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The Seal Usage of János Perényi (†1458), Master of the Treasury¹

I have been studying János Perényi's career since 2009. In the essays I have published since then I covered the outline of his career, his relation to royal power and to the magnates and his position within the national council.² In my papers which are about to be published I examined the beginning of his political career, the history of his family's possessions and the use of their residence³ Besides the conclusions of the literature, these studies are based mainly on already published diplomas and on the sources I have collected. In my present paper I intend to summarize the results of the sources collection I have carried out in the course of my studies abroad and during my professional practices.⁴ Conducting a research in the National Archive of Hungarian National Archive⁵ and also in the archives of the free royal cities of Upper-Hungary I collected

1 The article is supported by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences–University of Debrecen “Lendület” Research Group “Hungary in Medieval Europe”.

2 Ádám Novák, Johannes de Peren Magister Tavernicorum Regalium. In: *Keresztény szellemben a tudomány útján: III. Kárpát-medencei Keresztény Tudományos Diákköri Konferencia válogatott tanulmányai*. Ed. Gábor Kozma. Szeged, 2011. 103–114.; Idem, Adalékok egy 15. századi tárnokmester tevékenységéhez. In: *Hallgatói Műhelytanulmányok I. Debreceni Egyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar Történelmi Intézet*. Eds. Róbert Barta – Róbert Kerepeszki – Ákos Szendrei. Debrecen, 2012. 24–29.; Idem, Levelek Budáról. Az országnagyok levelei a városoknak V. László halála után. In: *Micae Mediaevales III. Fiatal történészek dolgozatai a középkori Magyarországról és Európáról*. Eds. Judit Gál – Bence Péterfi – András Vadas – Károly Kranzieritz. Budapest, 2013. 153–166.; Idem, A sasember fiai. Egy főúri család és famíliája Luxemburgi Zsigmond kíséretében. In: *„Causa unionis causa fidei, causa reformationis in capite et membris.” Tanulmányok a Konstanzi zsinat 600. évfordulója alkalmából*. Eds. Attila Bárány – László Pósn. Debrecen, 2014. 385–400.

3 Ádám Novák, Egy felső-magyarországi bárói család birtoklástörténete 1465-ig. A terebesi Perényiek. = *Agrártörténeti szemle* (under publication).; Idem, Rezidencia-választás kérdése a Perényi családban – Csorbakő szerepe. In: *DOSZ Tavasz Szél 2014 Konferenciakötet* (under publication).

4 Prešovská Univerzita Filozofická Fakulta Inštitút histórie 2011/2012. Prešov, Slovakia. Erasmus LLP.; Archív mesta Košice 2013. 01. 03.–31. 08. Košice, Slovakia. Campus Hungary traineeship.

5 Hereinafter: MNL OL

the charters issued or confirmed by János Perényi.⁶ I used the database of the MNL OL DL–DF⁷ as the basis of my investigation. Since I was predominantly interested in the seals attached to the charters, the inspection of the diplomas and letters kept abroad was inevitable. I photographed all these seals or had them photographed.

As a result of my research I created a database which contains the charters issued or confirmed by János Perényi, and also the seals attached to these charters. I publish these information in a summarizing table at my former paper.⁸ My work could not have been completed without listing polysigillic diplomas and were issued between 1439 and 1457. My studies written about the building of this database together with the conclusions I have drawn from it will be available to the public soon.⁹

Based on the above mentioned database and also on my previous research I try to find out whether the seal usage of Perényi reflected his relation to national politics and the role he played in it and his party affiliations. For my investigation I also use the results of the works on the functioning and seal usage of medieval judicial offices, the results of already published itineraries and discourses on political history.

6 Štátny archív v Prešove, Pobočka Prešov (ŠaP PP); Štátny archív v Prešove, Pobočka Bardejov (ŠaP PB); Štátny archív v Bratislave Pobočka Trnava (ŠaB PT); Archív mesta Košíc (AmK); Archív hlavného mesta SR Bratislavy (AhmB).

7 Database of Archival Documents of Medieval Hungary. Made by the National Archive of Hungarian National Archive used by the digitization of the archival guides for the Collection of the era Pre-Mohács, which was made between 1874 and 2009. Ed. György Rácz. Online publication [Medieval Charters – hereinafter: DL] – Collection of Photocopies [hereinafter: DF] 5.1]. 2010. [<http://mol.arcanum.hu/dldf>].

8 Ádám Novák, 15. századi pecséthasználat id. Perényi János tárnokmester pecsétjeinek tükrében. In. *VIII. Szegedi Medievisztika Doktorandusz Konferencia tanulmánykötete* (under publication).

9 Ádám Novák, Sokpecsétes oklevelek 1439 és 1457 között – egy kutatási terv és első eredményeinek bemutatása. In. *A Középkorral Foglalkozó Doktoranduszok Konferenciája 2014. 06. 05–06. ELTE Tanulmánykötete* (under publication); Idem, Seals of Noblemen in the Fifteenth Century. In. *Műveltség és társadalmi szerepek: arisztokraták Magyarországon és Európában. Learning, Intellect and Social Roles: Aristocrats in Hungary and Europe*. Eds. Attila Bárány – István Orosz – Klára Papp – Bálint Vinkler. Debrecen, 2014. (*Speculum Historiae Debreceniense* 18. A Debreceni Egyetem Történelmi Intézete Kiadványai) 59–72.

