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## **THE RETINUE OF THE HUNGARIAN KING AFTER THE BATTLE OF NICOPOLIS – THE DANUBE SECTION OF ESCAPE**

**ABSTRACT:** *In the past decades, or even during the last hundred years, many books and articles were published on the Crusade in 1396 and the Battle of Nicopolis. It is no wonder that the Crusade of 1396 still intrigues many people, being one of the emblematic events of the Christian undertakings in the Middle Ages. The topic is huge, so the study presents a slice of the Crusade. The aim of the study is to provide new data and information about the Hungarian King's journey home after the Battle of Nicopolis, including the Danube section, which has not been included in the literature so far.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Battle of Nicopolis, Crusade, 1396, escape, Sigismund of Luxembourg, Miklós Garai, János Kanizsai, Stiborici Stibor, Hermann Cillei, Danube*

**T**he Crusade of 1396 has already served as the basis for many papers. The chances of the complete reconstruction of the events are slim. This can be justified as a fact. However, the expansion of source bases, the review of known records with new methods and the inclusion of new means offer some hope to shed light on another slice of events, or to refine the existing knowledge. Therefore, the presentation of the next minor episode following the Battle of Nicopolis may also deserve attention.

The aim of the study is to provide new data and information about the Hungarian King's journey home after the Battle of Nicopolis, including the Danube section, which has not been included in the literature so far. The Danube section of the King's escape has not received enough attention in the literature so far.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the present study tries to find answers to the following questions: 1) who accompanied the Hungarian King in the escape after the Battle of Nicopolis and on the ship, 2) who was not with Sigismund on his way around the Balkans, 3) where these persons could have left the retinue of the King?

The study seeks to justify or refute the available literature by involving the primary sources – Joseph Ritter von Aschbach,<sup>2</sup> Alois Brauner,<sup>3</sup> Joseph Delaville Le Roulx,<sup>4</sup> Ferdinand Šišić,<sup>5</sup> Wertner Mór,<sup>6</sup> Aziz Suryal Atiya and Kenneth Meyer Setton, and in contemporary chronicles – Froissart,<sup>7</sup> Thuróczy,<sup>8</sup> Długosz<sup>9</sup> – the presence of the listed persons on the side of the King of Hungary during the escape after the Battle of Nicopolis. It is important to note that persons in the chronicles can only be considered members of the retinue if this is justified by the primary source. This is necessary because none of the authors of the chronicles were present in the Crusade of 1396 and could only reconstruct the events indirectly, from subjective narratives. Moreover, with the exception of Froissart, who was a contemporary of the events, Thuróczy and Długosz wrote their works decades after the incidents.

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<sup>1</sup> Tamás Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis to Mohács. A History of Ottoman-Hungarian Warfare, 1389–1526*. (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2016), 64.; Gábor Ágoston, „Bayezid I. (Thunderbolt)” in: *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Masters (New York: Facts On File, 2009) 81–82.; Kenneth Meyer Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1517) Volume I, The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society Independence Square, 1976); Steven Runciman, *A history of the crusades* (Cambridge: University Press, 1954); Aziz Suryal Atiya, *The Crusade of Nicopolis* (London, 1934).

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Ritter von Aschbach, *Geschichte Kaiser Sigismunds*. Erster Band (Hamburg: Friedrich Perthes, 1838).

<sup>3</sup> Alois Brauner, *Die Schlacht bei Nikopolis 1396* (Breslau: Buchdruckerei Lindner, 1876), 48–49.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Delaville Le Roulx, *La France en Orient au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle. Expéditions du maréchal Boucicaut* (Paris, 1886).

<sup>5</sup> Ferdinand von Šišić, „Die Schlacht bei Nicopolis (25 September 1396),” *Wiss-Mitt-Bosnien-Hercegovina* 6, (1899).

<sup>6</sup> Wertner Mór, „A nikápolyi hadjárat 1396-ban,” *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények*, 26, no. 1. (1925).

<sup>7</sup> Les Chroniques de Sire Jean Froissart. Tome III. (Paris: A. Desrez, Libraire Éditeur, 1835).

<sup>8</sup> Thuróczy János, *A magyarok krónikája*. Ford. Bellus Ibolya és Kristó Gyula. (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> Ioannis Długossi, *Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*. Lib. X. (Varsaviae: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Pwn, 1985).

Above all, however, it is worth briefly summarizing the existing knowledge about Sigismund's escape after the Battle of Nicopolis. During his quick escape, the Hungarian King and several leading men managed to reach the ships anchored on the Danube. From there they sailed in the only safe direction, along the course of the Danube, towards the Black Sea. Sigismund and his entourage returned to the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary on January 4, 1397, touching Constantinople, and through the Aegean and Adriatic Seas.<sup>10</sup> This also shows that the literature on the first stage of the escape on the Danube says little, but mostly nothing about reaching the ships.

