Partir en croisade
à la fin du Moyen Âge.
Financement et logistique

sous la direction de
Daniel Baloup et Manuel Sánchez Martínez

Presses universitaires du Midi
Collection « Méridiennes »
Toulouse • 2015
King Sigismund of Luxemburg
and the preparations for the Hungarian crusading host
of Nicopolis (1389-1396)

Attila BARANY
University of Debrecen

The paper is examining the efforts to organize the host for the 1396 Nicopolis crusade, focusing the financial background, innovations in military administration and personnel and reforms in defence doctrines. It discusses of Sigismund of Luxemburg’s (1387-1437) work in frontier defence and measures to secure funds. The king has been recently treated negatively, seen as an inadequate leader who did not lead expeditions. Yet he was able to prevent a national bloodshed and did gain successes by garrisoning castles with standing forces.

Investigating the 1390s anti-Ottoman campaigns, one is not able to consult direct sources, army mobilization, summons, pay-rolls etc. Much of the chancery documentation either perished or was destroyed after Mohács (1526), and one has to rely on indirect evidence, charter narrations, adjournment of suits (litterae prorogatoriae) or reambulatio for entering on campaign1; wills2, or a

---

range of auxiliary evidence: rewards, installation into holdings, forfeiture, confirmations of privileges. The Nicopolis host was substantial, numbering between 12,000-15,000. It is hard to imagine how the king was able to raise it and lead a large-scale campaign for hundreds of miles and secure supplies for 8-10 weeks. Historiography have long maintained that the anti-Turkish campaigns were led by unpaid noble armies. Yet, in light of recent evidence the bulk seems to have been made up of paid baronial contingents. The major question is how the crown was able to finance it since it was totally short of money. It will be seen that the wages were provided by mortgaged or donated royal properties.

Hungary in 1387-96: internal troubles

After his ascension, amidst an endemic civil strife, facing a baronial opposition Sigismund was having a narrow basis. He was elected by a league, as a consort of the queen and was to take a coronation oath. He was bound to donate royal properties in exchange for support. He granted away over half of the domain, which weakened his financial background. Armies had to be incessantly maintained along the southern fronts. Sigismund had to face a

---


2 «Ad regna aliena in medium gentis contra Turcos bellaturi seu dimicaturi ex votu»: ZsO. I. Nos. 4003., 4019., 4471.


5 ZsO. I. No. 4386.

pretender, Ladislaus of Naples, who, with his followers in Bosnia cooperated with the Ottomans. In the 1380s the Bosnian warlord, Hrvoje Vukčić led forays with Turkish auxiliaries and occupied Hungarian territories\(^7\). After Kosovo Polje, with the fall of Serbia, the southern borderline regions, the marches of Temes [Timiş], the counties of Keve [Kovin], Krassó [Caraşova] were heavily plundered. The key strongholds of Golubac and Orsova [Orșova] fell. The flourishing Szerém region [Srem or Syrmia] was depopulated. The loss of customs and taxes had a tragic effect on the revenues.

**Defence shield – borderline fortresses**

It cost a lot even to keep up the existing frontier castles. Sigismund underlined that castles had an inevitable role in «tutelam et defensionem»\(^9\), and their maintenance and appropriate upkeep was also necessary\(^10\). Up to the 1390s few, 10-12 frontier castles had been built, and only Törcsvár [Bran] was organized as a semi-standing garrison. The others, Talmács [Talmaci], Haram [Hram/Nova Palanka], Keve [Kovin], Szőrény [Drobeta-Turnu Severin] were protected by mobile field forces. On the Serbian frontier Debrec, Nepričava, Belastena were exchanged for a royal lordship with a baron\(^11\). The king appointed captains in custodia et conservatione of castles and either rendered money and men to their

