vol. 3, no. 4729.

¹⁰⁵ Horn – Kreutzer – Szabó (eds.), *Politika és házasság*, 145.

¹⁰⁶ Bogdándi (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent fejedelemség kori jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 592.

the late Ferenc Mikola, Anna Melith, made an agreement with Pál Mikola also in the name of her son, János Mikola, about the expenses that were paid by Pál for the trial to gain back their ancestral estates, the pawned lands of Iclod (Iklód) and Pâglişa (Poklostelke), they emphasized that János and Pál Mikola had the same rights over these pawned estates, and there was no mention whatsoever of Pál's heirs.¹⁰⁷ The boys must have been born later, and we have data of at least two sons: László, who died at age seven in 1601, and János, who lived to adulthood. A beautiful memory of the relationship of the siblings and also of the church of Someşeni as a family pantheon and the patronage of the church is demonstrated by the tomb decorated with a Latin inscription and the family's coat of arms, erected by János Mikola for the memory of his brother who had died as a child.¹⁰⁸ In 1589, Pál Mikola got into an awkward situation with his wife and her parents, Gergely Somlyai of Szentegyed, fiscal director of Transylvania¹⁰⁹ and his wife, Ágnes Wass. Out of carelessness and clumsiness, he was unable to carry out his mother-in-law's process concerning the division of properties according to their lineage and order of inheritance. Therefore, Pál's wife, Borbála Szentegyedi was forced to withdraw and invalidate the mentioned division act on behalf of her mother as well.¹¹⁰ Even if he wasn't careful enough with the estates of his wife's family, Pál was about his own. His name appeared several times whether together with that of her sister, Anna, or alone in certain issues¹¹¹ or court trials connected to the family estates.¹¹² His name oftentimes also appeared as a man of the voivode¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ The abovementioned ancestral estates were pawned by the late László Mikola. Pál Mikola went to court for them for seven years at the court of justice of Dăbâca (Doboka) County, and for the last two years János was also involved in the case. *Ibid.*, no. 665.

¹⁰⁸ Mérai, 'Síremlékek és patrónusok', 343.

¹⁰⁹ His career was presented by Zsolt Bogdándi. Idem, 'Szentegyedi Somlyai Gergely deákról [About Gergely Somlyai literate], in Klára Papp – Levente Püski (eds.), *A magyar arisztokrácia társadalmi sokszínűsége, változó értékek és életviszonyok* [The social diversity, changing values and living conditions of the Hungarian aristocracy] (Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetem, 2013), 37–46.

¹¹⁰ Bogdándi (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent fejedelemség kori jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 747.

¹¹¹ He dealts with Anna Mikola about the estates of Adămuş (Ádámos) and Dâmbău (Dombó) on 10 October 1576. NAR, Cluj, The Jósika archives, Series 1 – Medieval documents, no. 166, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00255-1-166. On 25 October 1578 he is mentioned again in connection with the Adămuş possession. *Ibid.*, no. 215 (transcript in the charter of Cristopher Báthory dated on 16 November 1578), CJ-F-00255-1-215 (accessed on 25 January 2021).

¹¹² In November 1577, in the lawsuit of the Mikola of Szamosfalva and Gyerőffi families in the case of the boundary with Cluj, both Farkas and Pál were mentioned. NAR, Cluj, The archives of Cluj, Series A. – Privileges and documents, Subseries A1 – The privileges of the town, no. 240, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00001-A-1-240; NAR, Cluj, The archives of Cluj, Series A. – Privileges and documents, Subseries A2 – Bunched documents, fasc. 4, no. 6, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00001-A-2-4-6 (accessed on 20 January 2021); On 1 May 1585 he

and at instatements into possession.¹¹⁴ He probably used his legal knowledge at these occasions: in 1587, he is appointed judge in a movable property case as a nobleman of law.¹¹⁵ In 1592, as vice-comes of Cluj County, he ordered that the Cluj County estates and manor houses of the orphans of his deceased relative Farkas should be managed by János Mikola.¹¹⁶ He must have died sometime after 1607, since according to a privilege issued in that year Pál Mikola and his wife, Borbála Szentegyedi were still alive, just like their daughter Erzsébet.¹¹⁷

Pál Mikola probably also had a manor house in Someșeni as well, like his relatives, Ferenc and Farkas. His garden was next to Farkas's plot,¹¹⁸ and in 1585 there is specific evidence of his Someșeni estate, from which one of his serfs ran away.¹¹⁹

The witnesses

The list of witnesses, consisting of two clergymen and two laymen, begins with the members of the clergy. First, there is **Ferenc Dávid**, "parish priest and superintendent of Kolozsvár". His life seasoned with a series of confession changes is well known,¹²⁰ therefore I would

reaches an agreement in a case about the property rights of some possessions. Bogdándi (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent fejedelemség kori jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 483.

