

= Hunyadi family =

The Hunyadi family was one of the most powerful noble families in the Kingdom of Hungary during the 15th century . A member of the family , Matthias Corvinus , was King of Hungary from 1458 until 1490 , King of Bohemia (ruling in Moravia , Lower Lusatia , Upper Lusatia , and Silesia) from 1469 until 1490 , and Duke of Austria from 1487 until 1490 . His illegitimate son , John Corvinus , ruled the Duchy of Troppau from 1485 until 1501 , and five further Silesian duchies , including Bytom , Głubczyce , Łosław , Racibórz , and Tost , from 1485 until 1490 . The Hunyadi coat of arms depicted a raven with a golden ring in its beak .

The founder of the family , Voyk , received the eponymous Hunyad Castle (in present day Hunedoara , Romania) from Sigismund , King of Hungary , in 1409 . His ethnicity is the subject of scholarly debate . Some modern historians describe him as a Vlach , or Romanian , knez or boyar , from either Wallachia or Transylvania . Others describe him as a Cuman or Slav nobleman . According to contemporaneous accounts , Voyk moved from Wallachia to Transylvania . Voyk 's oldest son , John Hunyadi , was often mentioned as a " Vlach " by his contemporaries .

John Hunyadi , a talented military commander , became the first member of the family to acquire the status of " true baron of the realm " . He was appointed Ban of Severin in 1439 , and Voivode of Transylvania in 1441 . He was also granted the title Perpetual Count of Beszterce in 1452 , thus receiving the first hereditary title created in the Kingdom of Hungary . At his death , John Hunyadi held many lands throughout the Kingdom . John Hunyadi 's fame and fortune led the election of his son , Matthias Corvinus , as King of Hungary in 1458 . Matthias ruled Moravia , Silesia , Austria , and other neighbouring regions . He attempted to secure hereditary line of succession for his son , John Corvinus . This did not happen , however , and John was only able to retain the Duchy of Glogau , along with some other family domains in Hungary , after Matthias died in 1490 . The last male member of the family , Christopher Corvinus , the only son of John , died at the age of six in 1505 . His sister Elisabeth died during childhood .

= = Origins = =

The family was given its land by Sigismund , King of Hungary , on 18 October 1409 . On that day , Sigismund granted Hunyad Castle and its demesne to Voyk and four of his kinsmen . In addition to Voyk , the grant lists his two brothers , Magos and Radol , their cousin or uncle also named Radol , and Voyk 's son , John , the future Regent of Hungary . The granted said that Voyk 's father was named " Serbe " , but did not say anything further about the origins of the family .

Voyk 's son , John Hunyadi , bore the nickname " Olah " , meaning " Vlach " , in his youth , which implied that he was of Romanian stock . The court historian of Voyk 's grandson King Matthias Corvinus , Antonio Bonfini , explicitly stated that John had been " born to a Vlach father " . Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III likewise knew that King Matthias had been " born to a Vlach father " , and a Venetian man , Sebastiano Baduario , referred to the Romanians as King Matthias 's people .

Historians of the 15th and 16th centuries , with perspectives that were either against or in favour of the family , wrote differing reports of the family 's status before King Sigismund 's grant . Jan Długosz described John Hunyadi as " a man of unknown origin " , and he is likewise mentioned as " a Vlach by birth , not highly born " by Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini . On the other hand , Johannes de Thurocz said that John Hunyadi " was descended from a noble and renowned race of Wallachia " .

Johannes de Thurocz also wrote that King Sigismund , fascinated by Voyk 's fame , " took him away from Wallachia to his own realm and settled him there " , suggesting that Voyk moved from his Wallachian homeland to the Kingdom of Hungary . The late 15th century historian Philippe de Commines referred to Voyk 's son John as the " White Knight of Wallachia " . In accordance with these sources , Pál Engel , András Kubinyi , and other contemporary historians have written that the Hunyadi family descended from Wallachian boyars (noblemen) .