The works written on the office of the Master of the Treasury or on the judicial court headed by the Master of the Treasury do not discuss the seal usage of this office holder.¹⁰ In his work written on the diploma issuing activity of the Master of the Treasury, Imre Szentpétery does not touch upon the types of seals used for the confirmation of charters.¹¹ The comprehensive work of Bernát L. Kumorovitz does not discuss this topic exhaustively either.¹² Neither can we draw a relevant and unambiguous conclusion based on seal indices or publications about seals. Sigillographic research has left this topic undiscovered.¹³ On the one hand the frequency of the Master of the Treasury's diploma issue was somewhere between that of other judicial offices and court offices, which I will explain later in detail.¹⁴ On the other hand most of the charters issued by the Masters of the Treasury, together with the seals, are not kept in the MNL OL DL but in the archives of such towns which were annexed from Hungary after the

10 Elemér Boreczky, *A királyi tárnokmester hivatala 1405-ig*. Budapest, 1904.; Imre Szentpétery Jn., „A tárnoki ítélőszék kialakulása”, = *Századok*, 68, 1934. 510–590.

11 Imre Szentpétery, *Magyar oklevéltan*. Budapest, 1995. 226–227.

12 Lajos Bernát Kumorovitz, *A magyar pecséthasználat története a középkorban. Der Gebrauch von Siegeln in Ungarn im Mittelalter*. (second, expanded and revised edition). Budapest, 1993.

13 Older publications: Károly Wagner, *Collectanea genealogico-historica illustrium Hungariae familiarum, quae jam interciderunt. Decas I. Ex ms potissimum eruit, et scutis gentilitiis auxit Carolus Wagner*. Budaë, 1778. 129–134.; György Pray, *Syntagma historicum de Sigillis regum et reginarum Hungariae pluribusque aliis. Opus postumum cum XVI. tabulis aeri incis.* Budaë, 1805.; Indexes: Béla Czobor, *Magyarország világi és egyházi hatóságai kiadott pecséteinek jegyzéke*. Pest, 1872.; *A Magyar Királyi Országos Levéltár Diplomatikai Osztályában őrzött pecsétek mutatója*. Ed. Dezső Csánki. Budapest, 1889. ; Publications: András Hegedűs – Pál Lővei – Imre Takács – Tünde Wehli, *Megpecsételt történelem: középkori pecsétek Esztergomból*. Ed. András Hegedűs. Esztergom, 2000.; Kumorovitz, *Pecséthasználat*, 1993. 136–146.; Attila Sunkó, *Pecsétyűjtemény V szekció* (MNL OL segédletei 23. 2006); Exhibitions: *Művészet Zsigmond király korában 1387–1437. II. Katalógus*. Eds. László Beke – Ernő Ernő – Tünde Wehli. Budapest, 1987.; *Művészet I. Lajos király korában 1342–1382*. Eds. Ernő Marosi – Melinda Tóth – Lívia Varga. Budapest, 1982.; Zsuzsanna Bándi, *A Magyar Országos Levéltár Mátyás-kori pecsétkiállításának katalógusa* (1990. április 6–október 6.). = *Levéltári Közlemények*, 62, 1991. 57–150; Idem, *A Magyar Országos Levéltár Jagelló-kori pecsétkiállításának katalógusa* (1991. szeptember 20–1992. június 30.) = *Levéltári Közlemények*, 64, 1993. 107–142.

14 This problem arises during the archontological examines too. Erik Fügedi, *A 15. századi magyar arisztokrácia mobilitása. Történeti statisztikai kötetek*. Budapest, 1970. 19.

First World War. Since then these sources can only be studied on black and white microfilms, but the seals are not visible on these.¹⁵ Therefore it cannot be expected for some time to come to any conclusions covering a longer period in history. I do not intend to provide a complementation with my present paper as I do not have enough available sources to do so. Therefore I am compelled to define the outline of the Master of the Treasury's seal usage based on the already known sigillographic works.

The number of establishments issuing diplomas grew proportionally with the development of medieval Hungarian literacy.¹⁶ For the court judicatures the royal seal usage always served as a model. Owing to the diversity of issued diplomas, the establishments with chancelleries introduced the smaller seal by the beginning of the 15th century, then the middle seal as well and according to the literature, there were even non-royal counter seals.¹⁷ The workload of the Lord Chief Justice necessitated the use of several seals already in the first third of the 14th century. Before that only the great seal of the Lord Chief Justice and his seal ring had been in use. The Lord Chief Justice definitely had a smaller seal as well after 1332, but presumably even earlier, after 1328. In the judicial process the so-called "prothonotary seal" of Deputy Lord Chief Justice and that of the Lord Chief Justice were used as well. We also need to add the seals used by the fine collectors to the just mentioned five seals.¹⁸ The seal usage of the Lord Chief Justice did not become any simpler during the reign of King Sigismund either. However, the larger amount of charters makes the investigation of the Lord Chief Justice's seal usage easier. Therefore it is possible for the researcher to determine with great certainty which seal was used for the different types of charters, and by whom and when the different seals were used.¹⁹

The duties of the Master of the Treasury separated from that of the royal treasurer in the reign of the Anjou monarchs and according to historical research, until 1405 his office became the court of appeal for

15 We do not know any seal from János Rozgonyi Master of Treasury, because The MNL OL do not keep any charters from him.

16 Szentpétery, *Oklevéltan*, 213.

17 Kumorovitz, *Pecséhasználat*, 76.

18 Iván Bertényi, *Az országbírói intézmény története a XIV. században*. Budapest, 1976. 216–218.

19 For the seal usage of the Lord Chief Justice see Norbert C. Tóth, *Rozgonyi Simon országbírósa (1409–1414)*. In: „*Fons, skepsis, lex.*” *Ünnepi tanulmányok a 70 esztendősk Makk Ferenc tiszteletére*. Eds. Tibor Almási – Éva Révész – György Szabados. Szeged, 2010. 49–75.