¹¹³ E. g., on 12 February 1573 he appeared as a man of the voivode in the case of a mill to be built on the Someș (Szamos) river, between two members of the Suky family. NAR, Cluj, The archives of Suky family, Series 1 – Medieval Documents, no. 237, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00423-1-237 (accessed on 25 January 2021).

¹¹⁴ E. g., on 26 November 1576 he appeared together with Farkas Mikola in the voivode's order of instatement of possession. *Ibid.*, no. 266. www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00423-1-266 (accessed on 25 January 2021).

¹¹⁵ Bogdándi (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent fejedelemség kori jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 612.

¹¹⁶ NAR, Cluj, The Jósika archives, Series 1 – Medieval documents, no. 360. www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00255-1-360 (accessed on 25 January 2021).

¹¹⁷ Erzsébet Mikola married János Tholdalagi, and had a daughter called Druziána. József Kádár – Károly Tagányi – László Réthy – József Pokoly, *Szolnok-Doboka vármegye monographiája* [The monograph of the Solnok-Dăbâca County] (7 vols, Deés: Szolnok-Doboka vármegye közönsége, 1901–1905), vol. 6, 336.

¹¹⁸ Bogdándi (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent fejedelemség kori jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 380.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 520.

¹²⁰ I would just mention the most important titles in the scholarship: Elek Jakab, *Dávid Ferenc emléke* [The memory of Ferenc Dávid] (2 vols, Budapest: Magy. Kir. Egyetemi Könyvnyomda, 1879); János Szász, *Dávid Ferenc* [Ferenc Dávid] (Budapest: Unitárius Egyház, 1982); Mihály Balázs, *Ungarländische Antitrinitarier IV. Ferenc Dávid* /Bibliotheca Dissidentium. Répertoire des non-conformistes religieux des seizième et dixseptième siècles. Édité par André Séguenny 26; Bibliotheca Bibliographica Aureliana 222/ (Baden-Baden-Bouxwiller: Koerner, 2008); Mihály Balázs, 'Dávid Ferenc életútja' [Ferenc Dávid's path of life], in András Kovács (compiled), Gyöngy Kovács Kiss (ed.), *A reneszánsz Kolozsvár* [The Renaissance Cluj] (Kolozsvár: Kolozsvár Társaság, 2008), 176–210 (henceforth: Balázs, 'Dávid Ferenc – Kolozsvár'); Mihály Balázs,

just refer to his offices mentioned in the Mikola-charter. After his studies in Braşov (Brassó, Kronstadt), he attended the university of Wittenberg, from where he returned to his home town in the second half of the year 1551. After a short period of being a schoolmaster, beginning with 1555, already an adept of the Reformation,¹²¹ he was elected parish priest of Cluj, an office he held throughout his life, until his death in November 1579. When he was elected, although there was a strong Protestant community already in the town, the Catholics were still present. The mendicant friars, after their expulsion in 1551, were brought back to the town the next year with a decree of the Diet, but the atmosphere remained just as tense, or perhaps even tenser. Dávid preached at the Protestant services in the parish church in the central square, while the Dominican and Franciscan churches officiated the Catholic Mass until mid-March 1556, when the still standing institutions of the Catholic Church, which lost the support of the already predominantly Protestant population, were permanently exiled from the town.¹²²

Not much later, sometime in 1556-1557, when the Protestant superintendence replacing the former Catholic bishopric of Alba Iulia split in two, creating the Saxon and the Hungarian superintendence, with the centres in Sibiu (Szeben, Hermannstadt) and Cluj, respectively,¹²³ the first

'Dávid Ferenc életútja' [Ferenc Dávid's path of life], *Keresztény Magvető*, 114.2 (2008): 173-202; Sándor Kovács, 'Dávid Ferenc az emlékezet és felejtés határán' [Ferenc Dávid on the edge of the memory and oblivion], in Orsolya Száraz (ed. in chief), Tamás Gergely Fazakas – Mihály Imre (eds.), *A reformáció emlékezete. Protestáns és katolikus értelmezések a 16-18. században* [The memory of Reformation. Protestant and Catholic interpretations in 16-18th centuries] (Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó, 2018), 156-167.

