

# Isabella Jagiellon, Queen of Hungary (1519–1559)

A Memorial Conference



Budapest, 28 February – 1 March 2019



**QUEEN BONA to JOHANNES DANTISCUS, bishop of Varmia,  
Cracow, 28 October 1537**

”Attulit et reddidit nobis Nicolaus Nipssius *binas imagines* Serenissime filie nostre Isabelle: verum *altera illarum*, ea videlicet que a capite ad pectus tantummodo facta est, *magis nobis placet*. *Altera rursus imago*, est multum diversa a forma filie nostre: cum que non quadrat. Quare postulamus a Paternitas vestra, ut si quam imaginem hinc similem apud se habet, *eam non ostendat*, neque cuiquam extra Prussiam, et extra Regnum nostrum mittat. Ne, qui filiam nostram non norunt, talem qualem manus pictoris effigiavit esse credant.”

**PETRUS POREMSKI to QUEEN BONA, Buda,  
15 March 1541**

”Maiestas Reginalis nullam habet commoditatem, male tractatur quamvis magnam pecuniam in singulos dies expendere cogitur. Nemo esse qui provideat.”

**QUEEN BONA to FRIAR GEORGE, bishop of Várad, Vilnius,  
10 March 1541**

”Id quod vestra magnificentia, *quae auctor matrimonii et tradenda in Hungariam Serenissimae filiae nostrae est*, iure ac merito praestare debet, detque operam, ut ipsa Serenissima filia Regina vestra cum filiolo suo, quam commodissimae vitam agat, neque defectibus ullis prematur.”

**ZSIGMOND GYALUI TORDA to PHILIP MELANCHTHON, 1547**

”Regina cum suo comitatu Polonico dies et noctes helluatur et tempus omne, quod ab epulis superest, salutationibus dat. *Nunc ex puerperio laborat*, etsi id ipsa sedulo getit ac dissimulat.”

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**Budapest, Headquarters of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences,  
1051 Budapest, Széchenyi István tér 9.  
Room: Felolvasóterem (Lecture Hall)**



# Programme 28 February, Thursday

## Opening

9:00–9:05

Welcome message from His Excellence Prof. Dr. Jerzy Snopek, Ambassador of Poland in Budapest

9:05–9:15

Opening words by Antal Molnár, Director of the Institute of History, Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA BTK TTI)

## Key-note lecture

9:15–10:05

Natalia Nowakowska, Sommerville College, Oxford, (The Jagiellons Project), Isabella, the Jagiellonians and Narratives of European History

## Wedding and Coronation – chair: PÉTER KASZA

10:15–10:35

Ágnes Máté Szegedi Tudományegyetem, Szeged [University of Szeged, Szeged], Literary Image of Renaissance Queenship: The Marriage of Isabella Jagiellon (1519–1559)

10:35–10:55

György Palotás Szegedi Tudományegyetem – József Attila Gimnázium, Makó [University of Szeged, Szeged – József Attila High School, Makó], The Cracovian Competition of Wedding Songs in 1539

10:55–11:30

Discussion and coffee break

## Family and Image – chair: ENIKŐ BÉKÉS

11:30–11:50

Susanna Niiranen, Jyväskylä yliopisto [University of Jyväskylä] Jyväskylä, Catherine and Isabella Jagiellon – Creating a Bond to the Late Sister

11:50–12:10

Karolina Mroziewicz, Uniwersytet Jagielloński, [Jagiellonian University], Kraków, The Sixteenth-Century Iconography of Isabella Jagiellon and Its Reception in Poland and Hungary

12:30–13:30

Discussion and lunch break





### Diplomacy – chair: NATALIA NOWAKOWSKA

- 13:30–13:50 Stanislava Kuzmova, Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave [Comenius University of Bratislava] Bratislava, Back to the Family: Isabella in Poland between 1551–1556
- 13:50–14:10 Pál Fodor, MTA BTK TTI, Budapest, The Ottoman Diplomacy and Transylvania
- 14:10–14:30 Szymon Brzeziński, Bibliotheca Narodowa [National Library], Warszawa, Diplomacy of Isabella Jagiellon: Struggling for Political Subjectivity
- 14:30–14:50 Mónika F. Molnár, MTA BTK TTI, Budapest, Isabella and her Italian Connection
- 15:30–16:00 Discussion
- 16:00–17:00 Concert by *Musica Historica*: Court Culture in Sixteenth-century Central Europe