According to another view on the family 's origins , which is championed by historians Camil Mureșanu and Ion Țepeș Aurel Pop , Voyk did not migrate from Wallachia , but was born in a family of Romanian noble knezes from the region of Hátszeg , or Hunyad . They say that Voyk 's

grandfather could have been a man named " Costea " , mentioned in a royal charter from 1360 , and who fathered a son named Serbe (the name of Voyk 's father) . According to the charter , Costea and Serbe together established two villages in the region of Hátszeg . Historian Dezső Dümmerth offers a third view of the Hunyadis ' ancestry . He said that Voyk was of Romanianized Cuman stock , one of the Wallachian boyars . He attributes Cuman and Tatar ancestry to the Wallachian boyars . Another historian , Miklós Molnár , accepts the Wallachian origin of the family , but also represents a fourth perspective on the origins of the family . He said that they may well have been of Slavic descent . Neither Paul Lendvai nor András Boros @-@ Kazai excluded the possibility of the Hunyadis being of Slavic origin .

John Hunyadi 's rapid advance , which astonished his contemporaries , and gave rise to legends about his origins . According to one of these stories , recorded in detail by the 16th @-@ century historian Gáspár Heltai , John Hunyadi was the illegitimate son of King Sigismund with a woman named Elizabeth , who was the daughter of a " rich boyar " from Morzsina in Hunyad County . Antonio Bonfini , on the other hand , wrote that John Hunyadi 's mother was an unnamed Greek woman who was related to the Byzantine Emperors .

Further legends emerged about the purported Romanian origin of the family . Antonio Bonfini wrote that John Hunyadi " traced his kin to the Roman family of the Corvini " . This story is connected to the Hunyadis ' coat @-@ of @-@ arms , which depicts a raven , corvus in Latin , with a golden ring in its beak . Coins minted for Prince Vladislav I of Wallachia in 1365 depict a raven @-@ like bird . Based on this similarity , Zsuzsa Teke and some other historians did not exclude the possibility that the Hunyadis were related to the Basarabs , the ruling dynasty of Wallachia . Another historian , Péter E. Kovács , wrote that that theory needed further verification .

= = Notable members = =

= = = Voyk Hunyadi = = =

Voyk was born in Wallachia , according to the nearly contemporaneous historians Johannes de Thurocz and Gáspár Heltai . Voyk had been serving as a " court knight " in the royal court when he received the demesne of Hunyad from King Sigismund , suggesting that he was descended from a prominent Wallachian family . Modern historian , Kubinyi , wrote that Voyk most probably joined Sigismund in 1395 . In this year , Sigismund invaded Wallachia and restored his vassal , Mircea the Old to the princely throne .

He was last mentioned in a royal charter in 1414 . Voyk died before 12 February 1419 . On this day , a charter confirming the grant of 1409 was issued for Voyk 's brother , Radol , and for Voyk 's three sons : John the Elder , John the Younger , and Voyk .

= = = John Hunyadi , Sr. = = =

Voyk 's oldest son , John Hunyadi was born between about 1405 and 1407 . In his youth , he served in the court of George Csáky , Filippo Scolari , and King Sigismund 's other warlike barons . He married Elizabeth Szilágyi around 1429 . Her father owned properties in Bodrog County .

John Hunyadi developed his military skills during his journeys in Italy and Bohemia in Sigismund 's entourage in the early 1430s . He and his younger brother (who was his namesake) were jointly appointed Ban of Szörény (present @-@ day Dobreta @-@ Turnu Severin , Romania) in 1439 by Sigismund 's successor , King Albert . With this appointment , they acquired the status of " true barons " .

The senior John Hunyadi became Voivode of Transylvania and Count of the Székelys in 1441 , with responsibility for the defense of the southern borders of Hungary against Ottoman raids . He defeated the Ottomans in several battles during his " long campaign " in the Balkan Peninsula in 1443 . The Estates of the realm elected him governor for the period of King Ladislaus V of Hungary 's minority in 1446 . King Ladislaus bestowed the title of Perpetual Count of Beszterce (present

@-@ day Bistri?a , Romania) upon John Hunyadi after he resigned of the governorship in 1452 . This was the first example of a grant of a hereditary title in the Kingdom of Hungary . John Hunyadi had by that time become the richest landowner in the Kingdom of Hungary , who held about 25 fortresses , 30 towns and more than 1 @,@ 000 villages . He died on 11 August 1456 , shortly after his greatest victory over the Ottomans at the Siege of Belgrade .