¹²¹ Balázs, 'Dávid Ferenc - Kolozsvár', 177-182.

¹²² Radu Lupescu, 'Utriusque ordinis expulsi sunt. Kolozsvár, 1556. március 15' [Utriusque ordinis expulsi sunt. Cluj, 15 March 1556], in József Csurgai Horváth (ed.), *Az első 300 év Magyarországon és Európában. A Domonkos-rend a középkorban* [The first 300 years in Hungary and Europe. The Dominican Order in Middle Ages] (Székesfehérvár: Alba Civitas Történeti Alapítvány, 2017), pp. 295-303; Mária Lupescu Makó - Radu Lupescu, 'Mendicant Friars and Religious Revival in Sixteenth Century Cluj, Transylvania', in Ulrich A. Wien (ed.), *Common Man, Society and Religion in the 16th century / Gemeiner Mann, Gesellschaft und Religion im 16. Jahrhundert. Piety, morality and discipline in the Carpathian Basin / Frömmigkeit, Moral und Sozialdisziplinierung im Karpatenbogen / Refo500 Academic Studies 67/* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck-Ruprecht Verlag, 2021), 173-190.

¹²³ This territorial organization in which the church structure followed the political organization, was preserved until the mid-1570s. It actually meant that one of the bishoprics was formed on the territory of the Saxon seats with the centre at Sibiu, while the other on the territory of the Hungarian-inhabited counties, with the centre at Cluj. The congregations living on the given territories were subordinated either to the bishop of Sibiu or that of Cluj, regardless of which branch of Protestantism they had embraced. Zoltán Csepregi, *A reformáció nyelve. Tanulmányok a magyarországi reformáció első negyedszázadának vizsgálatára alapján* [The language of Reformation. Studies based on the analysis of the first quarter of the Hungarian

leader of the Hungarian superintendence became Ferenc Dávid. In 1559, seeing that he could not have the Saxons accept regarding the Helvetian doctrine of the communion which he had already accepted and there was no hope of creating the Protestant unity he so much desired, Dávid resigned his title as bishop.¹²⁴ The situation changed in 1564, when, due to the permanent growth and influence of the Helvetian side, the settling of the issue could no longer be avoided. The first obvious sign of this was that Ferenc Dávid was once again elected bishop of the Church of the Hungarians of Transylvania¹²⁵ and court priest of the Prince instead of Dionysius Alesius, who was withdrawn (or had resigned) his title as bishop. As court priest of Prince John Sigismund, he most probably spent little time in Cluj, but his parish priesthood was by no means merely symbolic. The town registers prove that Dávid did preach, albeit rarely, he took measures in the case of the preachers under his supervision, and carried out negotiations with the town learders.¹²⁶ After the death of Prince John Sigismund in 1571, his successor, Stephen Báthory, displaced Ferenc Dávid as court priest and possibly also as superintendent. His place as court pastor was taken by Dionysius Alesius. Ferenc Dávid, who had held until then three offices as parish priest, superintendent and court priest, returned to his first clerical duty to his home town, which at this time – around 1570 – could already be considered Anti-Trinitarian. Ferenc Dávid played a major role of course in this change of confession, as he had started preaching Anti-Trinitarian doctrines from the pulpit as early as January 1566.¹²⁷ Not long after his return happened the major event which eventually led to the birth of the Unitarian and the Reformed Church. Sometime between 1572 and 1575, the common church of the Hungarians living on the historical territory of Transylvania, the “church of Cluj” (as opposed to the “church of Sibiu”) split and the independent Reformed and Unitarian Churches came into being. The superintendent of the former, the “Trinitarians” in the contemporary terminology, was Dionysius Alesius, also favoured by the Catholic Prince Stephen Báthory. The superintendent of the Anti-Trinitarians became Ferenc Dávid. At this point, we should turn back to the quittance charter of the Mikolas from 1573, in which Ferenc

Reformation] /Humanizmus és Reformáció 34/ (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2013), p. 479; Balázs, ‘Dávid Ferenc életútja’, 182.

¹²⁴ Balázs, ‘Dávid Ferenc – Kolozsvár’, 190–191.

¹²⁵ The official proclamation of the two confessions in Transylvania happened at the Diet of Medgyes: the Lutheran, called the religion of Sibiu, and the Calvinist (Reformed), called the confession of Cluj. *Ibid.*, 191.

¹²⁶ Balázs, ‘Dávid Ferenc életútja’, 192–193.

¹²⁷ According to Laurentius Filstich’s note. *Ibid.*, 190.