the burgesses of towns.²⁰ After that the office became separated from the royal court and operated in the town of Buda.²¹ In 1456 a statute of the Mastery of the Treasury was issued in which the common law of the procedure of the Mastery of the Treasury's bench was recorded in written form.²² Therefore the office of the Master of the Treasury and his bench only provided a legal forum for the burgesses of the towns. Research on population and social history revealed that the number of town burgesses was infinitesimal compared to that of the nobility, and they kept themselves somewhat distanced both from national politics and also from any quarrel with the nobility.²³ As a consequence the Master of the Treasury, compared to the office of the Lord Chief Justice or that of the Palatine, conducted very few affairs between the foundation of the office and the reign of King Matthias. For example János Rozgonyi, Master of the Treasury between 1435 and 1438, issued only 12 charters, while more than 400 diplomas can be associated with Lord Chief Justice István Bátori (1435-40).²⁴ Therefore in case of the office of the Master of the Treasury we cannot talk about the mass issue of diplomas.

The majority of the charters issued by the Master of the Treasury were so called missives addressed to the towns under his judicial jurisdiction. The court of the Master of the Treasury was summoned increasingly frequently after the beginning of the 15th century. The missives were sent out by the Master of the Treasury on the demand of the king, the governor or the burgesses.²⁵ These were confirmed with the seal of the Master of the Treasury. The sentences of the Master of the Treasury's bench were recorded in the letters of sentence and issued in privileged form.²⁶ To meet the formal requirements these were affixed with a bull. According to the investigations of Imre Szentpétery Jn., the letters of sentence were mainly issued by the Master of the Treasury himself.²⁷ This is the reason why it was not characteristic of this office, as opposed to the office of the

20 Boreczky, Tánokmesteri hivatal.

21 Szentpétery, Oklevéltan, 226.

22 Szentpétery, Tárnoki hivatal, 549.

23 Szentpétery, Tárnoki hivatal, 536. Cf. András Kubinyi, A magyarországi városok országrendiségének kérdéséhez: különös tekintettel az 1458–1526 közti időre. = *Tanulmányok Budapest múltjából* 1979, no. 21. 7–48.

24 According to the MNL OL DL–DF.

25 Szentpétery, Tárnoki hivatal, 517.

26 Szentpétery, Oklevéltan, 227.

27 The vice Master of Treasury leed rarely judicial jurisdiction in the first half of the 15th century . Cf. Szentpétery, Tárnoki hivatal, 528. The office of the Master of the

Palatine and the Lord Chief Justice, that the deputy of the Master of the Treasury would seal a charter with his own seal or with a seal left behind by the Master of the Treasury. The Master of the Treasury issued other missives in his own name as well, usually at the requests of the burgesses. In these patents the Master of the Treasury warned the public that only he and the king could sit in judgement on the towns.²⁸ Therefore charters issued under the jurisdiction of the mastery of the treasury could only be issued by the holder of this office. Without coming to a false conclusion we can state that the operation of the office of the Master of the Treasury did not require the use of different seals in judicial procedures.

Apart from being an office holder, the Master of the Treasury was also a great landlord; therefore he often issued charters in private matters. Most of these are receipts, missives, the authenticity of which is only secondary. The diplomas he issued in his own name in private matters which also implicate legal consequences are rarely authentic when issued exclusively with his own seal. This is why contemporaries tried to have these transcribed at a place of authentication and have it confirmed with an authentic seal.²⁹ However, we only have information about one private seal used by a Master of the Treasury.³⁰ Besides no seal has been revealed which can be personally associated with János Perényi and not with his office, and which he would have used simultaneously with his official seal as Master of the Treasury. Naturally we cannot state that such seal did not exist, but its non-existence seems to be proven by the charters he issued on private matters since the seal of the Master of the Treasury appears on these diplomas as well. Consequently we cannot and do not have to distinguish his private seal from his official one. This statement is confirmed by the fact that in case of the polysigillic diplomas Perényi, as opposed to for example Palatine László Garai, Lord Chief Justice László Pálóci and Miklós Újlaki, *Banus Machoviensis*, used the same seals which can be seen on the charters he issued on his official and private matters.³¹

Treasury do not have independent chancellery. That is why the Master of the Treasury confirmed the letters of sentence with his own seal. Cf. Szentpétery, *Tárnoki hivatal*, 530.

28 Szentpétery, *Oklevéltan*. 141.

29 Szentpétery, *Oklevéltan*. 242.

30 „Official” seal Kusalyi György Jakch Master of Treasury’s was published by Tamás Emödi, „A kusalyi Jakcsok származása és címeres emlékei”, = *Turul* 69, 1996, No. 3–4, 57–66. 60. „Privat” seal: *Megpecsételt történelem*, 2000. 112.