---

\(^9\) Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, Budapest, Q szekció, Mohács előtti gyűjtemény, Diplomatikai Levéltár [Hungarian National Archives, Section Q, Collection of charters before the battle of Mohács, 1526] [hereinafter DL] 70750; ZsO. I. No. 6111.  
\(^10\) «De bono et tranquillo statu ac restaurazione confiniorum»: DRMH II, p. 21.  
hands or entrusted them to upkeep and garrison the castles and rewarded them with estates\textsuperscript{12}, paid with sums issued from tax returns\textsuperscript{13}. E.g. in 1398 the king paid a \textit{salarium} of 2,000 florins for the defence of four castles for four years\textsuperscript{14}. Sums were reserved from taxes for captains \textit{pro custodia partium inferiorum}\textsuperscript{15}. The strongholds were not prepared for siege warfare but needed to be fortified and there were still no logistical bases and supply lines established, which the king had to provide for amidst the Turkish forays. Yet Sigismund started to organize a frontier defence zone, \textit{metae et confinia} and kept on adding new fortresses: in 1396 it took an enormous sum to take Vidin and Rahova [Oryahovo] and lay siege to Nicopolis.

\textbf{Military structure: the Angevin-age army}

«The baronies are neither hereditary nor lifelong, but are given and taken back according to the ruler’s wills»\textsuperscript{16}. In the Angevin period (1301-1387) army contingents were to be set up by the holders of \textit{honor} dignities, temporary fiefs\textsuperscript{17}. Royal counties were organized into provinces, governed from castles by warden-captains, who exercised power with their \textit{banderium} or \textit{vexillum}\textsuperscript{18}. They were not paid but in return for mobilisation any time enjoyed the revenues that went with the district\textsuperscript{19}. The \textit{banderium} consisted the honor-holder’s own retinue (of \textit{familiares}, lesser noble retainers, allowed a share of the incomes and partly

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{12} DL 24530; Szerbia, p. 40, ZsO I. No. 6049.
  \item \textsuperscript{13} \textit{In sortem solutionis gentium… castrum conservare debebit… florenos de lucri camere dare debeatis}. Szerbia, pp. 34-36.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ratione sui sallarii pro reformatione castrorum}: ZsO. I. No. 5313.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} ZsO. I. No. 3380.
  \item \textsuperscript{16} Croniche di Giovanni, Matteo e Filippo Villani, I-II (Biblioteca classica italiana: secolo 18; 21), Trieste, 1857-1858, II, lib. VI, cap. 54., p. 202.
  \item \textsuperscript{17} DRMH II., p. 22.
  \item \textsuperscript{19} 1397: DRMH II., p. 22.
\end{itemize}
paid *stipendiarii*), the nobles in the general levy and all the arms-bearing men\(^{20}\). The levy was regularly summoned almost each year, the nobles were obliged to wage war beyond the borders of the realm, on their own expenses, for 5-7 months, violating their ancient liberties\(^{21}\). As this mixed composition army proved to be less effective the crown was to levy extraordinary subsidies (*collecta*). The honor holder’s contingents needed to be paid in a greater proportion: as the king wrote to a captain «if the money you have is not enough, tell us how much you want, and we dispatch it to you»\(^{22}\). The Angevins’ Western campaigns were fought by regularly paid forces, with mercenary contracts\(^{23}\). By the late fourteenth century paid *stipendiarii* were strongly preferred in defence\(^{24}\). In 1380 King Louis I paid English archers at Töröcskő\(^{25}\).

**Army structure in the early reign of Sigismund: growth of private paid companies**

The crown had to contribute in a greater proportion to the maintenance of the honor-holders’ banderia since their revenues decreased with the granting

---

\(^{20}\) «Banderium proprio, familiaribus suis... in propriis sumptibus et expensis». *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae, et Slavoniae, I-XVIII.* Ed. Tadeus Smičiklas, Marko Kostrenčić et al., Zagreb, 1904-90, XII, p. 78; «Tam pedibus quam equitibus... transire debes ad locum et terminum... deputandus », *DV*, p. 162; *Oklevéltár a Tomaj nemzetségbeli honvaci Bánffy család történetéhez [Charters of the Bánffy family]*, I-II., Ed. Elemér Varjú, Bélá Iványi, Budapest, 1908-1928, I, p. 374.


\(^{22}\) DL 4800.000.