Dávid is called the parish priest of Cluj and superintendent. The question is: was he a superintendent at all, and if so, of which church?

Before I put forth my opinion, I must add: I do not want to deal with the problem of the splitting of the common Hungarian church around the dates of 1572-1575. On the one hand, it is not a subject of this paper, on the other hand, this field, the circumstances of the birth of the Reformed and Unitarian Churches, has its own researchers who have been studying, analyzing and publishing the sources related to the subject for many years. My own research rather proposes to insert the information contained in the charter into the timeline of Ferenc Dávid's biography, and to tackle the possible consequences of his title of superintendent (the birth of the autonomous Reformed and Unitarian Churches). However, since the subject, albeit secondary, is still somehow part of the theme of this paper, I will formulate my take on the matter as a reflection rather than a statement. At the same time, I leave space for other interpretations as well.

The views regarding Ferenc Dávid's title as bishop are unitary to a point, but based on the sources used and the various interpretive perspective matched to them result in diverse consequences. It seems to be a common view that Stephen Báthory, after his election as Prince in May 1571, displaced Ferenc Dávid as the head of the Hungarian diocese.¹²⁸ The Diet of May 1572 settles this state for Ferenc Dávid as being removed from his office as court priest and superintendent. The famed law that interdicted further religious reforms also decreed the name of the experts who decided the reforms, as **Ferenc Dávid and the superintendent** (emphasis mine, M. L. M.).¹²⁹ The scholarship unanimously claims that the superintendent was Dionysius Alesius,¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Mihály Balázs, "A hit ... hallásból lészön". Vallásszabadság és bevett vallások (receptae religiones) Erdélyben a 16. században' ["Faith ... comes from hearing". Religious freedom and established religions (receptae religiones) in sixteenth century Transylvania], in Idem, *Felekezeti és fikció. Tanulmányok 16-17. századi irodalmunkról* [Confessionalisation and fiction. Studies on 16-17th century our literature] (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2006), 29-30; Horn, *Hit és hatalom*, 121. In the absence of data, the authors are cautious about how Dávid was relieved of his superintendent title. It is less likely that Prince Stephen Báthory would have done it with a stroke of a pen, in theory the synod would have had the power to do so.

¹²⁹ Sándor Szilágyi (ed.), *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek. Monumenta Comititalia Regni Transylvaniae / Monumenta Hungariae Historica 3. osztály: Országgyűlési Emlékek. Monumenta Comititalia/* (21 vols, Budapest: M. Tud. Akadémia, 1875-1898), vol. 2, 528.

¹³⁰ For example, Balázs, "A hit ... hallásból lészön", p. 29; Horn, *Hit és hatalom*, 115-116; Előd Ősz Sándor, 'Az Erdélyi Református Egyház "kanonikus" püspöknévsoráról' [About the "canonical" bishop list of the Transylvanian Reformed Church], in József Kolombán Vilmos (ed.), *A „recepta religiók” évszázadai Erdélyben. Egyháztörténeti tanulmányok* [The centuries of the "recepta religions" in Transylvania. Studies of church history] (Kolozsvár: Kolozsvári Protestáns Teológiai Intézet, 2019), 32-33.

and the phrasing also clearly indicates that Ferenc Dávid was no longer that at the time. The law of May 1572 was modified at the Diet of 1-6 January 1573; the name of Ferenc Dávid disappeared in this version, and the experts who had to decide about the reforms were the two superintendents with the help of an expert committee.¹³¹

In the autumn of 1572 and in 1573, Ferenc Dávid appeared again as a superintendent. The first evidence about it came from Adam Neuser's letter written from Constantinople to Germany on 7 April 1574. Neuser wrote, looking back to the events that took place two years prior, in the autumn of 1572, that he had left Cluj equipped with the public letter of recommendation of **superintendent Ferenc Dávid** (emphasis mine, M. L. M.) to Pál Karádi, "who was also the preacher of Schiman, of the superintendent's diocese", to print his defence written in German "and other useful books he had" in Karádi's typography from Simánd.¹³² In April 1573, two other official documents mention Ferenc Dávid with the title of superintendent. The first is the Mikola quittance issued in Someşeni on 5 April 1573, the subject of our analysis, which mentions Ferenc Dávid as a preacher of Cluj and superintendent. The other is an extract of a charter issued in Cluj, on 22 April 1573, published by Péter Bod, and republished by József Pokoly at the end of the 19th century, signed *manu propria* by superintendent Ferenc Dávid.¹³³

There are two more pieces of evidence that shed light on Ferenc Dávid's superintendency. They are identical in content, but their dating is different. According to these, the articles of the Diet call the Unitarians "those following the religion of Ferenc Dávid", who are allowed to regard him as their bishop ("**from now on too**") (emphasis mine, M. L. M.), and after his death they have the right to elect a new superintendent. The Unitarian church history of Kénosi Tózsér and Uzoni Fosztó, referring to an old manuscript, place the date of this Diet to 6 January 1573,¹³⁴ while in

¹³¹ Szilágyi (ed.), *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. 2, 528, 534.