31 Novák, *Seals of Noblemen*.

Based on the sphragistical collection of Bernát L. Kumorovitz and the investigations of researchers following in his footsteps we know when a given person in the Middle Ages in general and also in the Kingdom of Hungary had a new seal made for himself. We know of one case of provable theft in the history of the Hungarian kings' double seals, namely when Louis I's seal was stolen from the chancellor's tent during the king's campaign against Bosnia in 1363, because of which the king had a new seal made. To avoid any misuse the king recalled all privileges to the chancellery which had been issued with the first seal and by adding a confirming clause to these documents they were issued again with the new double seal.³² Offices or private persons could have new seals made not only in case of theft but also when the seal was lost or damaged.³³ In such cases the new seal became the authentic one and the old seal was not accepted any more.³⁴ In royal seal usage a new seal was made when the monarch assumed a new title. The best example for this is King Sigismund who used three double seals and six "secret seals" during his reign above his seal ring and "middle seal". The reason for having new seals made was that Sigismund obtained first the title of Czech elector, then the title of King of Germany and finally the title of Holy Roman Emperor.³⁵ Similarly to literacy, the seal usage of secular lords took the royal court as an example.³⁶ In other words, when an eminent secular person obtained a new office or gained a new title from the monarch, he tried to express this in his seal as well.³⁷

32 Iván Bertényi, Pecsétan. In. *A történelem segédtudományai*. Ed. Ivány Bertényi. Budapest, 2006. 249.

33 King Ulászló II renewed the smaller seal of chapter of Eger in 1511. László Solymosi, *Levelesített káptalanok: Eger és Csázma pecsétjei a középkorban*. In. „*Fons, skepsis, lex.*”, 391–402. 395.

34 King Mátyás gave a modified seal to the chapter of Eger after than he amnesty its. Solymosi, *Levelesített*, 393.

35 Lajos Bernát Kumorovitz, *A specialis praesentia regia pecséthasználata Zsigmond korában*. In. *Emlékkönyv Domanovszky Sándor születése hatvanadik fordulójának ünnepére*. Budapest, 1937. 422–439.; *Művészet Zsigmond király korában*, 13–26. Recently Tamás Körmenyi, *Zsigmond király hatalmi reprezentációja*. Paper at the conference: „*Causa unionis causa fidei, causa reformationis in capite et membris.*” *Konferencia a Konstanzi zsinat 600. évfordulója alkalmából*. November 6, 2014.

36 Kumorovitz, *Pecséthasználat*, 59.; Tamás Körmenyi, *A magyarországi nemzeti címerek kialakulásának kérdéséhez*. = *Századok*, 143, 2009. no. 2. 391–426. 392.

37 For example: János Hunyadi, or László Pálóci and László Garai. Novák, *Seals of Noblemen*.

THE KNOWN SEALS OF JÁNOS PERÉNYI

During his life Perényi issued 64 charters, including the ones issued by himself and also the ones he issued together with other dignitaries.³⁸ Besides he sealed 3 other diplomas with his seal³⁹ and his name appears as compurgator on 2 further contracts.⁴⁰ From the charters to which his seal was attached 55 original ones have remained. Out of these only 33 contain identifiable seals, fragments or imprints. The types of the documents vary; there are private and official charters, missives, and polysigillic contracts, agreements and letters.⁴¹ Based on my research I can state that János Perényi used at least four seals during his life. Except his first seal all the other ones appear on his missives, receipts, agreements and on polysigillic diplomas. The use of the different seals cannot be categorized according to the place of issue either. It seems so that apart from the obvious chronological order no other reason can be found for the method of his seal usage. The exact dates when the different seals appeared and the period in which they were used are the following:

- Seal No. 1⁴² – with the circumscription János Perényi: January 31, 1424
- Seal No. 2⁴³ - with the circumscription János Perényi: July 18, 1436 and from June 29, 1440 until February 2, 1443
- Seal No. 3⁴⁴ – with the circumscription János Perényi, Master of the Treasury: March 15, 1439 then from December 30, 1446 until April 20, 1451, and finally, between March 19, 1456 and February 28, 1458
- Seal No. 4⁴⁵ – with the circumscription János Perényi, Master of the Treasury: from March 5, 1452 until September 24, 1454

We know his first seal from 1424 when he signed his charter as János, son of Imre Perényi and this is also the first recorded charter from

38 Novák, 15. századi pecséthasználat. Table.

39 MNL OL DF 289 006.; DF 289 009.; and DF 270 275.

40 MNL OL DL 13 827.; DF 235 587.

41 Cf. Novák, 15. századi pecséthasználat. Table.

42 Intact imprint: 31 January 1424 MNL OL DL 11 470.

43 Intact imprint: 18 July 1436 MNL OL DL 12 937.

44 Intact imprint: 20 April 1451 MNL OL DL 70 241.

45 Intact imprint: 20 September, 1452: MNL OL DL 70 900.

him.⁴⁶ He probably had his own seal made based on the seals of his family members,⁴⁷ namely his father, Imre Perényi, secret chancellor (1405-18),⁴⁸ his uncle, Miklós Perényi, *Banus Zewriniensis* (1390-91)⁴⁹ and his cousin, Miklós Perényi, Lord Marshal (1420-28).⁵⁰ Following the death of his father in 1418 and his cousin in 1428, János became the oldest male member of the Perényi family's branch of Terebes.⁵¹ After his brother died in 1437 he became the only male member of full age⁵² and from this date we encounter his name more often in the sources. In 1431 he was given the title of the Master of the Stewards and in 1435 he became *ispán* (lord lieutenant) of Zemplén county.⁵³ It is possible that he had his second seal made on account of getting these positions. The first copy of this second seal dates back to 18 July 1436.⁵⁴ On the first two seals only his name appears⁵⁵ and could be considered as his private seals, but as it will be revealed later he used his official seals as the Master of the Treasury on polysigillic diplomas and also on charters related to his private affairs. Following the death of King Sigismund he got a place in the council of King Albert as Master of the Treasury and he is mentioned as the holder of this title on 8. September 1438.⁵⁶ He must have had his third seal made at that time since its circumscription contains his new title as well. On 15 March 1439 he issued a letter of sentence with this new seal and this is also the first of this kind of document which remained to posterity.⁵⁷

46 MNL OL DL 11470.

47 János Perényi as same as his ancestry used his family's coat of arm at his seals. The description of the coat of arm see: András, Komáromy, „Heraldikai és Sphraistikai adalékok a „Harmincpecsétés oklevél 1511-ből” című értekezéshez. (3. közlemény)”, = *Turul* 5, 1887, No. 3. 135.

