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**The diplomatics of the Sclavonian princes and bans in the 14th
century**

(1323-1381)

(Summary of the PhD Thesis)

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This paper investigates the diplomatics of the Sclavonian princes and bans during the 14th century. The diplomatics observations are shown in the first part of the paper. In the second part, the regestas of their charters are demonstrated.

As the subtitle shows, the scope of this investigation is restricted to the period between 1323 and 1381. In 1323 the “restoration of King Charles I” started in Sclavonia, similarly to the activities in the other part of the country. The first step of the restoration regarding this territory was that King Charles I (1301-1342) relieved the ban, John of Babonić, of his duties. The family of John of Babonić strove to be the rulers of a territorial unit in Hungary. King Charles I named Nicholas from Felsőlendva (commonly called Felsőlendvai Miklós in Hungary), who was unconditionally loyal to him, as the leader. The period is closed in 1381, when, after the second banat of Peter Cudar, King Louis I (1342-1382), for the first time, named two people, Stephen and John Bánfi, for the leaders of the territory. Their banat resulted in the next, turbulent period.

1. The exterior characteristics of the charters of the Sclavonian princes and bans

In this period the charters of the Sclavonian princes and bans were written on parchment. After the 1330s they were written on paper as well. In the *privilegiums* their writings were ordered, the lines and the margins were lined in advance, and the erroneous parts of the text were underlined with dashed or dotted lines. In case of non-perpetual documents the *notariuses* did not strive for ordered and easily readable writings containing few abbreviations, since these documents usually had to be read by people who knew the writing of the *notarius*. The readers of the non-perpetual documents

created in lawsuits were acquainted with the steps of the suits, therefore, the interpretation of the very abbreviated parts of the text did not cause difficulty to them. All of the diplomas are of horizontal rectangular shape (*carta transversa*). Neither portrait-shaped nor book-format diplomas have been known among the charters of the princes and bans of the century. Only very few documents were ornamented with initials and these were published mainly in the first part of the century.

Seals were the main means of authentication. The Sclavonian princes and bans during the 14th century utilized all the three ways of fixing seals, that is, hanging, pressing and pressing-closing. *Sigillums* or at least fragments of them are known from every princes and bans. Based on these it can be pointed out that each ban used only one, his own, seal in the beginning of the period. In the 1350s they started to use two *sigillums*: a bigger one (the authentic) and a smaller one (the non-authentic). The duplicated seal-usage was settled down after 1366, that is, during the second banat of Nicolas Szécsi. After this period, the bigger, authentic seal was appended to the perpetual document, while the smaller one was pressed to the other documents.

The different types of notes which can be read on documents are to be mentioned among the exterior characteristics of charters. Among the contemporary notes a type of note called "*külzet*", *solvit* notes and notes of *commissio* and *relatio* can be distinguished. "*Külzet*" can be a very short extract of the content, an address or both. The *solvit* note appeared first in the charters of the bans in the 1370s, and in the following period became general. Notes of *commissio* and *relatio* appeared in the charters of Prince Stephan and Princess Margaret. Although in their case, their *prothonotariuses*, who were experienced in the work of the royal chancellery, began to use them and after them these notes were not used in the period in question. Contemporary notes

can be found only in very few documents which were edited in the chancellery of the princes and bans in Zagreb. The reason for this is that there were fewer numbers of cases and fewer workers of the chancellery. Among the later notes extracts and archival notes can be distinguished. The archival notes were established during the archiving process and these notes can provide us with knowledge about the history of the different archives.

2. The internal characteristics of the charters of the Sclavonian princes and bans

Invocatio verbalis cannot be found in the charters of the princes and bans in the 14th century. *Invocatio symbolica* was rare, only when the letter N of the word *Nos* was enhanced in the initial and its left arm was formed cross-shaped with the ornament.