# Programme 1 March, Friday

## Politics I. Institutions – chair: PÁL FODOR

- 10:00–10:20 Teréz Oborni, MTA BTK TTI, Budapest, “The Queen as a Painted Picture.” Queen Isabella and Her Reign in the Eastern Kingdom (1541–1551)
- 10:20–10:40 Zsolt Bogdándi, Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, Societatea Muzeului Ardelean [Transylvanian Museum Society], Cluj-Napoca/Kolozsvár, Establishing New Institutions – The Royal Table and the Places of Authentication (1556–1559)
- 10:40–11:20 Discussion and coffee break

## Politics II. Domestic Policy – chair: STANISLAVA KUZMOVA

- 11:20–11:40 Liviu Cîmpeanu, Institutul de Cercetări Socio-Umane [Romanian Academy, Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities] Sibiu/Hermannstadt/Nagyszeben, The Imperial Arsenal of Hermannstadt under the Rule of Queen Isabella
- 11:40–12:00 Júlia Derzsi, Institutul de Cercetări Socio-Umane, [Romanian Academy, Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities] Sibiu/Hermannstadt/Nagyszeben, Isabella Jagiellon and the Saxon Community of Transylvania
- 12:00–12:20 Emőke Gálfi, Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, Societatea Muzeului Ardelean [Transylvanian Museum Society], Cluj-Napoca/Kolozsvár, Queen Isabella’s Urban Policy during the Second Period of her Reign
- 12:20 Closing remarks – Teréz Oborni
- Lunch
- 14:00–15:00 Guided tour in the Museum of the National Assembly

## Abstracts in alphabetical order



**BOGDÁNDI, ZSOLT** – Session 6

*Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület [Transylvanian Museum Society], Cluj-Napoca*

### **Establishing New Institutions During the Reign of Queen Isabella (1556–1559). The Royal Table and the Places of Authentication**

**T**he principal aim of this paper is to present two important institutions established after the return of Prince John Sigismund and his mother from Poland (1556): the Royal Table (*tabula* or *sedes judiciaria*) and the places of authentication (*loca credibilia*). Apart from the chancellery, these institutions have been the basic elements of the administration of justice in the newly born state, later called the Principality of Transylvania. The paper will focus on the presentation of the new elements of this organisation, but it will also list their medieval characteristics.

The judicial reorganisation of the so called Eastern Hungarian Kingdom (consisting of medieval Transylvania and the counties East to the river Tisza) took place starting with the end of 1556, when the Royal Table has been established in a decretum issued in the name of Queen Isabella. This does not mean that the principal Court of Justice started its activity right away – that was surely a longer and more complicated process. In this paper I will present the steps of this process.

On the territory of the Transylvanian principality in-the-making there were three ecclesiastical institutions/places of authentication, which issued authentic charters: the Chapter of Transylvania residing at Gyulafehérvár, the Convent of Kolozsmonostor and the Chapter of Várada. Their medieval history has already been partially studied, but – until the recent years – the research covered their activity during the reign of queen Isabella in none of these cases, although very important changes took place in this period, that led in the end to the establishment of a new secular institution: the *requisitores* (letter-searchers). I discuss the institutions of *sedes judiciaria* and *loca credibilia* together because there are strong connections between them: the latter were the executors of the judicial orders issued by the Court of Justice.

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**BRZEZIŃSKI, SZYMON** – Session 5

*Biblioteka Narodowa [National Library], Warszawa*

### **The Diplomacy of Isabella Jagiellon: The Struggle for Becoming a Political Subject**

In my paper I would like to focus on Isabella Jagiellon's role in the relations of Kings Sigismund I and Sigismund August with Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, the Habsburg Monarchy and Transylvania. I examine the scope and character of the queen's diplomacy, conducted in conditions of great turmoil, caused above all by the Ottoman expansion in the region. Among other questions, that of Isabella's sovereignty as a female ruler, widow queen and regent gains special importance. It was closely connected to the ways her power was represented, and also to its limitations and the strategies applied. These issues shall shed light on more general problems, crucial to the whole of Isabella's reign, namely (1) the queen's relations with other members of Jagiellonian dynasty and role of dynastic ties for her rule and (2) the role of the Jagiellonians in the emergence of Transylvanian state. Furthermore, an essential part of my paper will be such aspects of Isabella's diplomatic activity as: diplomatic staff, communication, circulation of information and cultural transfer. As a result, I present an overview of the queen's political activity, especially in the field of diplomacy, dynastic policy and contacts with the political elite.