\(^{24}\) Temes, p. 213, G. Fejér, CD, X/3, p. 312; Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, U szekció, Diplomatikai Fényképgyűjtemény [Hungarian National Archives, Section Q, Collection of photos of charters] [hereinafter DF] 209930; ZsO. I. No. 6058.

away of royal domain\textsuperscript{26}. Sigismund was less able to enforce them to raise their banderia. The incomes of the honors were turned for the lords’ private retinues\textsuperscript{27}. Few followers remained who would take up arms free of charge. The wardens did only go to war if they received \textit{salarium}\textsuperscript{28}. Most frontier wardens asked extra amounts even to keep their positions. There was a difference made between the honor holders who receive our pay (\textit{pecuniam habent}), from those receiving only the revenues of the county, \textit{comitatus habent}\textsuperscript{29}. The retinues were in the first place filled with members of the kindred, \textit{familiares, consanguinei, fratres or clientes proximi} as well as lesser noble \textit{servitores}, though both groups served for pay or allowances\textsuperscript{30}, but they were differentiated from mercenaries addressed as \textit{strenui or stipendiarii}, who also involved foreigners, mainly Czechs\textsuperscript{31}. The prelates also raised \textit{vexillo propriis suis sumptibus}\textsuperscript{32}. The retainers were paid \textit{pro eorum subsidio} in silver, under fixed conditions, e.g. a heavy man-at-arms served for 1

\textsuperscript{26} Pál ENGEL, \textit{Királyi batalom és arisztokrácia viszonya a Zsigmond-korban [Relationship of royal power and aristocracy in the age of Sigismund]}, Budapest, 1977.

\textsuperscript{27} HO VII. p. 432; \textit{Codex diplomaticus comitum de Blagay}, Ed. Lajos Thallóczy Lajos, Samu Barabás (MHHD, 28), Budapest, 1897, [hereinafter Blagay] p. 84; \textit{Cum gentibus hominibus suis; «Cum gentium armigerorum/ exercitualium/ militanti... proximorum et familiarum eorum»: ZsO. I. No. 5101; G. Fejér, CD, X/2. pp. 438-53; «Consanguineorum suorum et amiliarum», Szerbia, p. 44.

\textsuperscript{28} DL 737; ZsO. I. No. 7633.

\textsuperscript{29} ZsO. I. No. 2021; Szerbia, p. 29; Krassó, III. p. 216; G. Fejér, CD, X/1. pp. 724; 905.


florin per week. In the campaigns of 1389-96 the forces were mostly made up of paid baronial contingents. The king contracted with entrepreneur captains for lances, lancea or gleve, i.e. a heavily armed knight, and 2-3 adjoining lightly armed horse-archers (pharetrarii). In the 1389 campaign 16 baronial vexilla took part, ranging from 10 to 250 lances. The warden of Szörény received three times as much salary as normal in 1395, and was rewarded with a mortgage for 2,000 florins. Imre Marcali fought with 140 lances in propriis sumptibus et expensis, but was rewarded with royal estates. Even the regulations of the king’s political league, the Order of the Dragon stipulated that he provide the barons with «iuvamina et subsidia pro defensione regni». The growth of mercenaries is proved by the increase of the personal names «stipendiarius» (zsoldos) in Hungarian. In the early 1390s the private banderia were directly hired by the treasury and allocated pay from the ordinary revenues, first from tax returns.