= = = John Hunyadi , Jr . = = =

John the Younger was the youngest of Voyk 's two sons that shared the name John , and was first mentioned in a charter issued to four members of his family on 12 February 1419 . King Albert of Hungary appointed him Ban of Szörény together with his brother , John the Elder , in 1439 . He died fighting against the Ottomans in 1441 . His brother wrote of him as " the valiant of the valiant " , showing that John the Younger was regarded a brave soldier .

= = = Ladislaus Hunyadi = = =

Ladislaus Hunyadi was the older of the two sons of John Hunyadi the elder by Elizabeth Szilágyi . He was born around 1432 . At the age of 20 , he was appointed ispán , or count , of Pozsony County , which made him a " true baron " . He became Ban of Croatia in 1453 and master of the horse in 1456 .

With his father 's death , Ladislaus inherited an enormous domain in 1456 . The ambitious Ladislaus had his father 's main opponent , Ulrich II , Count of Celje , captured and murdered on 9 November . The King , who promised amnesty to Ladislaus under duress , had him arrested in next year . Ladislaus was sentenced to death for high treason . He was executed on 16 March 1457 .

= = = Matthias Corvinus = = =

Matthias , the younger son of John Hunyadi the elder and Elizabeth Szilágyi , was born on 23 February 1443 . He was arrested upon the orders of King Ladislaus V of Hungary on 14 March 1457 , together with his elder brother Ladislaus . Matthias 's brother was executed two days after having been arrested . Fearing a revolt , the King fled to Prague and took Matthias with him .

The childless Ladislaus V died on 23 November 1457 . A Diet was convened to elect the new monarch . Matthias ' maternal uncle , Michael Szilágyi , arrived with more than 10 @,@ 000 armed noblemen under his command , and the Diet proclaimed Matthias king on 24 January 1458 . Matthias returned from Prague , but was only crowned with the Holy Crown of Hungary on 29 March 1464 , because he had spent the previous years with fighting against his opponents .

Urged by Pope Paul II , Matthias led a crusade against the Czech Hussites and occupied great parts of Moravia and Silesia in 1468 . The Catholic Estates of Moravia proclaimed him King of Bohemia on 3 May 1469 . Matthias ' reign was also recognized in Lusatia and Silesia , but Bohemia proper remained under the rule of his opponents , Kings George of Pod?brady (till 1471) and Vladislaus II Jagiellon . Through a series of wars , Matthias occupied Lower Austria and Styria between 1480 and 1487 . He officially adopted the title of Duke of Austria in 1487 .

Matthias married his first wife , Catherine of Pod?brady , in 1461 . She died in childbirth in 1464 . His second wife , Beatrice of Naples , whom he married in 1476 , was infertile . In the last decade of his life , Matthias ensured the succession of his illegitimate son , John Corvinus , to the throne of Hungary . Matthias died on 6 April 1490 .

= = = John Corvinus = = =

John Corvinus was the illegitimate son of King Matthias and his mistress , Barbara Edelpöck . John Corvinus was born on 2 April 1473 . Matthias recognized in public that John is his son and granted him the title of Duke of Liptó (present @-@ day Liptov , Slovakia) in 1481 . John Corvinus received a number of land grants from his father in the subsequent years . King Matthias granted him the

Duchy of Troppau and five further Silesian duchies ? Beuthen , Leobschütz , Loslau , Ratibor , and Tost ? in 1485 .

King Matthias ' all attempts to secure his son 's succession to the throne proved to be useless shortly after his death . The prelates and the barons elected Vladislaus II Jagiellon king on 15 July 1490 . He retained his domains and the Duchy of Troppau . The new monarch bestowed the title of Duke of Slavonia upon him , but he renounced of it in 1495 . He also renounced of the Duchy of Troppau in 1501 .

John Corvinus married Beatrice de Frangepan in 1496 . She gave birth to two children , Elizabeth and Christopher . John Corvinus died on 12 October 1504 . His son died at the age of six , his daughter at the age of twelve .

= = Family tree = =

The following family tree depicts the known members of the Hunyadi family :