¹³² Zsigmond György, 'Neuser Ádám' [Ádám Neuser], *Századok*, 45 (1911): 783 (in Hungarian translation). Cf. Mihály Balázs, 'Karádi Pál Simándon' [Pál Karádi in Simánd], *Keresztény Magvető*, 112.1 (2006): 149.

¹³³ József Pokoly, 'Történelmi apróságok' [Historical little things], *Keresztény Magvető*, 33.5 (1898): 281.

¹³⁴ János Kénosi Tózsér – István Uzoni Fosztó, *Unitario-Ecclesiastica Historia Transylvanica*, liber I-II, vol. IV/1, ed. János Káldos, introd. Mihály Balázs (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2002), p. 193. In the Hungarian translation of the same work the date of 6 January 1576 appeared. János Kénosi Tózsér – István Uzoni Fosztó, *Az Erdélyi Unitárius Egyház története* [The history of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church], transl. Albert Márkos, introd. Mihály Balázs, eds. Gizella Hoffmann – Sándor Kovács – Lehel Monár B. (Kolozsvar: Erdélyi Unitárius Egyház, 2005), p. 235. The discrepancy between the two dates was explained by Ildikó Horn, who also checked

the *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek / Monumenta comitialia regni Transylvaniae* of Szilágyi we find the same information among the decrees of the Diet of Medgyes on 28 January 1576, without the phrase “from now on too”.¹³⁵

Leaving aside Neuser’s letter, all the rest of the sources which call Ferenc Dávid a superintendent come from 1573 and 1576. We could say that Ferenc Dávid arbitrarily used the title of bishop after he was dismissed,¹³⁶ but it should also be taken into account that it was not Ferenc Dávid who used this title, but it was “attached” to him by Neuser, and it may well be that he projected the conditions of the time when the letter was written (1574) to two years before. In contrast with the former which is more of a personal nature, the two data from April 1573 are official documents, therefore I think it is highly unlikely that such an important title both religiously and politically as that of a bishop could have been used arbitrarily. As witness of the Mikola charter it was even more obvious, as the authenticity of the witnesses was of outmost importance, in order to avoid future possible legal disputes. So, if Ferenc Dávid rightfully used the title of superintendent as a witness on 5 April 1573, and on 22 April he reinforced this title by his *manu propria* signature, then it was probably legalized at the Diet of January 1573. By the fact that the decree issued at the Diet allowed “those following Ferenc Dávid’s religion” to consider him their bishop “**from now on too**”, in my opinion the Diet only legalized a pre-existing state which was considered natural by the Unitarians, and from that time onwards they could lawfully regard Ferenc Dávid as their bishop. Even more so as they already held separate synods and maintained separate schools. For this reason, the two anonymous superintendents mentioned in the second reformation law issued in January 1573, who had to investigate the suspicious doctrines in the company of “learned persons”, were Dionysius Alesius and most probably also Ferenc Dávid.¹³⁷ This was the point when the common church of the Hungarians split and the independent Reformed and Unitarian churches were born.

The next in line of the witnesses was priest **Bálint**, a cleric and preacher, about whom we unfortunately have no more information. He was possibly a clerical man of the local church or from the entourage of Ferenc Dávid or the Mikola family.

the manuscript on which the Latin edition was based, and there the date of 6 January 1573 occurred, so there was a mistake in the Hungarian translation. See Horn, *Hit és hatalom*, pp. 124–125, especially note 119. Cf. Balázs, “A hit ... hallásból lészön”, 29–30.

¹³⁵ Szilágyi (ed.), *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. 2, 577.

¹³⁶ Horn, *Hit és hatalom*, 122.

¹³⁷ In opinion of Horn it was about Alesius and Ungler. Her detailed and convincing point of view, see *Ibid.*, 116–122.