### Who could have been next to the King of Hungary?

Owing to Joseph Ritter von Aschbach (1838) on the retinue of the Hungarian King after the Battle of Nicopolis, the list of names has been present in the literature since the first half of the 19th century. This was also taken over by Joseph Delaville Le Roulx (1886) in his book, and also appears in the work of Ferdinand Šišić (1899).<sup>11</sup> The research independent of the listed historians was also carried out by Alois Brauner (1876). Mór Wertner (1925) has also published a list in his study, but the source of this cannot be fully defined.<sup>12</sup> Aziz Suryal Atiya (1934) did not undertake to review Sigismund's post-battle retinue, he rather collected the already known facts on the issue.<sup>13</sup>

With regard to the existing lists, there are overlaps between them, which is good news. It is a less relieving fact that there are more people in these lists who certainly did not, or only presumably, took part in the Crusade of 1396. Based on the literature, then who could have stayed on the ship next to Sigismund and whose presence can be confirmed?

We are fortunate in having the available primary sources, as the narrations of several diplomas mention the persons who were then with the King (see Table 1). Based on these, the following Hungarian and foreign lords can be identified according to the literature and primary sources, accompanied by Sigismund.

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<sup>10</sup> Engel Pál és C. Tóth Norbert, *Itineraria regum et reginarum, 1382–1438* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia és Magyar Országos Levéltár Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár Kutatócsoport, 2005), 72.

<sup>11</sup> Aschbach, *Geschichte Kaiser Sigismunds*, 107–108.; Delaville Le Roulx, *La France*, 280–281.; Ferdinand von Šišić refers to Delaville's work on the retinue of Sigismund. Šišić, „Die Schlacht bei Nicopolis (25 September 1396),” 315.

<sup>12</sup> Brauner, *Die Schlacht*, 48–49.; Wertner, „A nikápolyi hadjárat 1396-ban,” 247.

<sup>13</sup> Atiya, *The Crusade*, 212.; Setton, *The Papacy* 356.

Table 1 – Nobles next to King Sigismund

	Name	Next to the Hungarian King			
		Aschbach (1838) <sup>14</sup>	Brauner (1876) <sup>15</sup>	Wertner (1925) <sup>16</sup>	source
1.	Hermann Cillei Count of Cillei	◆		◆	◆ <sup>17</sup>
2.	Detre Bebek Slavonic Ban	◆			
3.	Miklós Garai Croatian Ban	◆	◆	◆	◆ <sup>18</sup>
4.	János Garai Dalmatian-Croatian Ban	◆	◆	◆	◆ <sup>19</sup>
5.	János Hohenzollern, Nuremberg Castellan	◆	◆	◆	◆ <sup>20</sup>
6.	István Kanizsai doorman	◆	◆	◆	◆ <sup>21</sup>
7.	János Kanizsai Archbishop of Esztergom	◆	◆	◆	◆ <sup>22</sup>
8.	Tamás Kulski	◆	◆		
9.	Oswald de Wolkenstein	◆	◆		
10.	János Pásztói national judge	◆			
11.	Grand Master Johannite Philibert de Naillac	◆	◆	◆	
12.	Antal Somkerek			◆	
13.	Stiborici Stibor Transylvanian voivode	◆	◆		◆ <sup>23</sup>

(Source: Own editing)

<sup>14</sup> Aschbach, Geschichte Kaiser Sigismunds, 107–108.

<sup>15</sup> Brauner, Die Schlacht, 48–49.

<sup>16</sup> Wertner, „A nikápolyi hadjárat 1396-ban,” 247.

<sup>17</sup> January 27, 1399 Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltár Diplomatikai Levéltár (National Archives of Hungary, National Archives, Diplomatic Archives) Nr. 34048, Középkori históriák oklevelekben (1002–1410). Szerk. Kristó Gyula, (Szeged: Középkorász Műhely, 1992), 240–243. Nr. 167. January 27, 1399. Valentin Langmantel ed., „Hans Schiltbergers Reisebuch nach der Nürnberger handschrift,” in *Bibliothek des litterarischen vereins in Stuttgart*. CLXXII, (Tübingen: Gedruckt auf Kosten des Litterarischen Vereins, 1885), 4.

<sup>18</sup> August 1, 1406 Codex Diplomaticus Patrius Hungaricus. Tomus VII. Studio et opera. Arnoldi Ipolyi et Emerici Nagy et Desiderii Véghely. (Budapestini: Typis Alexandri Kocsi, 1880), 439. Nr. 401; Középkori históriák oklevelekben, 252–267. Nr. 170.

<sup>19</sup> August 1, 1406 Codex Diplomaticus Patrius Hungaricus, 439. Nr. 401; Középkori históriák oklevelekben, 252–267. Nr. 170.

<sup>20</sup> Langmantel, „Hans Schiltbergers,” 4.