34 ZsO. I. Nos. 2408; 2461.
37 «In propriis suis sumptibus et expensis» ZsO. I. No. 1148; Bánffy, I. p. 420; Temes, p. 181; «Nos opportuit trina vice stipendia dare, antiquum patuissius annorum exercitum congregare... cum sui hominibus armigeris perierunt:» DL 42705; ZsO. I. No. 5769; Following donations: ZsO. I. Nos. 1714-5, 1758.
39 «Contra paganos... his regni nocere volentes... inuamini tamen et subsidio Domini nostri regis... pro tuiione regnorum deputabitis, et inuamini et subsidia ipsi deputando, ab tuiitiole regnorum praebenda et assignanda:» DL 9470, ZsO. II/2. No. 6471; G. FÉJÉR, CD, X/4. pp. 690-1.
then from alternative sources\textsuperscript{41}. In 1395 the chapter of Lelesz [Leles] was ordered to hand money over to a captain\textsuperscript{42}. Or, wages in sortem solucionis gentium were to be reserved de pecunia lucri camere by the captains themselves\textsuperscript{43}. Additional sums were issued when needed through pay-roll masters\textsuperscript{44}. Some armies had their own masters who had «pecunia ratione expeditionis exercitus» at their disposal\textsuperscript{45}. He was commissioned to supervise the army, oversee the equipment minutely, the proportion of knights and archers, etc\textsuperscript{46}. Or, the king commissioned entrepreneur captains, mostly the dignitary holders to raise a retinue, but they received pay afterwards\textsuperscript{47}. The king directly employed foreign mercenaries (Poles, Czechs and Germans) on a long term, e.g. with John, Duke of Mazovia for a year\textsuperscript{48}. The average banderia totalled in the range of 75-120 professionals\textsuperscript{49}. Some included infantrymen\textsuperscript{50}. Banderia were frequently paid in salt, allocated from royal mines\textsuperscript{51}. The chancery did spell out «the soldiers’ salt»\textsuperscript{52}.

\textsuperscript{41} «Pro expedizione nostra exercituali... de presenti instauranda duo milia florenos... debeatis... retenturi:» Zichy, IV, p. 342.
\textsuperscript{42} «De pecunia presenti taxe pro expeditione nostrae» ZsO. I. No. 3959.
\textsuperscript{43} Zichy, VI. p. 547; VIII. pp. 372, 376-77; 397.
\textsuperscript{44} ZsO. I. No. 687, Zichy, IV. p. 365.
\textsuperscript{45} P. ENGEL, Realm..., pp. 183-5; ZsO. I. Nos. 3913, 5529; DL 62757, Z-W. III. p. 149.
\textsuperscript{46} To examine whether the army «duos bonos archenarios seu facturarios habent». ZsO. I. No. 3913; DL 62757, Z-W, III. p. 149.
\textsuperscript{47} ZsO. II/1. 2598; ZsO. I. Nos. 3380; 4449; Szeberia, pp. 34-6.
\textsuperscript{48} «Obligato... duo milia cum quadringentis florenorum omni anno desolvato, ... salario... cum predictis XXX. bastis servire... debebit exercere»: G. Fejér, CD, IX/1. pp. 97-8; Máramarosi diplomák a XIV. és XV. századból, [Máramaros county charters of 14th-15th c.] Ed. János Mihályi, Máramarossziget [Sighetu Marmăcian], 1900, p. 128.
\textsuperscript{49} DL 13088, ZsO. I. No. 3913; DL 62757, Z-W, III. p. 149.
\textsuperscript{50} HO II. p. 233.
\textsuperscript{51} «Pro salariis... dispositiss... sales ad mille florenos... dare velit et debetare»: DL 53205; Temes, p. 330; ZsO. I. No. 2379; «Cum salibus nostris... satisfactionem impendere et realiter expedire debetare»: Zichy, VIII, p. 178.
\textsuperscript{52} «Sale date exercituantibus, eorum venditurae: DRMH II. 58-9.
The troops *sub vexillo regio* were organized through household knights. In the 1389-1390 campaigns the bulk of them served. Most of them however did not have an own *banderium*, but fought themselves, or possibly with a few lesser noblemen. They were also rewarded in a way or another, sometimes received *stipendium*, but mostly royal properties, mortgages or donations.