**CÎMPEANU, LIVIU** – Session 7

*Institutul de Cercetari Socio-Umane din Sibiu*

*[Romanian Academy, Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities], Sibiu*

### **The Imperial Arsenal of Hermannstadt under the Rule of Queen Isabella**

In the summer of 1551, Queen Isabella Jagiellon was forced to resign in front of general Giovanni Battista Castaldo, commander in chief of the superior Habsburg forces, due to the subversive manoeuvres of Friar George. Immediately afterwards, the imperial army occupied the fortresses and the fortified towns of Transylvania, setting up a military regime. By that time, the Transylvanian-Saxon city of Hermannstadt/Nagyszeben/Sibiu was the largest and best-fortified town of the province, thus it became the headquarters of the imperial army. The Habsburg military authorities established here the main arsenal of Transylvania, in order to supply the imperial field army and the arsenals of the other fortified towns and fortresses with weapons, ammunition and other war materials.





In February 1552 Conrad Haas became the commander of the imperial arsenal of Hermannstadt and kept this office for more than a decade. His correspondence is kept in the archives of Hermannstadt and, although it contains important evidence about the imperial arsenal, it is almost unknown by the historians. In this paper I aim to discuss the organization and functionality of the imperial arsenal of Hermannstadt during the Habsburg reign (1552–1556), and the circumstances in which it was taken over by Queen Isabella after her return to Transylvania, as well as the subsequent evolution, up to 1560. Our paper is based mainly on the unpublished correspondence of Conrad Haas and the other Habsburg generals and commanders, as well as on the town records and accounts of the city of Hermannstadt.

**DERZSI, JÚLIA** – Session 7

*Institutul de Cercetari Socio-Umane din Sibiu*

*[Romanian Academy, Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities], Sibiu*

### **Isabella Jagiellon and the Saxon Community of Transylvania**

**T**he study of the relations between the Transylvanian court and the different communities of the country has in the last time attracted the attention of researchers. Inspired by the results of Central European court history, historians have preferred to focus on the relationship between the ruler and urban communities, since in this context sources survived in relatively large numbers. The Saxon community received a significant attention (mainly due to the rich and well-organised archives of the most important Saxon towns), however, its connection to the court of Isabella was not studied.

Our paper aims to shed light on the relationship of the Saxon towns of Transylvania and the court of Isabella Jagiellon through the predominantly unpublished archival sources available in the archives of Sibiu (Hermannstadt/Nagyszeben) and Braşov (Kronstadt/Brassó). As primary sources, the account books of the most important Saxon towns from the period of Isabella's government will be studied, supplemented with the towns' rich correspondence and also with the evidence of contemporary chroniclers. The study of the sources will provide insight into the duties and tasks levied on the Saxon communities regarding the ruler and the court, such as forwarding the ruler's mails inside and outside the country, attending to the ruler and the ruler's entourage during visits in the towns, offering different benefits and presents (with regular or subsidiary character) to the ruler and members of the court, securing food supply for the

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ruler's messengers and diplomatic envoys, diplomacy and contact keeping with the neighbouring Romanian principalities, etc.

Focused on the interaction between Isabella Jagiellon and the most important Saxon towns of Transylvania the study will clarify the details of this relationship's peculiarities. What kind of obligations and duties had the Saxons towards Isabella? What meant the presence of the ruler in the towns from the perspective of Saxon diplomacy and how was the community rewarded for their services, in addition to political lobbying? What were the implications of the pleasant relationship with Isabella, for example in the question of the development of urban crafts and services, etc.? In addition, our investigation shall describe the financial and the organisational mechanism used to manage towns to ensure the various demands of Isabella and her court. The course and coordination of the visits of the ruler can be reconstructed with the help of our sources which complement the details known through the examples (the costs of the visits, securing food supply and accommodation, various services, dispensing presents to Isabella and her particular and official entourage). In consequence the institution of the court can be reconstructed, for instance: the apparatus of the travelling court (as an alternative to the "official" residence), the social status and position of the court people, customs, scenes and methods of representation implemented by the Transylvanian ruler and her entourage.