<sup>21</sup> March 4, 1397 Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Nr. 87647; Középkori históriák oklevelekben, 225–235. Nr. 165.

<sup>22</sup> March 4, 1397 Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Nr. 87647; Középkori históriák oklevelekben, 225–235. Nr. 165.

<sup>23</sup> December 8, 1397. Wenzel Gusztáv, *Stibor vajda. Életrajzi Tanulmány. Értekezések a történettudomány köréből. IV/2* (Budapest: Eggenberger-féle Akad. Könyvkereskedés, 1874), 100. Nr. 65; *Zsigmondkori oklevéltár I.* Összeállította: Mályusz Elemér, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1956), 565. Nr. 5102., Középkori históriák oklevelekben, 235–240. Nr. 164; Dlugossi, 211.

To interpret the Table, let us first see who the Hungarian secular dignitaries were that took part in the Crusade and what we can know about their stay after the battle. Among the secular dignitaries, the presence of Palatine Leusták Ilsvai (1392–1397), Stibor Stiborici Transylvanian Voivode (1395–1397), Dalmatian-Croatian Ban Miklós Garai (1394–1402), János Perényi, cup-bearer master (1390–†1396), and István Kanizsai doorman master (1395–1401) can be justified in the Crusade and the Battle of Nicopolis. Out of these dignitaries, Leusák Ilsvai was taken a prisoner of war and died there, while János Perényi was killed in the Battle of Nicopolis.<sup>24</sup>

The participation of the following four people in the Crusade can only be presumed in the absence of resources: Bebek Detre, Slavonic Ban (1394–1397), István Kórógyi and Miklós Treutel Macho Ban (1394–1397), János Kórógyi, cavalry master (1395–1396), Frank Szécsi treasurer (1394–1396) and György Csetneki, table attendant master (1387–1396). János Pásztói national judge (1395–1397) and Miklós Kanizsai royal chief treasurer (1388–1398) left home to govern the Kingdom of Hungary. In the case of the Hungarian ecclesiastical dignitaries, we only know the whereabouts of Archbishop János Kanizsai of Esztergom (1387–1418) and Bishop István Cikó of Eger (1387–1399). While the Archbishop's banderium was in charge of the campaign, the Bishop remained in the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary. We do not have information on the whereabouts of the Archbishop of Kalocsa, the eleven bishops and the prior of Vrana.<sup>25</sup>

The fact is that there may have been more ecclesiastical and secular nobles besides Sigismund than we can prove. This is also evidenced by the donation letter from Stibor and Garai. As described in these, Sigismund escaped from the Battle of Nicopolis with some other high priests and barons („*ceteris pancis Prelatis et Baronibus retorsum fecimus*”).<sup>26</sup> Referring back to the previous paragraph, the presence of only two of the Hungarian ecclesiastical dignitaries can be proved in the Crusade of 1396: János Kanizsai, who was present there and István Cikó, who remained at home. Thus, besides Kanizsai, at least one ecclesiastical dignitary still had to strengthen the retinue of the Hungarian King during the escape.

In view of the abovementioned data series in Table 1, it is necessary to deal with the following criticisms.

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<sup>24</sup> Kranzieritz Károly, „A nikápolyi csata magyar résztvevői,” *Hadtörténeti Közlemények* 128, no. 1 (2015): 168, 171–172, 167, 170, 168, 175.

<sup>25</sup> Kranzieritz, „A nikápolyi csata magyar résztvevői,” 175–176.

<sup>26</sup> December 8, 1397. Wenzel, Stibor vajda, 100. Nr. 65; 1406. augusztus 1. Codex Diplomaticus Patrius Hungaricus, 439. Nr. 401.

1) Aschbach is inaccurate in his work, when he also lists Detre Bebek and János Pásztói as present.<sup>27</sup> The whereabouts of Detre Bebek during the Crusade are unknown due to lack of resources while in the case of János Pásztói it can be clearly proved that he did not take part in the Crusade in 1396.

2) Detre Bebek and Miklós Garai are also mistakenly called palatine by Aschbach and Brauner. Bebek held this position from 1397, while Garai from 1403.

3) Antal Somkereké is on the list of Mór Wertner, who is proved to have taken part in the campaign of 1396 and the Battle of Nicopolis. It is also the fact that at that time he was familiar of Miklós Garai, who was verifiably staying with the Hungarian King during the escape. At the same time, they have no probative value that Somkereké would have been accompanied by Miklós Garai or Zsigmond on his escape.

4) Little is known about the Poles who took part in the Battle of Nicopolis. The Polish chronicler Długosz spoke about his participation in Poland, but he only listed two people who were also mentioned in the literature: Stibor Stiborici and Thomas Kulski.<sup>28</sup> Długosz could only get to know the events and the participants by narration. Therefore, the participation of these individuals can only be justified by the involvement of control sources. Stibor's involvement in the 1396 campaign was proven, including the present investigation. In the case of Thomas Kulski, there are currently no sources available to confirm Długosz's claim regarding him.