**The general levy**

Although Sigismund experimented with summoning the general levy, he complained of their inefficiency: «They appear on crutches rather than with arms, more like beggars than warriors», they should «at least have bows and arrows». «Our strength and that of all of our gentlemen of the realm appear to have declined». However, as the threat intensified, he was bound to rely on even the inefficient noble soldiers, and summon them first in 1392, then in 1394, 1395, 1396, 1398, 1399 and 1400. In fact, he occasionally summoned the levies of certain, mostly borderline counties. He was bound to demand the...
nobles to do their obligation beyond the borders «tempore maxime necessitatis». He ordered all exercituelles to rise fully equipped on pain of forfeiture of their properties. Heavy fines were imposed against the disobedient. Yet he could not in fact hope to have large number of nobles enrolling for service. In 1397, it was decreed that an exemption was possible to be purchased, though it did not succeed. It was not until 1411 that the punishments against insurrection were in fact severely enforced. The king often pardoned criminals sentenced to death on condition of fighting «cum propriis suis sumptibus et expensis». He also sentenced those who clandestinely left the army to the loss of nobility. The levy militias did not fight totally free of charge but were rewarded with estates later on. County noblemen were ordered to take part in castle constructions, paid or rewarded. However, if it was possible, the king kept the levy only in reserve. Nevertheless, the nobles, even in the paid scheme, were unwilling to serve.

Campaigns from 1389 to 1396

Sigismund realised that the incursions could have been effectively repulsed only with counter-attacks beyond the frontier. He led campaigns into the confines, sometimes fighting against two or three pronged attacks. The king was several times personally present, spent 2-3 months, wintered in the frontier,

---

62 1397: DRMH II. 22.
64 DL 60470., ZsO. I. No. 2491.
65 Even though he gave away the lands of the infideles: «Defensionem... venire non curarunt... illorum possessiones... occupari faciimus et illis in perpetuum donabimus, qui nobis in defensione... fideles exhibuerant»: ZsO. I. No. 4187.
66 County Turóc nobles received a licence to exchange their obligation into a money rent, 20 florins. ZsO. I. No. 4882.
70 DL. 96761., ZsO. II/2. No. 5706.
71 Szerbia, p. 42; Temes, pp. 286-7.
The Hungarian crusading host of Nicopolis (1389-1396) 163

but more regularly the wardens of the marches gained captaincy\(^2\). Although most victories were smaller, the retaliatory assaults prepared the basis for the grand enterprise. In 1389, learning the news of the Kosovo Polje defeat, Sigismund moved to Serbia with a preventive purpose and captured castles, with which being now under Hungarian control the Turks could not reach the border\(^3\). The districts of Macsó [Mačva], Szörény and Temes were made into military zones under the supervision of wardens. In 1389-91, the marcher lords of Temes, Macsó and Szörény as well as the sheriff of the Székelyek [Székelys, comes Siculorum] led assaults and took part in royal campaigns\(^4\). Most of the banderia were paid\(^5\). In 1392, Sigismund exacted the levy, mobilized 12 banderia and forced the main body of the sultan withdraw\(^6\). It was a long-distance and large-scale campaign, the army wintering in the frontline for months.

Sigismund set forth to have his neighbours involved in the anti-Ottoman struggle as protégés. Yet the buffer state system and the struggle against the pro-Ottoman tribute-paying Balkan warlords hard-pressed the treasury.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept-Nov 1389</td>
<td>Sigismund captured Čestin and Borač, Serbia(^7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May/June-July 1390</td>
<td>Wardens of Macsó and Temes repulsed attacks near Marót [Morović] and Vitovnica, Serbia(^7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept-Nov 1390</td>
<td>Sigismund’s campaign to Ostrovica, Serbia(^8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 1390-Jan 1391</td>
<td>Sigismund’s attempt to recapture Golubac, Serbia(^9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1390</td>
<td>Turkish assault into Szerém; battle at Nagyolasz(^9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^3\) ZsO. I. No. 1626.; DV, p. 394; Szerbia, p. 26.


\(^5\) ZsO. I. No. 1148.; Bánffy I, p. 420; Temes, p. 181.

\(^6\) P. ENGEL, „A török-magyar...», p. 574.

\(^7\) DL 7535.; ZsO. I. No. 1275.; Temes, p. 181; Szerbia, p. 25; DV, p. 394.

\(^8\) DV, pp. 394-97; Bánffy, I. p. 431.