**FODOR, PÁL** – Session 5

*MTA BTK TTI, Budapest*

### **The Ottoman Diplomacy and Transylvania**

**I**n the very first year of his reign, Süleyman implemented sweeping changes in Ottoman policy. In the aftermath of his victories in the 1530s on the Iranian and the Mediterranean fronts, he turned his attention back to Central Europe. The initial strikes were directed against Hungary, but later the conflict had spread to the border regions of Austria. After the easy seizure of Buda (1541), he nominally granted Transylvania and the region beyond river Tisza as Ottoman sancaks to John II Sigismund Szapolyai and Queen Isabella to rule. Süleyman was not considering the establishment of an eastern Hungarian or Transylvanian vassal state at that time. Since Ferdinand I Habsburg also held a claim for the whole country, the future of these parts undoubtedly became dependent on the outcome of the Ottoman-Habsburg conflict. As indicated in the orders of the imperial council of this period, the two „sancaks” – Transylvania and the Temesköz Region – had



been under Ottoman supervision even before the peace treaty of 1547. In the 1540s the Porte seems to have seen a feasible solution in maintaining the two political entities, which were relatively independent in their internal affairs. The queen's councillors, Péter Petrovics and Friar George Martinuzzi had instructions from the Porte as sancakbeyis. Petrovics turned out to be a willing and submissive partner, as he hoped that Istanbul would assist in protecting the interests of the young prince and the queen. Friar George however, since the fall of Buda, had been working incessantly on bringing Transylvania under the sway of the Habsburg king. Finally the Treaty of Nyírbátor (1549) resulted in the unification of the country under Ferdinand's rule. In 1551 Sultan Süleyman sent off his armies and vassals to attack Transylvania, but the military actions did not bring the expected result. After the failure of the Ottoman army and the assassination of Friar George at the turn of 1551–1552 led the sultan's court to reconsider its strategy and to deploy more powerful forces in order to resolve the situation. The sultan offered the Transylvanians an opportunity to repent: if they came to heel again and stood in support of the Szapolyais, he would forgive them and would find favour with him again as his vassals.

In these years the Ottoman ruler continued to seek for ways to strengthen and consolidate his position in Hungary even after the Peace Treaty of Amasya (1555). The policy of Süleyman was to push the Habsburgs out of Transylvania and to return the eastern part of Hungary to the heir of the House of Szapolyai, John II Sigismund. Finally, the sultan made a mixture of diplomatic and military threats, appointed John II Sigismund „king of Hungary and Transylvania”. Although Queen Isabella and his son were able to return and take charge of Transylvania, the Hungarians were not unified in supporting them. This paper will elaborate upon the policy of the Ottoman court towards Transylvania.

**GÁLFI, EMŐKE** – Session 7

*Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület [Transylvanian Museum Society], Cluj-Napoca*

### **Queen Isabella's Urban Policy during the Second Period of her Reign**

**A**fter the return of Queen Isabella to Transylvania, starting with 1556, urban policy played a prominent role in her activities: this short period (1556–1559) of her reign can be characterized by an abundance of measures. In this paper I will present a non-exhaustive list of the dispositions regarding her urban policy: among the Székely market-towns she granted privileges and rights for Székelykeresztúr, Marosvásárhely,

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Székelyudvarhely, Kézdivásárhely and Csíkszereda (the last of which has actually been mentioned for the first time in historical records in 1558). Isabella ordered new statutes for the market town Lugos, for the mining town Abrudbánya, and for the former episcopal centre of Várad too. The Queen established a thirtieth customs office in Kolozsvár, and donated for this city staple right (*ius depositorii*) and market right for holding four annual markets. The return of Queen Isabella brought about many radical changes also regarding a princely residence, the town of Gyulafehérvár. The aim of my paper is to present and analyse all these measures. I will try to give responses for some of the questions regarding the queen's urban policy, such as: Why the first period of her reign has not been characterized by the same kind of policy? What was the reason of all these measures? Which were the consequences of the secularization of ecclesiastical properties for the development of the towns, especially in the case of Várad and Gyulafehérvár?