The first of the two lay witnesses was **György Ombozi of Szovát**, mentioned with the “*vitézlő*” (noble) title, a member of an old noble family with estates in Dăbâca (Doboka) County. The Ombozi family was related primarily with the Kemény, Dienesi, Suky and Almádi families. His name appeared in 1555 with his father, Miklós Ombozi Jr., and his brothers, Ferenc and János. He was probably the eldest of the three sons, since his name was the first in the list.¹³⁸ On behalf of his mother, Sára Gerlistyei, he inherited estates in Severin (Szörény) County. Due to the division process of the possessions beginning with 1556, he had several legal cases with the Ban’s court of Caransebeş (Karánsebes). As a defendant, he did not refrain even from stopping the division with his sword, “according to the old customs”.¹³⁹ In 1572, Gergely Frátai, *comes* of Cluj County, recounts in his last will that he pawned 100 golden forints to György Ombozi which must be reimbursed with 106 forints.¹⁴⁰ In 1579, in relation to the instatement of an estate, among the neighbours that were present there was also a mention of a serf of the widow of Kristóf Kabos from Suceagu (Szucság), Margit Bank, wife of György Ombozi. Interestingly, this charter also mentions the future second wife of György Ombozi, Erzsébet Szentpáli, or rather her serf, in the same way as that of Margit Bank.¹⁴¹ In 1580, one of the serfs of György Ombozi from Suceagu is mentioned in a testimony.¹⁴² In the same year, we have evidence about pledging a part of a forest of the Nagyerdő of Suceagu,¹⁴³ while in 1584 György Ombozi, together with his brother János, appears as an appointed judge in the case of an escaped serf.¹⁴⁴ In 1585, he appeared in an inheritance case connected to the Ombozis,¹⁴⁵ and in 1587 he was mentioned already as deceased. His second wife, Erzsébet Szentpáli, who was still alive at this time, had an argument with the son of her husband’s first wife, Margit Bank, Mihály Kabos of Apahida. This allows us to presume that György Ombozi had no children with either of his wives. Another interesting fact is that the parties agreed

¹³⁸ Jakó (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent jegyzőkönyvei*, vol. 2, no. 5376. About his father, Miklós Ombozi, see also Horn, *Hit és hatalom*, 356.

¹³⁹ Frigyes Pesty, *A szörényi bánóság és Szörény vármegye története* [The history of the Severin Banate and the Severin County] (3 vols, Budapest: M. Tud. Akadémia, 1877–1878), vol. 2, 73–74. The case was completed in 1598 under Sigismund Báthory. *Ibid.*, 76–77. Cf. 275–276, 290–291, 301–302, 306, 366–367, 450–451, 453–454, 494, 547–548, 561–562.

¹⁴⁰ NAR, Cluj, The archives of Suky family, Series 1 – Medieval Documents, no. 416, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00423-1-416 (accessed on 27 january 2021, dated 22nd October 1572). Published: Erdélyi testamentumok, vol. 2, 90–93, here 92.

¹⁴¹ Bogdándi (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent fejedelemség kori jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 174.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, no. 249.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, no. 281.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 466.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 512.

to invite noblemen with knowledge of the law as judges, and one of the candidates on Mihály Kabos's side was Pál Mikola of Szamosfalva.¹⁴⁶ The Ombozi family was acquainted with the Mikolas for a longer time. György Ombozi's father, Miklós, as an envoy of Prince John Sigismund, visited the Saxons about taxing issues together with Ferenc Mikola in October 1559.¹⁴⁷ György "inherited" his father's relationship with the Mikolas when he was invited as a witness to the house in Bonțida of the late Ferenc Mikola.

When his first wife, Margit Bank, wrote her last will in her house in Apahida in February 1582, she stipulated that her husband would live at Apahida until he built his house in Suatu (Szovát), and that he would build this house – until his son, Mihály Kabos, grew up – from the incomes of the estate of Apahida.¹⁴⁸ At the beginning of April 1584, Margit Bank, widow of the late Kristóf Kabos, and wife of György Ombozi, completed her last will written earlier.¹⁴⁹ By the end of April that year, Margit Bank passed away, since György Ombozi transcribed her deceased wife's will.¹⁵⁰ As mentioned before, he married again after that, his second wife was Erzsébet Szentpáli, who had already been married three times before, with Lázár Podvinyai, Ferenc Kemény of Gyerőmonostor, and Pál Cserényi of Balázsfalva.¹⁵¹ In 1590, they are both mentioned as being from Suatu, and as deceased.¹⁵²

We have just as little information about **Benedek Bornemisza**. Benedek, originating from Pata in Cluj County, appeared in the sources at the beginning of the 1560s, on account of his wife, Ilona, daughter of Antal Henke.¹⁵³ Later on, we meet him again in similar contexts: in 1566, Benes (!) Bornemisza's wife, Ilona Henke,¹⁵⁴ was mentioned in a pledge

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 612. Cf. *Ibid.*, no. 628.

