

SUMMARIES

Gábor Barta:

The Year of Illusions. Some Remarks to the Dual King-Making after Mohács

One of the oldest sore points of Hungarian historiography is the correct evaluation of the election of two kings at the same time after the Mohács battle on August 29 1526. The most widely shared opinion is that the Hungarian ruling class committed an unpardonable and irreparable mistake forming two parties and turning against each other. They launched a civil war that finally caused the fall of the medieval Hungarian state in a decade and a half. The author discusses the possibilities of other decisions resulting other trends than separation, and the real causes of the civil war.

In the autumn of 1526, after the victorious army of Soliman II had marched off, the government of Hungary fell to pieces. Some of its members died in the battle together with King Louis himself, and the others ceased to function. The ruling class wanted to overcome the resulting chaos by local organizing. Two such centres proved really important. One of them was the court of the dowager queen in Pressburg, whose followers wanted to see Archduke Ferdinand, brother of Emperor Charles and Queen Mary, on the throne. The other party gathered at Tokaj and prepared the coronation of the Voivode of Transylvania, János Szapolyai.

The Pressburg group had disadvantages from the very beginning. There were only few Germano-phil aristocrats there who were not at all respected by the other members of their Estate owing to their political views and their participation in the machinations at the court. The tactical mistake of Mary and Ferdinand was that they stayed at the frontier, made decisions without consulting their Hungarian followers first, and questioned the right of the country to freely elect a king for itself.

Szapolyai and his circle did quite the opposite. They won the gentry and a great number of influential aristocrats, and occupied the most important centres in the country: Buda and Székesfehérvár. The national assembly organized by them had sufficient legal foundation and the coronation of János Szapolyai took place on November 11 1526.

The new king was one of the wealthiest landlords of the country and a ruler of Transylvania since 15 years. He was known as a born leader: he modernized the government offices of the Voivode, led several campaigns against the Turks and their Rumanian allies, and defeated the peasants in the 1514 revolt. He had played an important role in national politics since 1513 and was effectively in control of the political life of the country after 1518. It was only in the last few years that he had controversies with the royal court owing to Queen Mary's attempts to stand on her own feet. He positively knew also that Hungary alone cannot withstand the growing threat on the part of the Turks, but he hoped that Habsburgs, totally submerged in the long war with the French, would not bother about the developments along the Danube and would even give military support to Hungary. They, instead, turned against him with the army, the support of which he was hoping for.

Ferdinand of Habsburg was elected King of Bohemia in October 1526, and King of Hungary in the December of the same year with the help of his German mercenaries and his Hungarian followers in Pressburg. Still he did nothing for Hungary up to the summer of the following year, putting the West-European interests of his elder brother above the cause of Hungary from the very beginning. However, he did not retire, because he was afraid of Hungary making peace with the Sultan and letting him march across the country toward the Austrian and Bohemian provinces freely. Already as early as the autumn of 1526 he decided to drive out his Hungarian opponent by the force of arms as soon as possible. Knowing of his intentions, several Hungarian landlords remained loyal, and many of the followers of King John (János Szapolyai) began to secretly negotiate with him. They were right in finding it dangerous to get involved into an armed conflict with the western neighbours under the very nose of the blood-thirsty Turkish Empire.

These and the victory of Charles V in Rome were the events preceding the Hungarian campaign of the mercenaries of Ferdinand in the July of 1527. The tragic civil war was thus not

caused by the Hungarian ruling class and the dual king-making. It was a direct consequence of the circumstances forcing the Habsburg dynasty attack and occupy the country. The tragedy was made still deeper by the fact that the occupation did not serve a better defence along the southern borders, and aimed only at keeping the Turks away from Austria. All these consequences together make Mohács really the final blow in the face of medieval Hungarian history.

Imre Szántó:

The campaign of Ali, Pasha of Buda against the castles of Nógrád county in the summer of 1552

Sultan Suleiman renewed his alliance with the French in the summer of 1552 and began to systematically prepare a campaign against Hungary. The military policy of Porte was first of all characterized by the principle of dividing the enemy. The Turkish supreme command succeeded in attaining the primary aim of Pasha Akhmed's campaign, i. e. the occupation of Temesvár through three attacks engaging the attention and force of the enemy. Ali, Pasha of Buda engaged the forces of Ferdinand in Transdanubia and Upper Northern Hungary by attacking castles in Veszprém and Hont-Nógrád counties, the Turko-Rumanian armies attacking in Wallachia and Moldavia engaged those of General Castaldo. The pasha of Bosnia and the beys of Herzegovina and Hlevno endangered the castles in the territory between the Drava and the Sava by a strong concentration of troops. Thus Temesvár had to fight its life-and-death struggle alone, without any help from outside against the main force of the Ottoman army under the leadership of Pasha Akhmed.