5) A small detour is needed for Oswald de Wolkenstein. The vast majority of the literature accepts, and assumes, the participation of Oswald de Wolkenstein in the Crusade of 1396, with the exception of one researcher, Alan Thomas Robertshaw, who examined the issue in his doctoral dissertation defended in 1973. Examining Oswald's life and poetry, Robertshaw also raised the possibility of his participation in the Battle of Nicopolis. This is also interesting because, since Beda Weber's work "Oswald von Wolkenstein und Friedrich mit der leeren Tasche" published in 1850, the literature has accepted Oswald's participation in the Crusade as a ready-made fact, without criticism. Thus, he also appeared among the members of the escort next to the Hungarian King fleeing from the battlefield.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Aschbach, *Geschichte Kaiser Sigismunds*, 107–108; Delaville Le Roulx, *La France*, 281.

<sup>28</sup> Długosi, 211.

<sup>29</sup> Beda Weber, *Oswald von Wolkenstein und Friedrich mit der leeren Tasche* (Innsbruck: Nabu Press, 1850), 121.

However, Weber's research did not provide direct evidence of Oswald's participation in the Crusade, nor that he belonged to the escort of the Hungarian King at the time. This is one of the reasons why Robertshaw criticized the sources used by Weber and logically deduced the cause of the misunderstanding.

Weber misinterpreted the places, persons and campaigns that appeared in Oswald's poetry and drew bold conclusions from them. These include the erroneous finding that Oswald was a member of the entourage of King Sigismund after the Battle of Nicopolis, while his participation in the Crusade could not be justified by any sources.

However, Robertshaw's results did not spread among scholarly historians, who studied the life and work of Oswald von Wolkenstein. This is also evidenced by the work of Anton Schwöb in 1977 and Viktor Otto in 1996, stating that Oswald was involved in the Battle of Nicopolis.

It is necessary to note here that the case of Oswald de Wolkenstein is not unique in the literature. Similarly, historians accepted the participation of Henry, Count of Derby, in the campaign of 1396, as well as the fact that he was a member of Sigismund's entourage during his post-battle escape. To this day, it has been proven that the English participation is presumed, but no separate English contingent was present in the 1396 Crusade.<sup>30</sup>

Returning to Table 1, the number of well-known people may seem small, but if we give credit to the French chronicler Froissart it is not. According to him, Sigismund – not counting the Grand Master of Hospitallers Philibert de Naillac – was on the boat heading for the Danube Delta with seven people.<sup>31</sup> Froissart was not present at the events, so the figure he reported could only be included in his chronicle based on the sayings of survivors and eyewitnesses. Nevertheless, there is a suspicion that the list may be expanded at a later date, mainly based on the description of Shams al-Dīn Ibn al-Jazarī, who took part in the battle on the Ottoman side, saying that fifty people "escaped" on the Danube waiting with the Hungarian ruler.<sup>32</sup> Although Ibn al-Jazarī was present at the Battle of Nicopolis, the number he reported has to also be treated with caution, because in the turmoil of the battle it is almost impossible to count the enemy soldiers. Therefore, it can rightly be

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<sup>30</sup> Bárány Attila, „Angol lovagok a nikápolyi csatában,” *Hadtörténeti Közlemények* 118, no. 3 (2015): 4.

<sup>31</sup> Froissart, 445–446.

<sup>32</sup> İlker Evrim Binbaş, „A Damascene Eyewitness to the Battle of Nicopolis: Shams al-Dīn Ibn al-Jazarī (d. 833/1429),” in *Contact and Conflict in Frankish Greece and the Aegean, 1204–1453. Crusade, Religion and Trade between Latins, Greeks and Turks*. Ed. Nikolaos G. Chrissis and Mike Carr. (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2014), 169.

assumed that in addition to those listed in Table 1, other persons – nonaristocratic ones, family members, servants, who are not mentioned in the diplomas, also fled on the ship. Such is the case with Detre Bebek, who appeared several times and whose whereabouts was unknown at the time of the campaign. That is why it is difficult to say exactly who of the two historians may be right, if it is possible to seek truth on this issue at all. However, I think it is conceivable that Ibn al-Jazarī tried to take into account the lords among the refugees, while Froissart was merely trying to take into account the lords around the King that he might have known.

Based on the abovementioned, the presence of the following aristocratic persons from the battlefield of Nicopolis, accompanied by King Sigismund, is certain: Hermann Cillei, Philibert de Naillac, János Hohenzollern, Miklós Garai, János Garai, János Kanizsai, István Kanizsai, Stibor Stiborici. However, the presence of the following persons can only be assumed in the absence of the primary sources: Detre Bebek, János Kulski, Antal Somkerekci.