\(^7\) P. ENGEL, „A török-magyar...», p. 577.
Spring 1391  
Voivod of Transylvania arranging for defence and facing inroads\(^82\)

Aug-Nov 1391  
Sigismund defeated the Turks at Nagyeng, in the Szerém region\(^83\)

Autumn 1391  
Warden of S’s victory at Ersomlyó/Versec\(^84\)

Jan-Feb 1392  
Warden of Szőrény defeated by the Turks in the Temesköz

May-June 1392  
Turkish victories in the Temesköz and Szerémség

May 1392-Spring 1393  
The King forced the Sultan to withdraw near Ždrelo, Serbia \(^85\)

Spring 1393  
Warden of Mácso fought along the Bosnian border\(^86\)

July-Oct 1394  
Sigismund’s campaign to Bosnia, against Turkish allies, moving to the Serbian front and the Temesköz region, to face the Sultan’s assault\(^87\)

Jan-March 1395  
Campaign into Moldavia\(^88\)

April 1395  
Campaign into Wallachia, the voivod of Transylvania killed\(^89\)

June-Oct 1395  
Sigismund’s campaign to Wallachia\(^90\)

Sept 1395  
Count of Temes’ victory near Csák/Ciacova, Temes\(^91\)

July 1396  
Count of Temes’ victory at Maráz, near Parţa and Şag, Temes\(^92\)

Aug 1396  
Voivod of Transylvania deposed the pro-Ottoman prince of Wallachia\(^93\)

July-Sept 1396  
Nicopolis campaign

---

Table I: Campaigns against the Ottomans, 1387-96

82 P. ENGEL, "A török-magyar...", p. 571.
83 ZsO. I. No. 2253., 2605.; Szerbia, p. 34.
84 P. ENGEL, "A török-magyar...", p. 574.
85 ZsO. I. No. 2529., 2543.; 2544., G. FEJÉR, CD, X/2. p. 419.
86 MTK, I. 232.
89 Temes, pp. 250-2.
91 Temes, p. 265.
93 ZsO. I. No. 4509.
Ordinary revenues

The country faced severe financial difficulties. The ordinary revenues did not seem to have been sufficient for campaigns. The golden and silver mines started to get exhausted in the 1380s. Between 1385-96 a proportion of state revenues were not collected in large areas in the south. The ordinary revenues, estimated to 300-320,000 florins needed addition since they were used up in defence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax of peasant households (400,000 portae rendering 1/5 of 1 fl.)</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal salt monopoly/mining and commerce of salt</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monopoly of gold and silver</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customs (imposed on domestic and foreign trade, \textit{trieszima}, thirtieth)</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax of Slavonian peasants (\textit{marturina}, originally in marten fur)</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiftieth tax of Romanians in Transylvania (\textit{quinquagesima})</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes of privileged Cumans and Iasians</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes of Saxon cities</td>
<td>14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary tax (\textit{census}, a fixed sum) of royal cities</td>
<td>16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax of Jews</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>314,000 florins</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II: Ordinary revenues

War expenses

There survived only one pay-roll and army register from a 1410 Polish campaign, on the basis of which we might reconstruct army composition, numbers and wages\(^{94}\). The contingents of the captains numbered 100 to 150 lances, the other 4 barons mostly had about 40-60, but the bulk were made up

---

of the 20-25 lances of county sheriffs and milites aulici. This army totalled 1,110 lances, 3,300-4,400 men (1,110 knights and 2,190/3,290 archers). They were paid for two months, 10 florins per lance, that is, 6 for a knight and 2 for archers. The king paid 22,000 florins, 7% of the annual revenue. The army were paid out in cloth, «cum draperye et pannis», of Kassa [Košice]. The soldiers sold it along the return route at rates favourable and making profits for the king.

On average, a lance was paid 10-20 florins, and within the lance a knight received 7 florins, and the archers 3 fl each. For a two-month, medium-scale campaign with 1,500 knights and 3,000 archers the king needed 39,000 florins (i.e. 14 fl for 1 knight = 21,000 fl for 1,500 knights ; 6 fl for archers = 18,000 fl for 3,000 archers), which consumed 12.5% of the annual budget, not to mention supplies, horses, etc. The costs of the 1396 army, 3,000 knights and 9,000 archers, paid for 10 weeks amounted to 120,000 fl (i.e. 7 x 2,5 x 3,000 = 52,500 fl; 3 x 2,5 x 9,000 = 67,500), running to 40% of the annual revenues.