The Sclavonian princes and bans used the *dux/banus tocius Sclavonie* phrase in the *intitulatio* in all cases. The first two bans, Nicolas Felsőlendvai and Ákos Mikcs were for shorter or longer periods the counts of several counties, but in most of their charters called themselves just Ban of Sclavonia. The first change happened after the pacification of Croatia in 1345, when King Louis I subordinated that territorial unit to the Sclavonian ban. Parallel with this territorial expansion, the title of Nicolas Hahót became the Ban of Sclavonia and Croatia. His successor, Nicolas Szécsi used the same title. In 1350, when King Louis I departed to the second Neapolitan war, he named his younger and only living brother, Prince Stephan to the head of the Hungarian territorial unit nearest to the operational area. The young *dux* lived in Buda, instead of Zagreb, and he shared the leading of the country with his mother. On his behalf, Paul from Ugal (Ugali Pál) the former *prothonotarius* of *iudex curie*, who was undoubtedly loyal to the royal

family, led the territory. He called himself in the charters “*per inclitum principem dominum Stephanum Dei gratia tocius Sclavonie, Croatie et Dalmatie ducem in dictis regnis Sclavonie et Croatie banus constitutus.*” When in the end of 1350 the *dux* moved to Transylvania, Ugali left too, and the former Transylvanian vaivode Stephan Lackfi was named to be the ban. King Louis I renewed the Sclavonian dukedom in 1353. This time Nicolaus Hahót helped the king’s brother. He also helped the widow Princess Margaret to rule after the death of Stephan.

Both Stephan and Margaret used the triple ducal title, that is, they called themselves the Sclavonian-Croatian-Dalmatian prince and princess respectively. Beside the double-title (Sclavonian-Croatian) of the bans, which reflects the real situation, the triple title expressed the Hungarian claim for Dalmatia. Princess Margaret left Hungary in 1356 and King Louis spent the summer in Zagreb leaving the question undecided for foreign countries whether he wanted to be at war with Serbia or Venice. In the end, he opted for and conquered the Dalmatian region held by Venice. Until the war-situation calmed down and until the death of Stephan’s orphan, John in 1360 Leusták Paksi, who led the territory, used the title *vicarius generalis* and then changed it to ban. The bishop in Zagreb, Stephan Kanizsai followed him in the banat who in his temporary office used the *vicarius generalis* title, too. During the second and third banats of Nicolas Szécsi and during the two banats of Peter Cudar the title of the Sclavonian bans did not change. King Louis revived the Sclavonian dukedom, in 1371-72 and he named his relative, Charles of Durazzo from Naples. De Surdis John, bishop of Vác helped him, and he called himself *vicarius generalis*, like Paksi and Kanizsai.

The *inscriptio* named the person, people or corporation to whom the diploma was addressed. In the charters of princes and princesses it always came after the *intitulatio*. When the ban wrote to the king or a church

institution, it stood at the first place. The formula “*omnibus Christi fidelibus*” and its versions were typical in the first part of the century.

Fifteen kinds of *salutatio* can be distinguished in the investigated charters. It is usual that most of them took place in the first part of the century and in the charters of princes and princesses. In the charters edited in the second part of the century only the “*salutem et amicitiam paratam*” formulas were used.

Arenga, namely that part of the charter which contains general truth suitable for the content of the diploma, can be found only in the charters of the first two bans and Stephan *dux* and Margaret *ducissa*.

The “*memorie commendantes tenore presencium, quibus expedit universes*” formula was the most popular *promulgatio* in the investigated period. In the charters edited in the first part of the century and in the charters of Princess Margaret the “*ad univerosrum noticiam harum serie volumes pervenire*” formula can be distinguished.

The *narratio* and the *disposicio* changed in each and every case, they were always suited to the charter. Such a *narration*, which was almost a short story that narrates the actions and the services of the possession or other donation receiver, was not created in the chancellery of the bans in this period. The order part of the chapters that addressed documents was unified.

The *corroboratio* in the formula “*in cuius rei memoriam/testimonium firmitatemque perpetuam presentes concessimus litteras nostras (privilegiales) (pendentis et autentici) sigilli nostril munimine roboratas/consignatas*” became steady, and in some cases it was extended with the name of the *destinatarius*, or with the name of the actual case instead of the word *rei*.

The *datatio* was always written according to the Christian calendar, the place of the edition was generally the part of it. In the *privilegiums* of the

princes the Roman calendar was used without the place of edition, like in the royal charters. The *annus ducalis* can be found only in the charters of Prince Stephan.