¹⁴⁷ Berger (hgg.), *Urkunden-Regesten*, vol. 2, no. 2542.

¹⁴⁸ *Báthory Zsigmond Királyi Könyvei*, no. 157.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 474.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 482.

¹⁵¹ Bogdándi (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent fejedelemség kori jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 174. Cf. *Báthory Zsigmond Királyi Könyvei*, no. 1351.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ Ilona Henke, wife of Benedek Bornemisza, was called to justice in 1561. NAR, Cluj, Fond familial Bethlen de Iktár [The archives of the Bethlen family of Iktár], Seria 3 – Acte privind administrarea posesiunilor [Acts regarding the administration of possessions], no. 410, f. 1, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00329-3-410 (accessed on 15 May 2021). We can expect some uncertainty, because in the absence of a picture of the charter, we have to rely on the Romanian extract.

¹⁵⁴ NAR, Cluj, The archives of Suky family, Series 1 – Medieval Documents, no. 283, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00423-1-283 (accessed on 27 January 2021). We can expect some uncertainty, because in the absence of a picture of the charter, we have to rely on the (erroneous) Romanian extract. The charter was transcribed on 1 November 1576. *Ibid.*

deal. Then, beginning with 1568, Ilona Henkei, wife of Benedek Bornemisza of Pata was repeatedly mentioned in a case that lasted for over a decade, about the inheritance of some (Thoroczkay) estates (5 October 1568,¹⁵⁵ 27 October, 31 October and 25 November 1577,¹⁵⁶ and 2 February 1578, in the same case, as Benedek Bornemisza of Magyarpata¹⁵⁷). From the late 1560s, he was mentioned several times as a witness (in 1569, 1575¹⁵⁸), and in 1577 he was a witness again at the putting into possession of Cămărașu (Pusztakamarás) in Cluj County.¹⁵⁹ He was a man of the voivode in November¹⁶⁰ and December 1583, when his name was mentioned together with the other witness, György Ombozi of Szovát,¹⁶¹ and in 1585¹⁶², when his name appeared again in an estate business.¹⁶³ The last piece of information about him comes from 1589, when one of his serfs is mentioned.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁵ NAR, Cluj, The archives of the Bánffy family, Series 2 – Tools of contemporary evidence and documents based on the tools of contemporary evidence, Subseries 1b – Documente ordonate după Registrul 1b [Subseries 1b – Documents ordered by Register 1b], fasc. 55, nr. 28, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00320-1-2-1b-55-28 (accessed on 27 January 2021).

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, fasc. 66, no. 33, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00320-1-2-1b-66-33 (accessed on 27 January 2021).

¹⁵⁷ NAR, Cluj, Fond familial Thoroczkay [The archives of the Thoroczkay family], Seria I – Documente medievale [Series I – Medieval Documents], no. 88, fasc. VII, no. 3, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00444-1-88 (accessed on 27 January 2021). We can expect some uncertainty, because in the absence of a picture of the charter, we have to rely on the Romanian extract.

¹⁵⁸ NAR, Cluj, Colecția personală Kemény József [Personal collection of József Kemény], Seria 1 – ANR [Series 1 – ANR], Subseries 1 – Documente medievale [Subseries 1 – Medieval Documents], no. 85, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00594-1-1-85; NAR, Cluj, Fond familial Gyulai-Kuun [The archives of Gyulai-Kuun family], Seria 5 – Documente recotate [Series 5 – Re-allotted documents], no. 812, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00351-5-812 (accessed on 30 January 2021).

¹⁵⁹ NAR, Cluj, Fond familial Kemény de Ciumbrod [The archives of Kemény family of Csombord], Seria 1 – Documente medievale [Series 1 – Medieval documents], no. 115, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00008-1-115 (accessed on 30 January 2021).

¹⁶⁰ NAR, Cluj, The archives of the Bánffy family, Series 2 – Tools of contemporary evidence and documents based on the tools of contemporary evidence, Subseries 1b – Documents ordered by Register 1b, fasc. 36, no. 4, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00320-1-2-1b-36-4 (accessed on 30 January 2021).