**Extraordinary revenues**

The crown was bound to have recourse to extraordinary war taxes. Already the Angevin kings imposed subsidia, pronounced «pro stipendiariis». In 1323, it was 1/8 of a mark (250 g silver) per peasant holding; then in 1332 was raised 8 times higher. It was four times higher than the seigneurial rent. Later on it became almost regular and constant, 1 florin, i.e. equalling 1 mark of silver.
Sigismund’s extraordinary revenues can be estimated to 160-180,000 florins per year. The bulk was made up of *taxa extraordinaria*, but were only levied ten times, putting the yearly average very low. The king might have been only able to get the consent of the council to levy *collecta* if he rewarded them with properties. In 1387, a one-seventh property tax was imposed on peasants and townsmen. The sheriffs were ordered to put the collected money at the

---

102 Estimates and approximate amounts.
103 The purpose of wages pronounced: «*Ut hominibus exercitabantibus stipendia commode elargiri posint*»: ZsO. I. No. 4324.
disposal of captains\textsuperscript{105}. This was much heavier than the tithe or the 10% seigneurial rent\textsuperscript{106}. It was promised to be one-time but was followed in 1394 another one of half florin per \textit{porta}, i.e. three times as much as the annual royal tax\textsuperscript{107}. It was repeated in 1395\textsuperscript{108} but became more regular after Nicopolis (in 1397, 1399, 1415, 1416, 1417, 1432 and 1434)\textsuperscript{109}. The subsidy ran to 1/2 fl 21 denarius in 1399, and was even doubled, 1 fl, more than 5-6 times greater than the royal tax by the end of the reign\textsuperscript{110}. Sigismund also ordered the conscription of peasant families\textsuperscript{111}.

Special extraordinary taxes were levied on cities from 1395\textsuperscript{112}. Sopron and Pozsony were imposed 2,000 florins each while their annual tax was 400\textsuperscript{113}. Sopron paid 800-1000 florins per year, double its normal tax, \textit{\textit{per occasione stipendiiorum}}. The cities were even asked to pay extra amounts\textsuperscript{114}. On average, they had to pay an equivalent of their normal taxes. They were occasionally to hand over money \textit{\textit{ratione stipendiiorum}} to captains\textsuperscript{115}. Kassa was to give about 6-800 fl\textsuperscript{116}. Eperjes [Prešov] was to pay 400 florins\textsuperscript{117}, Kolozsvár [Cluj] 200,
The Hungarian crusading host of Nicopolis (1389-1396)

Bártfa [Bardejov] 800-1,200118, Körmöcbánya [Kremnica] 300 fl119 and Zágráb [Zagreb] 40 marks of silver120, Pozsony paid well over 3000 florins121, Nagyszombat [Trnava] alike122. Sometimes extra subsidies were levied, e.g. for galleys123, or, «pro tuicione et conservatione castri», or if the king was in arrears with wages124. It might be estimated that the cities yielded in extra subsidies taxes at least the equivalent of their normal taxes, i.e. 30,000 fl.

Donations of royal domain, loans and mortgages

Baronial banderia were largely financed by donations of royal property125. Even military wardens received now grants as not being able to repulse the attacks with their own forces, and bound to use their own money to recruit extra troops126. The wardens of Temes received castle lordships in 1390-1392127. The wardens of Szórény and Macsó laid preventive assaults on their own expenses, but made out their bills in no time128. However, as the Turkish pressure intensified fewer barons undertook to fight even on the king’s money and Sigismund gave away larger properties to instigate them. In 1391, only three banderia fought129. Some lords exchanged their southern estates; some

119 ZsO. I. No. 4795.
120 ZsO. I. Nos. 1621., 2108.
121 ZsO. I. No. 1477.
122 ZsO. I. No. 938.
127 ZsO. I. No. 3823., 4497., 4501., Csáky, I. p. 171, 183; Szerbia, p. 38; Temes, pp. 252, 263-65; A gold mine was given away with the prerogatives of mining: «Cum possessionibus… aurifodinis, montanis et mineris metallorum… aquirendis…» ZsO. I. Nos. 1626., 2121.; DV, p. 394; Szerbia, p. 26.
wardens resigned from offices\textsuperscript{130}. The king increased the rewards and gave away escheated or confiscated estates and extorted properties from collateral heirs: on the 1392 campaign there appeared now nine barons\textsuperscript{131}.