**KUZMOVA, STANISLAVA** – Session 5

*Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave [Comenius University of Bratislava], Bratislava*

### **Back to the Family: Isabella in Poland between 1551 – 1556**

**I**n 1551, after signing the agreement with Ferdinand, Isabella, widowed queen of Hungary, and her son, John Sigismund, were to leave the kingdom, first stopping in Košice, then moving on to Silesia. However, Opole was not able to sustain the royal inhabitants and Isabella and her son spent the following period in Poland, before returning to Transylvania in 1556.

The paper proposes to re-examine the Polish sojourn of Isabella between 1551 and 1556 with focus on the familial relations and the position of Isabella within her family, among her blood relatives and towards the dynasty which she “left” after marrying Szapolyai, king of Hungary. During this difficult period, Isabella negotiated with Ferdinand as well as tried to secure the support of her brother, the king of Poland, her mother, and others. They were provided with a living, the young prince with a teacher and they spent the following years in Warsaw and in Krzepice. The period was the subject of the extensive but old works of Veress (1899) and Szádeczky (1888), and more recently of studies of A. Orgona and Sz. Brzeziński, with special focus on John Sigismund and Transylvania. I propose to provide a fresh view of this interesting and difficult period of Isabella's life, while closely looking at sources that had already been known for the old authors, but also new ones, including among others the collection of documents and



diplomatic exchange in the manuscript of the Jagiellonian Library, BJ 175/2. The familial and dynastic dynamics, the status and its changes, related to the Jagiellonian queen in this special position will be investigated.

**MÁTÉ, ÁGNES** – Session 3

*Szégedi Tudományegyetem [University of Szeged], Szeged*

### **Literary Image of Renaissance Queenship: the Marriage of Isabella Jagiellon (1519–1559)**

**I**n this paper I will examine some characteristic features of the literary image of Queen Isabella Jagiellon, last queen of the undivided Kingdom of Hungary. I will focus on works written in Latin to commemorate her marriage to King János Szapolyai in 1539.

The main question of my presentation is: which literary topoi and/or stereotypes did Polish, Hungarian and Italian humanists employ to describe this important transition in the life of the future queen of Hungary? In order to shed light on this question, I will analyse a series of poetic and prose works written by Michael Verantius, Stanislaus Aichler, Giacomo Ferdinando da Bari and Pál Istvánfi. My working theory is that, while the image of Isabella Jagiellon was connected to the traditional negative image of queens present in Hungarian culture, the attitude of the writers to Queen Isabella's Italian origin (her mother was Bona Sforza) depended on the nationality of her eulogists. This will demonstrate that a dynastic marriage was also an opportunity for sixteenth-century litterati to use neo-Latin literature as a medium of political communication.

**MOLNÁR F., MÓNIKA** – Session 5

*MTA BTK TTI, Budapest*

### **Isabella and her Italian Connection**

**I**n my paper I shall investigate the Italian connections of Isabella Jagiellon, first of all dealing with the activity of her Italian mother, Bona Sforza, and her Italian courtier, Giorgio Blandrata.

Her Italian mother, Bona Sforza (1494–1557), as a queen of Poland had an intensive influence on the Polish royal court in the sixteenth century. Even if Bona's reputation was negative for many centuries in Poland-Lithuania (which can be attributed to the "black legend" that has been linked to her name), she nevertheless contributed significantly



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to the Polish Renaissance. Bona Sforza spent her childhood in Milan and Bari, and she inherited from her mother, Isabella of Aragon her interest in arts and literature. The Wawel, where Isabella – her eldest daughter and her mother’s favourite (she was also called Isabella, just as her Italian grandmother) – grew up, was a real renaissance court, in which Bona Sforza and her husband, King Sigismund Jagiellon of Poland supported different types of arts and artist.

This ambience and Italian-style education were brought by Isabella Jagiellon to the Hungarian and later to the Transylvanian court, first as the wife of the Hungarian king, John Szapolyai and after the death of John (after only one year of marriage) as the dowager queen. In these royal residences, among the Hungarian and Polish noblemen, there were also many Italians. The most influential among them was Giorgio Blandrata (1515–1588), an Italian physician, polemicist and Protestant reformer. First, he was the court physician to the queen dowager, the Milanese Bona Sforza, thereafter he moved to Transylvania and served Queen Isabella between 1544 and 1551.