48 MNL OL DL 75 406.

49 MNL OL DL 8837.

50 MNL OL DL 39 284. See: *Művészet Zsigmond király korában*, 466. and MNL OL DL 39 287.

51 Engel Pál, Magyarország világi archontológiája: 1301–1457. In: *Magyar középkori adattár (CD-ROM)*. Budapest, 2001. Cf. Novák, A sasember fiai. 397.

52 Ebd.

53 Engel, Achontológia.

54 MNL OL DL 12 937.

55 1. seal: IOHANNES DE PEREN cf. MNL OL DL 11 470. 2. seal: S.johannis. de.perin.

56 Gr. József Teleki, *Hunyadiak kora Magyarországon. X–XII. Okmánytár*. Pest, 1853–1857. X. 6. sz.

57 MNL OL DF 239 718.

So far the formula seems to be quite simple: as a descendent of a baronial family and later as a great landowner and court dignitary he needed a seal. We do not know what happened to his first seal later; he could have lost it, it could have become unfit for use or he might even have felt that it was not worthy of his title any more. Later this seal did not appear at all. We know that the barons did not represent their court titles on their seals and Perényi followed the same tradition. The title of the Master of the Treasury was, however, a judicial title of nationwide importance, and therefore it was expectable that the holder of such title should include it in his seal. Therefore in this case having a new seal made can be an acceptable act.

THE SEAL USAGE OF PERÉNYI DURING THE CIVIL WAR

We experience the first incomprehensible change in his method of seal usage after the death of King Albert. At that time the sources referred to Perényi as the Master of the Treasury and his prestige was unshaken since he was the member of the legation sent to the Polish king, Vladislaus/Ulászló III in order to invite him to the Hungarian throne.⁵⁸ On 9 March 1440 he presumably used his second seal already,⁵⁹ but definitely did so on 29 June 1440 and on 17 July 1440.⁶⁰ All of these diplomas are polysigillic and we would think that, similarly to other judges of national importance, he did not use his official seal but his private one to confirm these kinds of documents. However, other charters issued later prove that this was not the reason for changing his seal.⁶¹ What could have been in the background of this change? Is it possible that he could not use his official seal in the absence of a lawful king?

For the latter question we must give a negative answer. When the seals of the diplomas issued on 30 May 1439,⁶² on 17 September 1439⁶³ and on 29 June 1440⁶⁴ are compared to each other, it becomes obvious,

58 MNL OL DF 289 005.

59 MNL OL DF 289 004.

60 MNL OL DF 289 006.

61 See MNL OL DF 287 198.; DF 270 334.

62 MNL OL DF 258 081. Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (HHStA) AUR, 1439. V. 30.

63 MNL OL DL 39 290.

64 MNL OL DF 289 006. Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie dok. perg. nr. (AGADW) 5575. The photos made from black-and-white photocopies, which were ordered by Pál Engel. I could use them thanks to Pál Lővei.

that the Palatine, Lőrinc Hédervári, and László Pálóci, Lord Marshal used the same seal in case of all three diplomas, while László Garai, ban of Macsó and Matkó Tallóci, ban of Slavonia also used the same seal in case of the latter two diplomas. Unfortunately Perényi sealed only the diploma issued on 29 June 1440, but perhaps the diplomas mentioned above will serve with enough proof. We will be able to state this with more confidence when the copies of the three polysigillic diplomas which have not been investigated so far will arrive from Warsaw.⁶⁵ But if this was not the reason, than how the change in Perényi's seal usage can be explained?

We know that Perényi used his second seal on 27 March 1442 and on 2 February 1443 as well, although he called himself Master of the Treasury.⁶⁶ However, it is not certain at all that he was acknowledged as such in the court of King Ulászló. According to the work of Pál Engel written on Hungarian archontology, János Perényi held this office first between 8 September 1438 and 2 February 1442. He was followed by János Ország between 4 April 1443 and 18 February 1444 but he was referred to as formal Master of the Treasury on 23 May. The list of dignitaries written on 22 February 1444 recorded a vacancy and from 30 June 1445 Perényi held the title until 1458.⁶⁷ In his archontology Imre Szentpéteri Jn. calls Perényi King László V's Master of the Treasury between 1441 and 1444. Szentpétery considered Ország – although Mihály Ország and not János Ország – as King Ulászló's Master of the Treasury, but unfortunately he does not quote his sources in his work.⁶⁸ Still it seems to justify him that Engel, based on charters issued by King Ulászló and on a grant given in front of the cathedral chapter of Buda, refers to Ország as the holder of this office. And the reference he made to Perényi is a charter issued by Perényi himself.⁶⁹

Hereinafter we should not think about party affiliations but should simply follow the facts. Perényi was not among the great dignitaries of the country in 1441 at Márványkő or at Szombathely⁷⁰ and until 1445 he

