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Natural Resources and Society

Gábor Demeter and Beatrix F. Romhányi
Special Editors of the Thematic Issue

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Tábori sebesültellátás Magyarországon a XVI–XVIII. században
[Care for the wounded in the field in Hungary in the sixteenth,
seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries]. By Katalin Mária Kincses.
Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 2019. 180 pp.

Katalin Kincses' book offers a narrative of the history of care for the wounded in the field in Hungary in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries and situates this narrative in the larger context of European history. As she notes in her introduction, her work moves on the borders of several areas of the scholarly endeavor, including medical history, military history, cultural history, and the history of the sciences. This is one of the reasons why the subject has not been given the attention it merits in the earlier secondary literature. Kincses endeavors to address this oversight. In her monograph, using an array of interdisciplinary tools, she presents the history of medical care in the field in Hungary in the early modern era.

The book begins with a short historiographical introduction and then presents relevant antecedents from the Middle Ages (for instance the surgeons' guilds, which provided training, the appearance of surgeons in the army beginning in the thirteenth century, the development of field hospitals at the end of the fifteenth century, and the transformation of the hospitals that were run by the religious orders into secular hospitals in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries). Kincses then turns to a discussion of the advancements that were made in military technology in the early modern era, or in other words, the military revolution and its consequences and innovations in the military sciences, which were influenced in no small part by developments in the natural sciences and which, beginning in the seventeenth century, led to the foundation of military engineering schools and educational institutions which ensured higher levels of theoretical knowledge.

In the next longer chapter, Kincses presents developments in the medical sciences in the early modern era in part through a discussion of the endeavors of the major figures of the time (Paracelsus, Hans von Gersdorff, Ambroise Paré) and in part through a discussion of some of the major books (for instance, Hieronymus Bock's *Kreuterbuch*). She also calls attention to the importance of practical experience in the flourishing of surgery, in particular in Italy (names like Giovanni de Vigo and Bartolomeo Maggi come to mind). I cannot help but note that, given his importance, Hieronymus Brunschwig should have been discussed in the main text and not simply in a footnote.

By the sixteenth century, surgery had become the leading branch of the medical sciences because of the experiences doctors gathered with armies in the field and the many technical innovations. By the end of the seventeenth century, however, internal medicine had usurped its place, in part because it put theoretical questions in the foreground and in part because it built on clear knowledge of the anatomy. Kincses attempts to reconstruct the practices of surgery in Hungary during the era of the wars with the Ottoman Empire in part on the basis of monographs on surgery (which, regrettably, have survived in only a woefully incomplete and fragmented form). All over Europe, surgeons who worked for armies at the time could only perform their jobs if they were specifically entrusted and commissioned to do so. Thus, there were hardly enough of them to address the needs of a massive army.

The next chapter presents the history of care for the wounded in Hungary in the period of the Ottoman occupation by drawing on several specific examples, such as the siege of Eger in 1552, the camp hospitals of the Fifteen Years' War, and their plans. Kincses devotes particular attention to Miklós Zrínyi's plans for care for the wounded in the field, which are found in his writings on military strategy and the science of war. Kincses notes that Zrínyi was well acquainted with and made use of the contemporary European literature on military science, and thus he was very much aware of the issue of providing medical care for the wounded in the field.

In the next section, Kincses presents shifts in both organizational structures and attitudes which took place in the second half of the seventeenth century. She draws, in this discussion, on the writings of figures like Raimondo Montecuccoli and Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli. Surgeons, doctors, and pharmacists became indispensable parts of the army, as indicated by the fact that the Habsburg Army had physicians with the status of camp surgeon, and for the first time on the level of the regiment with the artillery. During the siege of Buda in 1686, a camp hospital was established on the Margaret Island, which also indicates the increasing importance of military health care.

During Rákóczi's War of Independence, the 1705 letters patent on the development of regular regiments and the 1707 *Regulamentum universale* were of tremendous importance from the perspective of military health care. Simon Forgách, Rákóczi's general, drew on the ideas of Zrínyi and the practices in the Habsburg army and had surgeons among his regiments. These surgeons were paid members of the military personnel, and this constituted an important innovation.

The last longer section of the book focuses on the reforms introduced by Joseph II and the Josephinian Military Academy of Surgery in Vienna. Kincses also touches on the Josephinum's wax figures, its collection of books, and the commemorative medals found in collections in Hungary which have some attachment to the Josephinum. In my assessment, in comparison with the earlier chapters, this chapter lacks an adequate presentation of the medical sciences at the time and the training and education provided for doctors and surgeons. Given the importance of the larger European context, it would have been worth mentioning the Prussian parallel, for instance alongside the Collegium medico-chirurgicum, the Pépinière in Berlin, which was a kind of "partner institution" of the Josephinum.

The amount of printed sources and the secondary literature on which Kincses has drawn in her research is impressive, but one still notes with some frustration that, in the case of the Hungarian secondary literature on medical history, some of the most recent publications went unused, even though they would have been relevant to the discussion. Kincses would have done well to have included the writings of Enikő Rüsz-Fogarasi, for instance, who has published on the history of hospitals in the Middle Ages and the early modern era, not to mention Zoltán Péter Bagi's essays on military health care during the Fifteen Years' War and the plan for a camp hospital and Péter Balázs's volumes on the eighteenth-century legal health regulations, which were valid for the entire empire. The works of András Oross on military history at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries also would have merited mention. Although Kincses draws on archival sources several times, additional archival research and the use of publications based on archival sources might have added a degree of nuance to her discussion. The medical history of the siege of Eger in 1552, for example, is familiar to us not only from Tinódi's narrative. Archivist István Sugár wrote an exhaustive study of the barber-surgeons of the siege, and he studied the different types of wounds (and thus also the roles of firearms) on the basis of a 1553 application for aid for the wounded.

All in all, Katalin Kincses' monograph draws attention to a subject which so far has received little attention in the secondary literature on medical and military history. Her work may well form the foundation for further research on the topic. The chapters offer new insights into the changes which took place in the conditions of the army, developments in medicine in the early modern era, and the continuous interaction of the two in medical care for the military in the field.

Katalin Simon
Budapest City Archives

THE

Hungarian Historical Review

Aims and Scope

The Hungarian Historical Review is a peer-reviewed international journal of the social sciences and humanities with a focus on Hungarian history. The journal's geographical scope—Hungary and East-Central Europe—makes it unique: the Hungarian Historical Review explores historical events in Hungary, but also raises broader questions in a transnational context. The articles and book reviews cover topics regarding Hungarian and East-Central European History. The journal aims to stimulate dialogue on Hungarian and East-Central European History in a transnational context. The journal fills lacuna, as it provides a forum for articles and reviews in English on Hungarian and East-Central European history, making Hungarian historiography accessible to the international reading public and part of the larger international scholarly discourse.

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