3. The chancellery of the Sclavonian princes and bans in the 14th century.

The *prothonotarius* led the chancellery of the Sclavonian princes and bans. Because of their expertise in law they took part in *generalis congregation* and in the law court of the bans. They also contributed as *homo banus* to significant suits. Similarly to the judges of the period, they took care of the bigger, authentic seal of the bans. However, according to our present knowledge, when the ban was undoubtedly not in Zagreb, no diploma was published.

The series of the *prothonotarius* is known from the period of Ákos Mikcs, but only with big gaps. The reason for this is that the “*datum per manus*” formula did not appear in the charters of the bans. This formula documented the name of the person, who was responsible for the publishing of the charters, that is, in case of the banat the name of the *prothonotarius*. Nevertheless, it can be found in the charters of Prince Stephan and Princess Margaret. Andrew, son of Nicolas from Križevci county was the first *prothonotarius* of the Sclavonian ban in the period of this study.

During the Sclavonian dukedom of Prince Stephan, George, son of Michael from Megyericse (Megyericsei) as well as from Križevci county worked as *prothonotarius*. He followed his “*dominus*” during Prince Stephan’s changing dukedoms. During the dukedom of Princess Margaret Peter de Brünn (Brünni) worked as *prothonotarius*. Master Kozma led the chancellery of Nicolas Hahót, who was assumed to be the leader of the

Zagrabian chancellery during the first banat of his lord, but information about him from this period has not been found yet. Master Jacob was the *prothonotarius* of Leusták Paksi. After the leaving of his master he probably stayed at his office and he was also the leader of the chancellery of Stephan Kanizsai, bishop and *vicarius*. Master Michael, son of Nicolas Sörnyei from Somogy county was appointed by Nicolas Szécsi for his second banat, and like George Megyericsei, he followed his lord during Szécsi's changing honors. During the second banat of Peter Cudar, Master George was the *prothonotarius*. He was the last *prothonotarius* in the period of this study.

The princes and bans were accompanied by some part of their chancellery during the official travels. In most of the cases there is no difference between the charters of princes/bans edited in Zagreb or in other Slavonian settlements or in campaign. Only one charter (dated June 23, 1345 by Nicolas Hahót in Knin, Croatia) is known in which the formulas differ a bit from the usual ones.

The chancellery of princes/bans certainly managed the book of register, too, in which the content of the charters were written. Similarly to the other chancelleries the book of formulas was also used to ease the “*notarius*” work.

4. Grouping of the Slavonian princes' and bans' charters based on their contents

Privilegiums, which were written on parchment and sealed with hanging seals, can be found among the editions of the 14th century chancellery of Slavonian princes and bans. In the first part of the century editions were published with more solemn and longer formulas. They also bear all characteristics of the royal charters (except for the *datatio* of Roman

calendar). A subgroup of the *privilegiums* is established by the “simple” *privilegiums*, which are similar to the “full” *privilegiums*, but they were edited with simpler formulas. This subgroup of *privilegiums* was typical in the second half of the century. The “confirming” charters form another subgroup, in which the prince/ban transcribed and confirmed another diploma. Their formulas converged toward unification at the end of the century.

The “patens” charters were made in open form, with pressed seals on their back. The group shows the biggest variety of content, since charters published this way can be found in almost every subject. The “*damus pro memoria*” type of charters is a special subgroup of the “patens” which became the regular type of the “case postponing” charters during the second half of the century.

The *mandatums* or “order letters” are addressed to either ecclesiastical or secular people. In case of *mandatums* of princes the name of the prince always stands in the first place. If bans write to an ecclesiastical institute the addressee stands in the first place. The *disposicions* of *mandatums* addressed to chapters or convents became much formulated in the studied period, practically, only the names were changing in them.

5. The periods of the diplomatics of the princes and bans in the 14th century

The period between 1323 and 1381 can be divided into three sub-periods.

The first sub-period was between 1323 and 1343, that is, the time of the first two bans. From this period only a few charters are known. The last full *privilegium* was edited in this sub-period. The formulas of the different

types of charters did not separate yet. The longer, *ornamentaler* formulas were typical. The bans used only one seal. The paper appeared in the chancellery.