65 MNL OL DF 289 005. AGADW 5574.; DF 289 004. AGADW 5572.; DF 289 127. AGADW 5573.

66 MNL OL DF 213 069. and DL 13 705.

67 Engel, *Achontológia Tárnokmesterek*.

68 Szentpétery Jn. *Tárnoki hivatal* 1934. 525.

69 Cf. Engel, *Achontológia Tárnokmesterek*.

70 Engel, *Achontológia Főrendek* 1441A–B and MNL OL DF 287 161–2.

is not mentioned in any polysigillic diploma.⁷¹ At the end of 1441 he did not appear on either side at the siege of Kassa (Košice)⁷² and in 1443 his office was held by János Ország. Based on all this we can conclude that he did not get any position in the government of King Ulászló and was not in the king's favour. Although he kept on referring to himself as Master of the Treasury without using the "formal" word, he did not confirm his charters with his official seal. Authenticity can provide an answer to his seal usage. At that time Perényi was not Master of the Treasury of King Ulászló, who possessed real, although incomplete power, therefore Perényi could not use his third seal, or rather it would not have been authentic. He considered it safer to use his former, second seal which had been accepted by everyone during the reign of King Sigismund. Unfortunately we do not have any analogies from the judges of nationwide importance. Lőrinc Hédervári continued to hold his office as Palatine. István Bátori was removed from the office of Lord Chief Justice at the beginning of 1440⁷³ and the seal of György Rozgonyi is not known from this period. Miklós Újlaki, ban of Macsó and later the woiwode of Transylvania did not change his seal either, although the latter he remained loyal to King Ulászló.⁷⁴ László Garai, ban of Macsó, who rebelled against Ulászló also used a seal with the abbreviation of the title of his office.⁷⁵ Therefore the seal usage of János Perényi was quite unique. Although we do not know his motives for doing so, we suspect that there was consistence and consciousness in it.

In April, 1444 Perényi was present at the diet where the decrees of Ulászló were accepted.⁷⁶ In the diplomas ratifying the decrees Perényi is not referred to with any title, only with the word "senior" to differentiate him from his kinsman, János, son of Péter Perényi. However, the battle of Varna brought changes in domestic politics. In December, 1444 the Palatine, Lőrinc Hédervári addressed a letter to Perényi calling upon him to make peace with Simon Pálóci, against whom he waged a private

71 Cf. Novák, Sokpecsétes.

72 József Tutkó, *Szabad királyi Kassa városának történelmi évkönyve*. Kassa, 1861. 34–35.; Pál Tóth-Szabó, *A cseh-huszita mozgalmak és uralom története Magyarországon*. Budapest, 1917. 187–188.

73 Engel, Achontológia.

74 Novák, Seals of Noblemen.

75 MNL OL DL 13 677.

76 MNL OL DL 13 827.

war, but the Palatine does not call him Master of the Treasury.⁷⁷ The conflict was resolved in the diet held in May, 1445⁷⁸ where the assembled dignitaries already called him the Master of the Treasury.⁷⁹ His title is also present in the diploma signed at Szina on 8 July which brought an end to the civil war.⁸⁰ Unfortunately the confirming seal of this diploma completely wore off. On 30 December 1446 he attended to a matter as the Master of the Treasury and in this case he used his third seal.⁸¹ We should not look for the reason for this change in the content or character of this charter, since on 13 February 1448 he also used the same seal as a landlord.⁸² The real reason is the consolidation of domestic politics and this can also be proven with an analogy. As I have already pointed out in a previous essay, many of the great dignitaries changed their seals at the turn of 1444 and 1445.⁸³ Therefore Perényi was not the only one who intended to show this change in domestic politics and his own personal influence even in his seal usage. It also needs to be mentioned that he did not destroy his previous seals.

THE SECOND OFFICIAL SEAL OF PERÉNYI

When reading the study of Pál Lövei on the polysigillic diploma issued on 5 March 1452 in Vienna we can witness an interesting phenomenon.⁸⁴ Apart from being one of the five diplomas which contain the seals of governor János Hunyadi and that of the national council,⁸⁵ this diploma is also the first one which was sealed with the fourth seal of János Perényi,

77 *A zichi és vásonkeői gróf Zichy-család idősb ágának okmánytára. Codex diplomaticus domus senioris comitum Zichy de Zich et Vasonkeő.* Eds. Imre Nagy – Iván Nagy – Dezső Véghely. Pest, 1872–1931. IX. 90–91. (no. 89.)

78 Nándor Knauz, *Az országos tanács és országgyűlések története: 1445–1452.* Pest, 1859. 24.

79 MNL OL DL 13 846.

80 MNL OL DF 270 275.

81 MNL OL DF 228 693.

82 MNL OL DL 66 917.

83 Novák, *Seals of Noblemen.*

84 Pál Lövei, („...jelen levelünket ...szokott pecsétjeinkkel meg is erősítettük ...”) - Sokpecsétes oklevelek megpecsételési folyamata. In. *„A feledés árja alól új földeket hódítok vissza”: Írások Tímár Árpád tiszteletére.* Eds. István Bardoly – László Jurecskó – György Sümegi. Budapest, 2009. 109–117. 112.

85 Cf. Imre Szentpétery, Hédervári Imre 1447-iki felmentő levele. = *Turul*, 20, 1902. no. 4. 153–165. 161–162.

Master of the Treasury. He certainly used this seal until 24 September 1454.⁸⁶ It would seem so that he only renewed his seal but on a charter issued on 19 March 1456 his third seal can be found again.⁸⁷ He did not use the fourth seal any more to certify charters, his third seal appears on even the last charter he issued.⁸⁸ Why did he change his seal another time and why did he decide to use his original official seal in 1456 at latest?