Not only Captain István Dobó, but also the competent circles in Vienna were positively aware that after conquering Veszprém, Pasha Ali would turn against Szolnok and Eger in the summer of 1552. Ali, however, turned surprisingly and unexpectedly against the castles in the hilly Hont-Nógrád county whose function was to defend the mining towns beyond the hills. On July 6th he beleaguered Drégely. The captain, György Szondi faced the siege with his 150 soldiers without any prospect of victory, but in a very brave manner. When seeing that they were unable to keep the castle, the defenders ran into the invading Ottoman troops and fought until the glorious end.

After Drégely, a number of castles in the territory fell to the Turks: Szécheny, Hollókő, Ság, Gyarmat, and Buják. Archduke Miksa, the governor of Hungary for King Ferdinand asked Erasmus Teuffel, Commander-in-chief to unite his troops with the insurgents of nobles encamped around Fülek. Pasha Ali, however, proved quicker and defeated the mercenaries of the king led by the conceited and incompetent Teuffel near Palást on August 10th. Thus the only army of Ferdinand qualified to hold up the enemy wanting to take Eger, was completely destroyed.

This victory made it possible for Ali to unite his troops with those of Akhmed and turn against Szolnok and Eger with this doubled force.

Gyula Kristó:

Separate government beyond the Drava River and in Transylvania in the age of the Arpads

The present article examines the separate government of the Ban and the Voivode and their functions from the 12th century up to the 1270's or 1280's. During this time the Bans and the Voivodes were replaced at an interval of three or four years, the king defending himself by these frequent replacements against a too strong power of any official within a province. With the repression of royal power, however, the families of higher status and greater power began to strive for these offices, causing frequent changes in the posts again. Some families tried to make the offices of the Ban and the Voivode hereditary. The sources reflect two sides of their activity. First these dignitaries were simply officials of the king effecting his orders. Their power came from two sources: originally they both got their offices from the king, one in the military sphere, and the other in the field of jurisdiction. These two gave, however, many opportunities to the Ban and the Voivode to misuse their power and strengthen their position. In this way they gradually created a court around themselves, a so called *familia*. Later also the county bailiffs, the vice-Bans and the vice-Voivodes were made from the ranks of the *familia*. On the other hand, the Ban and the Voivode entertained and realized oligarchal plans. Their growing strength in the second half of the 13th century is indicating a general strengthening of secular aristocracy in the period. The incomes of the Ban and the Voivode became stabilized in those years, and the Treasury of the Ban was established. The power of the Ban became decentralized by the late 13th century with a Ban in Slavonia and another along the coast, namely in Croatia and Dalmatia. The Bans often declared their office originating from God himself. They and the Voivode

even attacked the prerogatives of the privileged and the immunity of the king. Their power became dangerous from the point of view of the king and the unity of the country when their constitutional situation was enforced by their position in private law, i. e. they had considerable estates and many people belonging to their *familia* in their province.

Their independent power over the territory should not, however, be overestimated in the period up to the end of the 13th century. Their power was about as great as that of the palatine or the lord chief justice. Apart from the system of provincial landlords at the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries including the Bans and the Voivodes as well, the inner immanent tendencies of polarization, inherent in the independent government of the Bans and Voivodes were, in the 11th-14th centuries still of minor importance. This is proved by two circumstances. On the one hand, the Ban and the Voivode — when they still were primarily commissioned by the king — first did not embody disintegration, but rather the even stronger dependence of the territories concerned, cf. the organization of the county system and the network of castles in the provinces. On the other hand, the degree of provincial independence was to a great extent determined by their earlier historical situation. While in Croatia Hungary inherited a relatively developed early feudal state, in Slavonia and Transylvania there was no proper state organization before the Hungarian conquest. As a result, attempts at unification were successful in Slavonia and Transylvania, but not in Croatia. A greater independence in Slavonia and Transylvania around the mid-thirteenth century was, therefore, not a survival of an earlier isolation, but the consequence of the strengthened power of the Ban and the Voivode in the course of the 13th century. This century saw also the creation of new banates along the southern borders of Hungary, and an unsuccessful attempt at calling henceforward also the Transylvanian voivodeship a banate in the 1260's. These two offices rose to the height of their glory as incarnations of disunity in the 15th century. The origin of their power can be found — just like at the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries — in the system of provincial landlords. It was not that they possessed or trespassed upon public rights, but that the Bans and Voivodes had large estates in the provinces under their rule.