**MROZIEWICZ, KAROLINA** – Session 3

*Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego [Jagiellonian University], Krakow*

### **The Sixteenth-Century Iconography of Isabella Jagiellon and its Reception in Poland and Hungary**

**T**he principal aim of the paper is to discuss the iconography of Isabella Jagiellon, which encompasses the queen’s likenesses executed at different stages of her life in such different media as paintings, medals and book covers. The analysis focuses on the shifts in depictions and functions of Isabella’s likenesses responding to her new roles and dignities as a Polish princess (daughter of Sigismund I and Bona Sforza), queen consort (wife of John Zápolya) and queen dowager of Hungary (mother of John Sigismund and a widow). The comparative approach to the queen’s contemporary and postmortem depictions produced in Poland and Hungary will in turn demonstrate different ways in which Isabella’s image functioned in the collective imagination of Poles and Hungarians throughout the centuries.



**NIIRANEN, SUSANNA** – Session 3

*Jyväskylän yliopisto [University of Jyväskylä], Jyväskylä*

### **Catherine and Isabella Jagiellon – Creating a Bond to the Late Sister**

**W**hen Catherine Jagiellon married John Vasa, Duke of Finland in 1562, Isabella Jagiellon was already dead. The first child of the ducal couple was born during their imprisonment at the Gripsholm Castle in Sweden and named Isabella (1564–1566). Passing on the identity of the dead sibling at baptism was a common custom in early modern society, but passing on a name related to father’s family was more typical than that of a mother.

In my paper, by showing samples of early modern name-giving patterns of royal and princely families in Sweden, Poland and Italy, I suggest that there was a greater stress on passing down family names through Catherine’s line than through John’s line. Through the name, the baby was tied to the Jagiellonian family. There were several reasons for the name-giving we can label as dynastic. In my paper, I attempt to analyse the name choice by Catherine and John as a dynastic strategy. To some extent, Isabella and her youngest sister, Catherine had “parallel lives” since they were both married abroad where they had to cope with difficult circumstances and various political and religious strives, balancing between the interests of the Jagiellons and those of their marital families. In these situations, naming a child in an early modern princely family was a fundamentally significant act, bearing various meanings and symbolism. Furthermore, I shall present the beautiful tomb of Catherine Jagiellon’s and John Vasa’s infant daughter Isabella in the Cathedral of Strängnäs, said to be the first funeral monument dedicated to a child in Scandinavia. I shall discuss its curious positioning in the “shadow” of the huge equestrian statue of Charles IX and thus, the memory of the Jagiellonians in Sweden.

**OBORNI, TERÉZ** – Session 6

*MTA BTK TTI, Budapest*

### **“The Queen as a Painted Picture” – Queen Isabella and Her Reign in the Eastern Kingdom (1541–1551)**

**T**he position of Queen Isabella changed radically when, in late August 1541, Sultan Suleiman seized Buda, and gave her Transylvania and the eastern counties of the Kingdom of Hungary to rule. In the period from 1541 to 1551, Isabella was compelled to

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create her realm in the eastern parts, or more precisely, the Hungarian councillors of hers created a new framework for the part-country in the name of the queen. At this time, her opportunities to decide on a course of action were rather limited: the decisions were made by the leading political figures in Hungary – mainly by Friar George, the first councillor of her late husband – in cooperation with the Polish royal court. In those times Isabella corresponded continuously with her parents, or, if they resided in Vilnius, with court officials in Cracow. The uncertainty of her situation was not lessened by the circumstance that Isabella's parents initially had no well-formed and coherently presented standpoint regarding the continuation of their daughter's and grandson's rule. In the early 1540s, they were more in favour of the line that Isabella should leave Transylvania and reach an agreement with Ferdinand; in the second half of the decade, however, they were more supportive of the policy that Isabella should keep the kingdom that she and her son held.

Although Isabella was young, inexperienced, and for the time she did not have enough competence to govern a country, behind her were her father, the Jagiellon dynasty's reputation in Europe, and Poland's political weight. Other legitimation flowed from the circumstance that she was the dowager of King John and the crowned queen of Hungary (*Regina Hungariae legitime coronata*); the mother of John II Sigismund, the king-elect of Hungary. Despite her wishes, in 1549 Isabella was compelled to renounce her part of the realm in favour of Ferdinand and to travel to the court of her brother, King Sigismund II Augustus of Poland. In my paper I shall discuss the first period of Isabella's government and the process of creating a new political entity in Transylvania.