Hereinafter we will look at the role Perényi played in national politics after 1445. In that year he was not chosen to be a member of the legation sent to Frederick, King of Germany on 11 May.⁸⁹ Although he was present at the confirmation of the diploma issued at Szina mentioned above, he did not seal any of the invitations to the diet which were signed on 17 June at Zsámbék.⁹⁰ He was not on the diet too, when it elected to the Governor János Hunyadi.⁹¹ Because of the great number of participants the diet took place at Rákos and was attended by the representatives of several towns.⁹² Nevertheless, not a single charter survived which would have been issued by Perényi, Master of the Treasury, although the towns' representatives would have gone to see their judge as it was customary.⁹³ At the beginning of January, 1447 the national council sent another delegation to Frederick while Perényi issued a diploma at Terebes.⁹⁴ Unsurprisingly we do not find his name among those who signed the armistice agreement on 1 June 1447.⁹⁵ His name appears again on a charter of nationwide importance on 13 September 1447 when the dignitaries of the country removed Imre Hédervári from his office.⁹⁶ During the spring of 1447 Perényi kept signing his charters on his own estate⁹⁷ while the other dignitaries resided mainly in Buda.⁹⁸ He did not take

86 MNL OL DF 279 651.

87 MNL OL DF 255 752.

88 MNL OL DL 44 858.

89 Knauz, Országos tanács, 27.

90 MNL OL DF 240 862.; DF 250 106.

91 He did not belong to the national council. Cf. Engel, *Achontológia Főrendek* 1445A.

92 Knauz, Országos tanács, 40–41.

93 Cf. Boreczky, *Tánokmesteri hivatal* 1904.

94 Knauz, Országos tanács, 56–57. and MNL OL DF 228 693.

95 MNL OL DF 287 192.

96 Szentpétery, *Hédervári Imre*, 155.

97 MNL OL DL 66 917.; DF 228 708.; DF 213 190.; DL 31 575.; DL 31 576.;

98 Knauz, Országos tanács 1895. 79–81.

part in the battle of Rigómező either⁹⁹ and while the dignitaries were all staying in Buda in 1449¹⁰⁰ he issued a diploma in Terebes.¹⁰¹

It clearly appears so that one of the greatest landholders of the country and also the Master of the Treasury was not a regular and determining member of the national council and did not reside in the company of Hunyadi either. He mainly fought against the Czechs who were plundering his estates. The defeat at Rigómező (Kosovo Polje) resulted in changes in national politics. János Hunyadi's reputation as the whip of Turks was somewhat shaken and according to the literature, this made Hunyadi think over his politics.¹⁰² He was forced to sign an armistice agreement with Jan Jiskra, the leader of the Czech mercenaries;¹⁰³ he left Buda to meet Jiskra on 12 March 1450.¹⁰⁴ János Perényi, who sealed a diploma in Buda at the end of February,¹⁰⁵ must have been in Hunyadi's escort since his name and seal appears on the armistice agreement signed on 28 March at Mezőkövesd.¹⁰⁶ At the beginning of 1451 he resided in Buda together with the other dignitaries,¹⁰⁷ then wrote a letter from Terebes on Hunyadi's orders to the towns of Upper-Hungary.¹⁰⁸ According to the available sources, in 1452 we often find him in the company of Hunyadi and the dignitaries. On 5 March he took part in the negotiations with the Austrian estates in Vienna,¹⁰⁹ in April he issued a charter in Buda¹¹⁰ and on 24 August he confirmed the peace treaty with Jiskra on Hunyadi's behalf.¹¹¹ Reading the text of this treaty it becomes obvious that Perényi and his three associates, namely Vince, bishop of Vác, Rajnald Rozgonyi and László Pálóci were also responsible for keeping the peace. After

99 Engel, *Achontológia Főrendek* 1448A.

100 Knauz, *Országos tanács*, 87–90.

101 MNL OL DF 213 215.

102 Tamás Pálosfalvi, A pozsonyi vár elfoglalása 1450-ben. In. *Analecta Mediaevalia II. Várak, templomok, ispotályok. Tanulmányos a magyar középkorról*. Ed. Tibor Neumann. Piliscsaba, 2004. 197–219. 198.

103 Pálosfalvi, *Pozsonyi vár*, 203.

104 Pál Engel, Hunyadi János kormányzó itineráriuma, 1446–1452. = *Századok*, 118, 1984. no. 5. 974–997. 984.

105 MNL OL DF 240 052.

106 Engel, *Achontológia Főrendek* 1450A.

107 MNL OL DL 70 900.

108 MNL OL DF 213 344.

109 Lővei, „...jelen levelünket”, 112.

110 MNL OL DF 240 148.

111 MNL OL DF 235 587.

signing the peace treaty he returned to his estate at Füzér¹¹² and probably after he got news about the handing over of László V¹¹³ he joined Hunyadi at Buda in the second half of September.¹¹⁴ Neither of them were among the members of the legation which was sent to bring home László V from Vienna,¹¹⁵ but in December he and Hunyadi welcomed the king together.¹¹⁶ The diet at Pozsony (Bratislava) settled the questions of land ownership and as a result of this Perényi got a new grant, the castle of Jolsva (Jelšava) from László V.¹¹⁷

Based on the above mentioned information we can conclude that from the end of 1449 or from the beginning of 1450 Perényi played an increasingly important role in the politics of Governor János Hunyadi. Apart from being able to take part in the decision making of the council of the dignitaries, he attended the negotiations in Vienna and was a dependable ally of Hunyadi against Jiskra in the north-eastern part of the country. His increasing influence in politics must have led Perényi to promulgate this in his seal as well.

Although Hunyadi resigned from his office as governor at the end of 1452, he gained the title of chief captain and in reality all power concentrated in his hands. As a consequence he started to isolate from the influential dignitaries in 1453. In this year Dénes Szécsi, Miklós Újlaki, László Garai and László Pálóci signed a cooperation agreement which was clearly aimed against Hunyadi.¹¹⁸ Perényi did not join this cooperation and we do not know about any charters issued by him in 1453. In 1454 he sealed several charters in Buda for which he used his fourth seal¹¹⁹ and held a meeting in Terebes in November regarding the defence against the plundering mercenaries.¹²⁰ We do not know about any sealed charters which he would have issued in 1455 and we do not encounter his name

112 MNL OL DF 242 414.

113 László V was handed by Frigyes to Cillei on September 4. See: Antal Áldásy, A magyar országgyűlés követtsége V. Lászlóhoz 1452 október havában. = *Századok*, 44, 1910. no. 7. 554–562. 554.