## **Who stayed with the Hungarian King?**

From the available sources, it can be clearly proved that in Sigismund's retinue, a personal change took place while sailing on the Danube, before reaching the Black Sea. This is the well-known fact in the literature. Following the loss of the battle, Sigismund was relieved of some members of his entourage for defense and political matters affecting the Kingdom.

According to Aschbach and thus Delaville, Sigismund's retinue was left by Detre Bebek, János Pásztói and János Garai. This is interesting because none of the sources listed by Aschbach prove that Detre Bebek and János Pásztói were a part of this "delegation".<sup>33</sup> Atiya also mentions only the repatriation of John Garai although he used the same sources as Aschbach.<sup>34</sup> As described in Aschbach, there are still two fundamental problems explained above: 1) János Pásztói was proven not to have taken part in the Crusade, so he could not have accompanied Sigismund. 2) The presence of Detre Bebek cannot be confirmed or denied in the absence of sources.

Then, who could have stayed and who had left the escort of the Hungarian King before reaching the Black Sea?

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<sup>33</sup> Aschbach, *Geschichte Kaiser Sigismunds*, 107–108.

<sup>34</sup> Atiya, *The Crusade*, 231.



Table 2 – *Changes in the accompaniment of the Hungarian King*

No.	Név	Stayed with Sigismund?	
		Yes	No
1.	Hermann Cillei Count of Cillei <sup>35</sup>	●	
2.	Miklós Garai Croatian Ban <sup>36</sup>	●	
3.	János Garai <sup>37</sup>		●
4.	János Hohenzollern, Nuremberg Castellan <sup>38</sup>	●	
5.	István Kanizsai doorman <sup>39</sup>	●	
6.	János Kanizsai Archbishop of Esztergom <sup>40</sup>	●	
7.	Grand Master of Hospitallers Philibert de Naillac	●	
8.	Stiborici Stibor Transylvanian voivode <sup>41</sup>		●

(Source: own edition)

It can be seen from Table 2 that the King's escort was verifiably left by Stibor Stiborici and János Garai. According to sources, they were not alone, but they left together with other barons ("cum nonnullis alis Baronibus nostris") they set out for the Kingdom of Hungary via Wallachia. Could it be a legitimate question whether the plural "barons" meant only two of them, or more? According to the Hungarian law, the rank of baron could only be held by a person who held or is holding a secular or ecclesiastical dignity. Thus, at that time, only Stibor had the rank of baron among those who left the retinue and could be justified by sources. Thus, mentioning the barons in plural has already raised suspicions and another question: in addition to those listed in the Table, who else could have been on the ship that had the rank of baron?

There are two solutions to the mystery: 1) the writer who drafted the Garai donation letter was inattentive and/or washed away by his brother, who already held the rank of baron at the time of the Battle of Nicopolis.

<sup>35</sup> January 27, 1399. Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Nr. 34048, Középkori históriák oklevelekben, 240–243. Nr. 167.

<sup>36</sup> August 1, 1406. Codex Diplomaticus Patrius Hungaricus, 439. Nr. 401., Középkori históriák oklevelekben, 252–267. Nr. 170.

<sup>37</sup> August 1, 1406. Codex Diplomaticus Patrius Hungaricus, 439. Nr. 401., Középkori históriák oklevelekben, 252–267. Nr. 170.

<sup>38</sup> Langmantel, „Hans Schiltbergers,” 4.

<sup>39</sup> March 4, 1397. Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Nr. 87647, Középkori históriák oklevelekben, 225–235. Nr. 165.

<sup>40</sup> March 4, 1397. Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Nr. 87647, Középkori históriák oklevelekben, 225–235. Nr. 165.

<sup>41</sup> December 8, 1397. Wenzel, Stibor vajda, 100. Nr. 65., Zsigmondkori oklevéltár, 565. Nr. 5102. sz., Középkori históriák oklevelekben, 235–240. Nr. 164. Daniela Dvořáková, *A lovag és királya. Stiborici Stibor és Luxemburgi Zsigmond* Pozsony: Kalligram Könyv- és Lapkiadó Kft., 2009), 69.

Thus, the plural actually means János Garai and Stibor Stiboric. 2) There was also a person(s) with the rank of baron in the royal escort who could not be verified by sources. This is as much probable as it is not, for it has already been said above that the whereabouts of several secular and ecclesiastical dignitaries was unknown during the Crusade and the Battle of Nicopolis, so they may have been accompanied by Sigismund during the studied period.