János Buza:

The rate of exchange of the tallér (thaler) and the gold florin, and their role in the circulation of money in Hungary's parts under Turkish rule in the 17th century. Nagykörs 1622—1682

The present article is a byproduct of the author's research work begun in 1965 on the history of the prices and is based on archival sources, namely on purchase agreements and tax-books from the 17th century. He establishes here the exchange rate of the *tallér* and the gold florin or forint.

It is well-known from the studies by Tibor Antal Horváth and Stefan Kazimir in 1964 that the exchange rate of these two currencies was different in the western and the northern parts of the country, i. e. in the territories of the Pressburg and Szepes Treasuries after the 1630's. J. Buza establishes here that the rate of exchange of the *tallér* and the florin differed also in the territories under Ottoman rule. Thus — even without considering the situation in Transylvania — we can refute the earlier supposition that there were but two different regions from the point of view of money exchange and the mentioned rate in Hungary in the 17th century.

In Lower Hungary, i. e. in the territory under the Pressburg (or Pozsony) Treasury, one *tallér* was worth 150 *dénárs* (denarius), while in Upper Hungary — under the management of the Szepes Treasury — it was worth 180 *dénárs* between 1630 and 1668. In the territories under Ottoman rule, at the same time it was 160 *dénárs*, i. e. it was somewhere between the different levels in Royal Hungary. From 1669 onwards a constant rise can be observed both in Upper and in Lower Hungary. The mass emission of *krajcárs* (farthings) with money rated different from those of the *tallér* resulted in a rise to 165 *dénárs* in Lower Hungary, and 200 *dénárs* in Upper Hungary. In the parts of the country under Turkish occupation it became 200 in 1668, 220 in 1671, and 240 from 1672, which means that it was much above the level of Upper Hungary.

In this latter territory this rise — including that of the gold coins as well — was due to the emission of a great quantity of timons to the market from 1663, mainly in the form of soldiers' pay. It was a French coin, or better to say, it was minted following the French example. It had got into the Ottoman Empire from the Mediterranean. Originally it was worth 5 *sous* or one twelfth of an *écu*.

In Turkish-occupied Hungary it was agreed to be worth 20 Hungarian *dénárs*, while one *tallér* was first 11, later 12, and finally 13 timons. This resulted — together with the still greater inflation of a Turkish coin, the *akhe* — a rise in the rate of exchange of the *tallér*. Beyond this, the rise may have been caused also by the following reasons: First, in the Ottoman Empire no

tallérs were minted, still, the taxes and other payments had to be paid in *tallérs* and gold coins from the 1660's. Second, the mints of the Habsburg Empire emitted less *tallérs*, providing the territories under Ottoman rule with inflated coins instead. The 55 discoveries of hoards of money from the period between 1650 and 1706 consisting of 11,000 coins reflect that the *tallérs* were used to an ever smaller extent. Between 1650 and 1665 it can be found to 42 per cent, while from 1683 to 1686 it constituted only 8.2 per cent of the finds, this remaining (8.6 per cent) characteristic also in the period between 1687 and 1696.

In the following, the article attempts to show how this rise in the rate of exchange of the money influenced the life of the peasants under Turkish rule. In 1668 a great number of them complains about the increasing demands of the invaders in *tallérs* and gold florins. The situation of the peasants was further worsened by the decrease in the price of the cattle from the middle of the 1660's parallel with the general tendencies in Europe. It was so serious because the cattle served as the only means of getting either corn or gold and silver coins. The author here stresses that the pauperization of the peasants under Ottoman rule — except for a thin layer of those wealthier peasants who dealt also with buying and selling animals — began much earlier than the wars of independence between 1683 and 1699.

The article ends with methodological remarks.