114 MNL OL DL 70 900. Cf. Engel, *Itinerárium*, 986.

115 Áldásy, *Követtség* 1910. 555.

116 MNL OL DF 242 420. Cf. Engel, *Itinerárium*, 986.

117 MNL OL DL 14 627–8.

118 MNL OL DF 287 204.

119 MNL OL DL 106 096.; DL 14 784.; DF 279 651.

120 MNL OL DL 31 664.

in diets, or in any legation, campaign or agreement. His next charter was issued in 1456 and in this case he used his third seal again.¹²¹

Presumably he returned to the use of his previously seal in 1455 or at the beginning of 1456. Yet again, the reason for this change was probably his political manoeuvring. He had his fourth seal made to express that he was a trusted man of Governor János Hunyadi and one of his greatest supporters against the Czechs in the north-eastern part of the country. However, the return of László V and the evolving political alliances against Hunyadi made him realize that he took a stand on the wrong side. It must have been an attempt on Perényi's part to find a way out of this situation when he tried to get closer to László V, which was rewarded by a new royal grant to all of his estates.¹²² From March 1456 he started to take part in national politics again, mainly by organizing the military operations against the plundering mercenaries.¹²³ He used his third seal to confirm his charters which he signed as King László's Master of the Treasury and later called himself captain of the upper parts as well.¹²⁴ Acting as such, Perényi, united with Jiskra, fought against Mihály Szilágyi, the brother-in-law of János Hunyadi and later signed a peace treaty with Szilágyi on 8 September 1457 at Kassa (Košice).¹²⁵ Following the king's death in the same year he was in council with the dignitaries in Buda from 29 November at latest until 6 December.¹²⁶ He was in charge of the north-eastern part of the country until the new king was chosen at the diet.¹²⁷

The question might arise whether János Perényi considered the representation of his political engagement really so important that he emphasized it on his seals as well. It is well-known fact that royal seal usage was an important means of propaganda.¹²⁸ The seal of a magnate did not only serve the purpose of advertising his pedigree and title but it also represented his power. Perényi also used the marble tombstone which was

121 MNL OL DF 255 752.

122 MNL OL DL 14 909.

123 MNL OL DF 270 319.; DF 213 596.; DF 213 600.; DF 213 611.; DF 213 649.; DF 213 651.; DF 213 654.;

124 Ibid.

125 MNL OL DF 213 674.

126 MNL OL DF 228 791.; DF 213 680.; DF 270 334.; DF 203 229.; DF 250 248.

127 Novák, *Levelek*, 159.

128 Körmendi, *Zsigmond király*.

probably ordered by him¹²⁹ to demonstrate his power. The unusually long and very telling circumscription of the tombstone immortalized his title of Master of the Stewards he held during the reign of King Sigismund and the title of Master of the Treasury given to him by King Albert. Besides the symbol of the Order of the Dragon and the symbol of the Aragonese Order of the Jar, i.e. of Annunciation Lilies and the Vase also appears on the tombstone together with the symbol of the Lancaster-House, the Collar of SS. This way red marble tombstone, which was made for all eternity, has a crowded effect but it contains everything a baron can be proud of.¹³⁰ Everything, except that János Perényi also used to be László V's Master of the Treasury and captain of the upper parts. Naturally in the reign of King Matthias it was not too favourable to refer to these offices. This might as well be a coincidence but can also be a momentum of conscious baronial representation.

SUMMARY

In my study in concentrated only on János Perényi's seal usage. I would not state that his political engagement and his relation with the dignitaries can only be described based on this. A more comprehensive source analysis is required to make such statements. Not only the charters issued by him but also the letters written about him and even the ones written to him contain information on the topic. Unfortunately the coherent correspondence of that branch of the Perényi family whose members became Palatines did not survive; therefore we rarely come across letters written to him, although his own correspondence with the towns was quite lively. With extensive source criticism and by finding as many references as possible the itinerary of János Perényi will also be possible to be made which will serve as the "spine" of his activity.

Nevertheless, this sigillographic research can point out the deficiencies of our historiography: namely that we need to conduct a more intensive, deeper research on 15th century secular seal usage. In the absence of analogies I can only make comparisons based on my own research. Nevertheless, I sincerely hope that my seemingly week demonstration

129 Pál Lövei, „*Posuit hoc monumentum pro aeterna memoria*” – *Bevezető fejezetek a középkori Magyarország síremlékeinek katalógusához. Akadémiai doktori disszertáció.* Budapest, 2009. 83. According to Lövei János Perényi ordered his own tomb with his brother's one. But the epigraph was made later.

130 Pál Engel – Pál Lövei – Livia Varga, Zsigmond-kori bárói síremlékeinkről. = *Ars Hungarica*, 11, 1983. no. 1. 37–38.

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will stand its ground even after the information on the available seals is processed. As a humble contribution I wish to foster this by collecting and publishing the polysigillic diplomas issued between 1439 and 1457. By means of this it will become easier to prepare the seal indices of other dignitaries. For instance it would be worth investigating the seal usage of another dignitary who held his office for a similarly long period. The seal usage of a Lord Chief Justice or a Palatine is perhaps too versatile for this but the sigillographic research of a voivode of Transylvania or that of another dignitary of nationwide importance would be more expedient.