The King did not get rid of Stibor Stiborici and János Garai without reason. Their repatriation through Wallachia had a significant purpose, which is well-known in the case of Stibor. Sigismund rightly assumed that the southern borders of the Kingdom could be hit by a smaller or larger hostile Ottoman attack as a result of the battle of Nicopolis.<sup>42</sup> Stibor had to preserve the tranquility of the Transylvanian territories, as the internal political events in Wallachia took an unfavorable turn again after the victory of Sultan Bajazid in Nicopolis after 1395. The Ottoman-friendly political forces were strengthened again. This threatened the southern Transylvanian territories of the Kingdom of Hungary to be once again marred by raids and the Ottoman presence in Wallachia be permanently strengthened. The Transylvanian voivode Stibor played a significant role in successfully arranging this danger in the Hungarian royal interest, sometime between the second half of 1396 and the beginning of 1397.<sup>43</sup>

In the case of János Garai, we have no information, but it is rightly probable that a similar defense and governmental purpose affecting the Kingdom might have been the reason for his departure as in the case of Stibor.

## Where could they go home from?

The available source material does not detail the circumstances of the return of Stibor Stiboric and János Garai. Just where they left the royal entourage? The answer is given by the royal donation letter issued to Stibor Stiborici on 8 December 1397 and to Miklós Garai and his brother János on 1 August 1406.<sup>44</sup> Let's examine the relevant sections of the charters:

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<sup>42</sup> Szakály Ferenc, „A török-magyar küzdelem szakaszai a mohácsi csata előtt (1365–1526),” in *Mohács. Tanulmányok a mohácsi csata 450. évfordulója alkalmából*. Szerk. Rúzsás Lajos és Szakály Ferenc. (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1986.), 21., Sima Ćirković, *Istorija srednjovekovne bosanske države* (Sarajevo: Srpska književna zadruga, 1964), 67.

<sup>43</sup> See more about the Wallachia-Hungarian relationship: Kranzieritz Károly, „Havasalföld szerepe az 1396-os kereszties hadjárat előkészítésében és végrehajtásában,” *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 129, no. 1 (2016); Dvořáková, *A lovag és király*, 69.

<sup>44</sup> *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor culese de Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki. Vol. XV* ed. Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki și Nicolae Iorga (București, 1911), 1825. and *Documenta Romaniae Historica. D. Relațiile între Țările Române, Vol. I* (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1977), 163.

1) The donation letter of Miklós Garai and his brother János:

*„Johannem filium condam Nicolai palatini cum nonnullis alis Baronibus nostris pro custodia et conseruacione regni nostri de loco ubi tetis et aqua Danuby fluctibus maris in proximo”*<sup>45</sup>

[János, the son of the late palatine Miklós, was sent back to our country with several barons in order to protect and preserve our country, from the place where the waters of the tetis and the Danube unite]

2) Stiborici Stibor's donation letter:

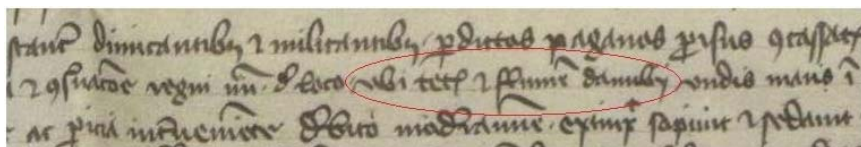


Figure 1 – The relevant detail of Stibor Stibor's donation letter

(Source: Budapest, Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Nr. 8283)

*„prefatum dominum Styborium cum nonnullis alis Baronibus nostris in nostra absencia pro custodia et conseruacione regni nostri de loco ubi tetis et flumen Danubij undis maris in proximo couiungitur et intrat”*<sup>46</sup>

[Stibor's voivodeship for the protection and preservation of our country together with several barons from the place where tetis of the river Danube merges with the foam of the sea nearby and enters it]

According to the charters, Stibor and Garai left the escort of the Hungarian King at one of the tributaries of the Danube called “Tetis” and headed for the Kingdom of Hungary via Wallachia. The description could be considered accurate if the “Tetis” river in question could be found on maps today, but this is not the case. Thus, the question rightly arises about the location of the river, or whether it existed at all.

With regard to the river, we start from the basic thesis that it existed and cannot be clearly identified simply due to name distortion. However, the question remains where to place it on the map? To substantiate the assumption and answer the question, the data from the available cartographic sources have to be reviewed. It is necessary to note that in the case of the listed maps, the convenience provided by the usual modern cartographic requirements (the so-called scale, uniform signal system, contour lines, etc.) have to be waived.

<sup>45</sup> August 1, 1406. Codex Diplomaticus Patrius Hungaricus, 439. Nr. 401., Középkori históriák oklevelekben, 252–267. Nr. 170.

<sup>46</sup> December 8, 1397. Wenzel, Stibor vajda, 100. Nr. 65., Középkori históriák oklevelekben, 235–240. Nr. 164.

The purpose of the reference map source material is to identify and geographically delimit the mentioned river. In the case of the latter, this is only roughly possible due to the lack of uniform editing.