The second sub-period was between 1343 and 1366. The number of the charters doubled compared to the earlier period. The “*damus pro memoria*” charters appeared, the longer formulas disappeared from the charters of bans and the *promulgatio* became steady in the “*memorie commendantes*” etc. formulas. The double seals used by the bans appeared, although they were not stabilized.

The third sub-period was between 1366 and 1381. The number of the charters was similar to the previous period. The formulas of the charters and the double seals used by the bans were stabilized.

6. About the regestas

In the collection of the regestas I recorded all of the charters – altogether 483 pieces – which were edited by the Slavonian princes and bans irrespective of whether the whole text is available, or it is with content-transcription or in mentions. It is not possible to find a unified principle regarding the mentions either in the CD-Rom of the Hungarian National Archive about the mediaeval documents or in the published volumes of the *Anjou-kori oklevéltár*. In some cases the diplomas known only from mentions contain important historical facts (for example, dates of *generalis congregatio* and residential *exercitus regis*), and they are worth publishing in all cases. Although for the sake of unification the other ones have to be published as well.

In case of the documents which have been published in the volumes of the *Anjou-kori oklevéltár* I published only the dates and the data about the

charters, but I skipped the text of the regestas. Naturally, I published the regestas of the charters which have not been edited yet. The language of the regestas is Hungarian. I published the vulgar words verbatim. I gave the dates in their original form as well as in modern form; the *octavas* and *quindenas* were rewritten to the date form used nowadays in all cases.

List of the Sclavonian princes and bans during the 14th century

Princes

Stephan (first time)

1350. 02. 20. (Smič. XI. 441.) - 1350. 10. 22. (MOL DF 249 099)

Stephan (second time)

1353. 03. 10. (Smič. XII. 107.) - 1354. 07. 13. (MOL DL 94 424)

Margaret

1354. 12. 6. (Smič. XII. 198.) - 1356. 01. 14. (Smič. XII. 241.)

Charles

1371. 04. 16. (Smič. XIV. 238.) - 1372. 06. 16. (Smič. XIV. 314.)

Bans

Nicolaus Felsőlendvai

1323. 02. 04. (Smič. IX. 94.) – 1325. 04. 14. (HO. 3. 76.)

Ákos Mikcs

1325. 05. 27. (Zala I. 184) – 1343. 04. 26. (Smič. XI. 44.)

Nicolaus Hahót (first time)

1343. 05. 18. (Smič. XI. 47.) - 1346. 07. 06. (Smič. XI. 231.)

Nicolaus Szécsi (first time)

1346. 07. 31. (Smič. XI. 237.) - 1349. 06. 05. (Smič. XI. 407.)

Paul Ugali

1349. 07. 06. (F CD IX/6. 43.) - 1350. 07. 06. (Sjme Ljubić, Listine 3./278.)

Stephan Lackfi

1351. 01. 09. (MOL DL 4 168) – 1353. 01. 13. (Smič. XII. 103.)

Nicolaus Hahót (second time)

1353. 04. 29. (A.O. 6/60.) - 1356. 02. 22. (MOL DL 58 021)

Vacantia

1356. 02. 27. (MOL DL 24 438) – 1356. 03. 21. (A.V. 439.)

Leusták Paksi

1356. 04. 06. (F CD IX/7. 141) - 1362. 10. 27. (Smič. XIII. 188.)

Stephan Kanizsai (vicarius)

1362. 10. 31. (MOL DF 212 780) - 1366. 07. 19. (Smič. XIII. 395.)

Nicolaus Szécsi (second time)

1366. 08. 01. (Smič. XIII. 399.) - 1368. 05. 27. (Smič. XIV. 86.)

Peter Cudar (first time)

1368. 08. 02. (MOL DL 73 604) - 1371. 01. 21. (Smič. XIV. 304.)

John De Surdis (vicarius)

1371. 07. 06. (Smič. XIV. 269.) - 1372. 06. 11. (Smič. XIV. 311.)

Nicolaus Szécsi (third time)

1372. 11. 17. (MOL DL 94 435) - 1373. 02. 08. (MOL DL 322)

Peter Cudar (second time)

1373. 03. 08. (MOL DL 61 223) - 1381. 05. 20. (Smič. XVI. 159.)

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