**PALOTÁS, GYÖRGY** – Session 3

*Szegedi Tudományegyetem [University of Szeged], Szeged – József Attila Gimnázium [Attila József High School], Makó*

### **The Cracovian Competition of Wedding Songs in 1539**

Since 1537, it had been frequently suggested by the court of John Szapolyai that it would be advisable to contract a marital union between the royal house of Hungary and one of the other European dynasties. On 2 March 1539, the Hungarian king married Isabella Jagiellon. A number of wedding hymns were written for this event, by poets such as Stanislaus Glandinus, Stanislaus Kleryka, Sebastianus Marschevius, Venceslaus Schamotuliensis, etc. These works are not included in the book of Brożek (titled *Szesnastowieczne epithalamia Łacińskie w Polsce*, 1999). Such occasional poems



proliferated under the conditions of the aristocratic patronage in the early modern period. It is therefore no wonder that several poets presented their poems to the royal court in the throne room of the Cracovian Palace on 31 January 1539. The Dalmatian humanist Michael Verantius (1514–1571?) also wrote an epithalamium which can be found in two different forms (a printed edition and a manuscript). The title on the frontispiece of the Cracovian printed version of his work, owned by the Biblioteka Czartoryska in Cracow, is *Epithalamion Serenissimi Ioannis Hungariae regis et Isabellae reginae...* The manuscript version is found in a collection of Latin poems entitled *Praeludia Michaelis Verantii*, which is kept in the National Széchényi Library in Budapest. This volume contains the same poem of Verancius titled *Ioannis Hungariae regis nuptiae*. This wedding hymn tells the story how Szapolyai suggested the marriage after having been acknowledged as a king of Hungary. He sent a delegation to Sigismund I in Cracow to ask for the hand of his daughter, Isabella in order to forge an alliance against the common enemy, the Ottomans. The ceremony was followed by festivities at the royal court in Cracow. A Hungarian chivalric contest and a tournament of knights were organized on the second day (see Marschevius' work entitled *De ludis equestribus...*), then the marriage settlement was concluded. The Polish king took farewell of his daughter. Later the poem talks about the journey of the royal princess across the Carpathians as well as describes the wedding at Buda in details. The Hungarian nobility welcomed her at the palace. They reminded her of the former greatness of the Scythians whose ancestry dominated the whole of Asia a long time ago. Not a humble and weak, but a most brave and strong race will stem from the 'Sarmatian-Scythian league'.

In the first part of the paper I will provide a brief historical overview of the royal wedding in Cracow and in Buda. In the second part I will examine the epithalamia of Glandinus and Marschevius, and I will compare the two versions of Verantius' poem. Early modern authors of wedding poems could imitate a series of ancient and medieval poetic examples as well as a number of rhetorical treatises. Thus, in the second part of my paper I will show the political usage of ancient genres in Central Europe during the Renaissance.

## MUSICA HISTORICA ENSEMBLE

**T**he Musica Historica ensemble was founded in Budapest in 1988. In addition to classical and early music, its members also play Hungarian and Eastern European folk music, which decisively shaped their style. Their work relies on thorough research regarding the musical culture of the fifteenth–eighteenth centuries. They are convinced that the scientific background cannot replace artistic invention, as early music is a genre open towards experimentation. The ensemble's repertoire includes mainly Hungarian and Central European music from the eleventh to the nineteenth centuries; besides, they also play the works of Western European composers from the Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque periods, as well as Turkish and ancient Greek music. The ensemble has performed on more than 1300 occasions, among others, at prestigious festivals in Hungary and abroad (Romania, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland, Austria, Germany, Latvia, Estonia, Slovenia, Turkey). They have seven individual CDs and have contributed to several CD-ROMs, radio and TV programmes, audio anthologies, and theatrical and museum accompanying recordings. Since 2008, the members of the ensemble have been masterclass trainers and lecturers at the Early Music Summer University in Csíkszereda/Miercurea Ciuc.

### Members

**ISTVÁN RUMEN CSÖRSZ** (leader), **ROLAND KASZA**, **ATTILA KOVÁCS**, **RÉKA PALÓCZ**,  
**VALÉRIA PRIBAY**, **ZOLTÁN SZÉPLAKI**, **ZSÓFIA TÖVISHÁZI**.



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