The earliest of the seven maps listed was made in 1606 (Map 1), on which a river called the Teltz river (*Telfch flu.*) can be clearly seen between the Olt (*Aluata flu.*) and Ialomița (*Launiza flu.*) rivers.



Map 1 – The southern area of Wallachia in 1606 (detail)

(Source: Map of Romania from Abraham Ortelius. Theatrum orbis terrarum. London, 1606)<sup>47</sup>

The second earliest one was made in 1620 (Map 2), on which the rivers Olt, Dâmbovița and Ialomița that are still known today can be clearly seen with the difference between the latter two a river called Teltz (*Teltz flu.*) which is also marked on the map. In contrast to the listed rivers in Wallachia before and now, hardly anything is known about this river. The similarity of the noun form suggests that the searched "Tetis" is a distorted version of the name "Teltz".

<sup>47</sup>

[https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/detail/FOLGERCM1~6~6~791216~150445:Theatrum-orbis-terrarum-Abrahami-Or?cic=FOLGERCM1%7E6%7E6&sort=call\\_number%2Cauthor%2Ccd\\_title%2Cimprint](https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/detail/FOLGERCM1~6~6~791216~150445:Theatrum-orbis-terrarum-Abrahami-Or?cic=FOLGERCM1%7E6%7E6&sort=call_number%2Cauthor%2Ccd_title%2Cimprint)  
(Access: 11.08.2022)



Map 2 – The southern area of Wallachia in 1620 (detail)

(Source: Budapest, Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum B III a Nr. 156)

The river Teltz flows into the Danube at certain settlement in Briolono. An important factor for the analysis will be the municipality of Zorzo, which, according to the map, was located at the confluence of the Danube and Dâmbovița rivers. The data of Map 2 are also confirmed by the map edited in 1635 (Map 3).

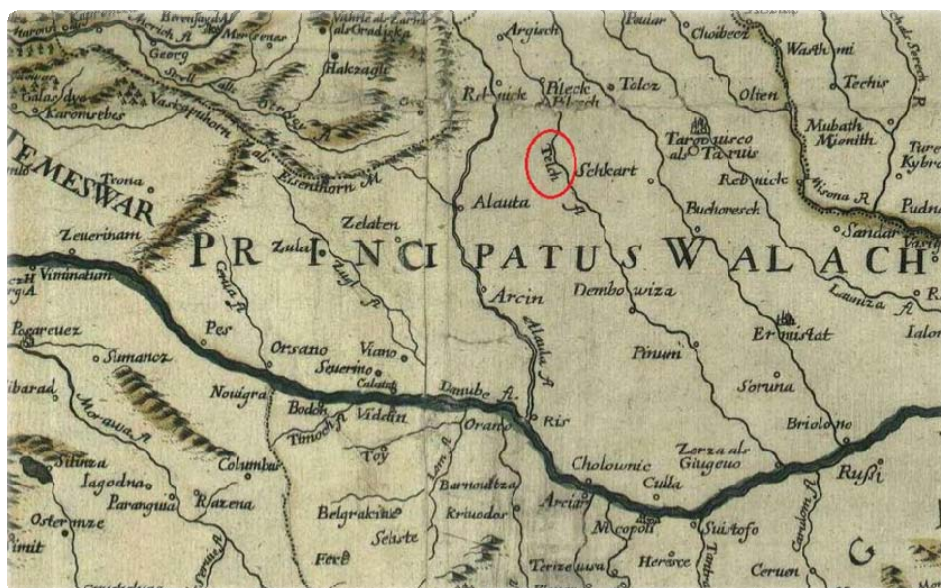


Map 3 – The southern area of Wallachia in 1635 (detail)

(Source: Willem Blaeu: Novus Atlas das ist Abbildung und Beschreibung von allen Ländern des Erdscheits Amsterdam, 1635.)



The first deviation from the 1620 and 1635 maps is shown in the 4th map made in 1686. Here the river called *Teltch fl.* denotes the upper reaches of the river Dâmbovița as not referring to the river to the west, which flows into the Danube at Briolono. To the east of this, the map clearly marks the meanders of the river Ialomița. Another interesting fact is that the map marks the settlement "Buchoresch" on the left bank of the unnamed river, which is the capital of present-day Romania, Bucharest that is known to be located along the Dâmbovița River.



Map 4 – The southern area of Wallachia in 1686 (detail)

(Source: Budapest, Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára S 16 - Nr. 593)

The available 5th map, which was put on paper in 1720, again marks the river Teltz (*Feltz fl.*) east to the river Dâmbovița (*Dembovicen fl.*), with Briolono at its estuary. Still, the information on the map can only be considered partially authentic, as the Olt River is missing from the map, which due to its extent could not escape the attention of the creator(s) if only the names were not mixed, which also raises the question of authenticity. Apart from further cartographic analysis of the map and focusing on the question of the study, it can be stated that Map 5 is important because it 1) names the sought Teltz River and 2) shows its presumed location east of the Dâmbovița River.