¹⁶¹ NAR, Cluj, The archives of the Bánffy family, Seria 3 – Evidențe vechi de arhivă și acte fasciculate [Series 3 – Old archival records and bunched documents], Subseries 2 – Acte fasciculate [Subseries 2 – Bunched documents], no. 47, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00320-1-3-2-28-47 (accessed on 30 January 2021).

¹⁶² NAR, Cluj, Fond familial Kornis [The archives of Kornis family], Seria 1 – Documente medievale [Series 1 – Medieval documents], no. 169, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00378-1-169 (accessed on 30 January 2021).

¹⁶³ NAR, Cluj, The archives of Suky family, Series 1 – Medieval Documents, no. 504, fasc. IX, no. 39, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00423-1-504 (accessed on 30 January 2021).

¹⁶⁴ Bogdándi – Gálfi (eds.), *Az erdélyi káptalan jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 615–616.

The relationship between Benedek Bornemisza of Pata and the Mikola family of Szamosfalva was not merely that of acquaintance as neighbours, but we can also connect them directly with sources, although the sources come from July 1577, after Ferenc Mikola's death, when his widow, Anna Melith, complained about the people of Cluj who violated the boundaries of her estates in Someşeni. Prince Cristopher Báthory's order of prohibition in Anna's protection had to be forwarded to the council of Cluj by Pál Mikola of Szamosfalva, István Gyerófi of Szamosfalva, Benedek Bornemisza of Pata and Zsigmond Györgyfalvi of Györgyfalva.¹⁶⁵ The following year, the part of estate of Voivodeni (Vajdaszentiván) of Torda County, gained as new donation, was granted not only to Benedek Bornemisza's wife, Ilona Henke, but among others also to the widow of István Mikola of Szamosfalva, Anna, wife of János Hamvai.¹⁶⁶ It seems therefore that Benedek Bornemisza of Pata lived the life of the petty county nobility, took part in instatements into possessions, and as a man of the voivode he was the local executor of the Prince's orders. Although he might have lived a long life, we have no evidence about any other family members except his wife.

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When the Mikola relatives took over the family archive from the widow of their late brother, well protected by the oldest member of the family, they followed the customary law and the interests of their family. The archive's importance was due to the fact that the documents preserved in it secured the rights of the family and convinced the owners to do all they can to keep it safe. This careful preservation practiced by the Mikolas as well as other families assured their survival through centuries,¹⁶⁷ and

¹⁶⁵ NAR, Cluj, The archives of Cluj, Series A. – Privileges and documents, Subseria A2 – Acte fasciculate [Subseries A2 – Bunched documents], fasc. 1, no. 45, www.arhivamedievala.ro, CJ-F-00001-A-2-1-45 (accessed on 30 January 2021).

¹⁶⁶ Anna, daughter of the late János Cserényi of Vajdaszentiván, was first the wife of István Mikola, then of János Hamvai. Bogdándi (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent fejedelemség kori jegyzőkönyvei*, no. 146.

¹⁶⁷ At present, the archive of the Mikola of Szamosfalva family, along other families such as the Kamuti or Kállay, are part of the entailed archive of the Baron Jósika family, deposited by the Baron Jósika family in the archive of the National Museum of Transylvania in 1941. A part of this archive is now handled by the Cluj County Office of the National Archives of Romania in Cluj-Napoca, and another part is found in the "Lucian Blaga" University Library of Cluj-Napoca. Originally, the Mikola family archive was a separate unit; around 1763, it was merged with the archives of the Kamuti family after the death of the last Kamuti married to a Mikola, when the Mikola family died out. Zsigmond Jakó, the handler of the archives, considered that the oldest and most important part of the entailed archives of the Jósika family were the Mikola and Kamuti family archives, since these two archives contain a significant amount of

from the second half of the 19th century, losing their original function, turned them into indispensable sources for the researchers of a nearer or more distant past.

Translated from the Hungarian by Emese Czintos

medieval materials, as well in terms of Transylvania. Zsigmond Jakó, *Az Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum Levéltárának múltja és feladatai* [The past and the tasks of the Archives of the Transylvanian National Museum] /*Erdélyi Tudományos Füzetek* 133/ (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 1942), 20–23; Idem, 'Jelentés az Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum Levéltárának 1942. évi működéséről' [Report on the operation of the Archives of the Transylvanian National Museum in 1942], *Erdélyi Múzeum*, 48.1 (1943): 27–28; Idem, 'Jelentés az Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum Levéltárának 1944. évi működéséről' [Report on the operation of the Archives of the Transylvanian National Museum in 1944], *Erdélyi Múzeum*, 49.1–2. (1944) 86–105.