Map 5 – The southern area of Wallachia in 1720 (detail)  
(Source: Budapest, Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum B III a Nr. 157)

On the penultimate 6th map, which shows conditions between 1737 and 1738, the same order is noticed as on Maps 2 and 3: the rivers Olt, Dâmbovița, Teltz (*Feltz als Tolcz*) and Ialomița. The town of Briolano is also located at the confluence of the Teltz and the Danube, but the town of Zorzo is already much west of the river Dâmbovița, and is replaced by the town called Giorgio. In the case of the map, it is important to note that Bucharest is already correctly marked next to the river Dâmbovița.



Map 6 – The southern part of Wallachia in 1737–1738 (detail)  
(Source: Budapest, Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára S 68 - X - Nr. 74)

The last 7th map, which records the situation of 1771, also shows the order of the rivers: Olt, Dâmbovița, Teltz (*Feltz fl.*) and Ialomița. The municipalities of Brielano, Zorzo and Giorgo are also listed and shown on Map 5. In addition to the major rivers, the Map indicates other smaller rivers, trying to show the size of the given river. This hydrographic difference shows that the river Teltz (*Feltz fl.*) is smaller than the rivers Olt, Dâmbovița and Ialomița. In addition, the Map shows that the area was divided by several Teltz-sized rivers.



Map 7 – The southern area of Wallachia in 1771 (detail)

(Source: Budapest, Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum B II a Nr. 136)

## Summary

Regarding the Danube section of the Hungarian King's return journey after the Battle of Nicopolis, the research has yielded the following results:

1) Eight aristocratic people who left the battlefield of Nicopolis on the side of the Hungarian King and boarded a ship are confirmed by resources.

2) We have succeeded in identifying the persons who were allegedly accompanied by Sigismund by the literature only based on assumptions due to erroneous or incomplete data.

3) We have received an answer as to who accompanied Sigismund during his trip around the Balkans, including Constantinople.

In the case of points 1) and 3), the possibility has to be maintained that there may have been other lords accompanied by Sigismund, whose presence there is not reported by sources.

4) In the case of Stibor and János Garai, the location where the royal escort was left is known, but the identification of the named "*Tetis*" river



did not brought a decisive result, as only the following conclusions could be drawn from the seven maps listed.

1) The river "*Tetis*" in the charters is presumably identifiable with the river "*Teltz*".

2) The sought river can be assumed to be somewhere along the left bank of the Danube between the rivers Dâmbovița and Ialomița.

3) It is possible that due to natural erosion the sought river was recharged, swamped, etc., or disappeared due to the Romanian river regulations of the 20th century.

There are many more questions to be investigated in relation to the Crusade of 1396.

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## **ПРАТЊА МАЂАРСКОГ КРАЉА НАКОН БИТКЕ КОД НИКОПОЉА – ДУНАВСКА СЕКЦИЈА ПУТА**

(Резиме)

**У** последњих стотину година објављене су многе књиге и чланци о крсташком походу 1396. године и о бици код Никопоља. Ипак не треба да чуди што крсташки рат 1396. године још увек изазива интересовање многих, будући да је реч о једном од најзначајнијих хришћанских похода у средњем веку.

Како је тема изузетно широка ова студија обрађује тек део поменутог крсташког рата. Циљ рада је да представи нове чињенице и информације о повратку мађарског краља након битке код Никопоља, које се односе на Дунавску секцију пута, која до данашњег дана није била обрађивана у литератури.

У студији смо дошли до открића да је у изворима потврђено да је осмор по племића који су се борили на страни угарског краља, напустило бојно поље код Никопоља и укрцало се са њим на лађу. Успели смо да идентификујемо особе које су пратиле краља Жигмунда а у досадашњој литератури, због погрешних или непотпуних података, навођене на основу претпоставки. Успели смо да одгонетнемо и ко је чинио пратњу краља Жигмунда приликом његовог путовања по Балкану, укључујући и посету Цариграду.

У случају Стибора и Јаноша Гараија позната је од раније локација где је остављена краљевска пратња, али идентификација реке „Тетис“ није дефинитивно урађена. На основу седам коришћених мапа може се закључити да је река која се помиње у повељама вероватно река „Телтз“. Може се претпоставити да се поменута река може лоцирати негде дуж леве обале Дунава, између реке Дамбровица (Dâmbovița) и Јаломица (Ialomița). Могуће је да је услед природне ерозије та неидентификована река усахла, постала мочвара или томе слично, или је исушена у време иригационих радова у Румунији у 20. веку.

**КЉУЧНЕ РЕЧИ:** Битка код Никопоља, Крсташки рат, 1396, повратак, Жигмунд Луксембуршки, Никола Горјански, Јанош Кањижај, Стибор Стриборић, Херман Цељски, Дунав