The crown took substantial loans, especially «ad expeditionem contra... Turcorum»\textsuperscript{132}, and «pro salario», or «pro tuiione confiniorum ab insultibus Turcorum fienda»\textsuperscript{133}, as well as «pro defensione confinariorum regni»\textsuperscript{134} and «pro conservatione castrorum», «pro tuiione castri in confiniis»\textsuperscript{135}. Nevertheless, huge loans were taken for general defence concerns, but the narration or the context or other indirect evidence help us define the enterprises for which they were allotted\textsuperscript{136}. Between 1387 and 1396 the king took loans totalling over 60,000 florins, which might seem an enormous amount, but in comparison, in 1427 the upkeep of Belgrade alone amounted to 12,000 florins and lesser fortresses needed 1,200–1,600 per year. Sigismund has been negatively treated for extravagant prodigality and lavishly taking enormous loans also for his own daily expenses. Yet, it is not entirely true, since 97% of the 770,000 florins he borrowed in 50 years were explicitly turned to defence costs\textsuperscript{137}.

As surely, the king mortgaged entire lordships, totalling for 500,000 fl. during his reign, often for unlimited time\textsuperscript{138}. He mortgaged whole principalities: Brandenburg for 565,000 fl and Neumark for 63,200 fl\textsuperscript{139} as well as 15 cities.

\textsuperscript{130} ZsO. I. Nos. 2563., 2634.; Krassó, III. p. 222; Szerbia, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{131} ZsO. I. Nos. 2596., 2500., 2504., 2501., 2543., 2546., 2547., 2560., 2563., 4653.; 4656.; Szerbia, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{132} DI. 33411., DI. 34113., ZsO. I. No. 4169., IX. No. 770.
\textsuperscript{134} J. Deér, «Zsigmond...», p. 179; G. Fejér, CD, X/6. p. 802; DI. 33411., DI. 33412.
\textsuperscript{135} DI. 33980., ZsO. I. No. 5551.
\textsuperscript{139} ZsO. II/1. Nos. 1796.; 1942.
and 1 lordship for 100,000 fl to Poland\(^{140}\). The sureties were soon to be donated away as perpetual heredity as the crown not being able to redeem them\(^{141}\). Later on, he pledged castles for almost each campaign\(^{142}\). The crown being in arrears with stipenda mortaged castles to the castellans themselves\(^{143}\). The dignitary holders were to be paid with properties: the voivod of Transylvania received 8 castle lordships in 1398\(^{144}\). The Palatine was granted Liptó county in 1406 for war expenses\(^{145}\). Properties were even donated away in advance in return for future service\(^{146}\). The crown did even sell estates for cash and granted royal domain towns to war leaders\(^{147}\).

**Pledge, lease and sale of royal revenues and monopolies**

Taxes and various *ius regale* revenues, mines, mints, customs, dues were either obligated for assurance of loans, leased out for a lump sum sometimes years in advance or even donated away. The revenues of whole counties, mints and salt mines were assigned to wardens to pay their armies\(^{148}\). First, some of the gold and silver mines and mints were leased out on a long term to entrepreneurs, Italians or Germans, for a lump sum, for years in advance\(^{149}\). Occasionally whole gold mints were leased, e.g. Buda in 1402 e.g. for 8,000 florins\(^{150}\). The king took up loans from foreign merchants, and paid them not

---

\(^{140}\) DL 13277.; DL 9984.; DF: 212749., ZsO. III. 2897.

\(^{141}\) ZsO. I. Nos. 2408.; 2461.


\(^{143}\) DL 34067., Blagay, pp. 310-11; ZsO. I. No. 5627.


\(^{145}\) DL. 9225., HO. VII. pp. 432-45, ZsO. II/1. No. 4899.

\(^{146}\) DL. 8158., ZsO. I. No. 4395., G. Wenzel, Sibor..., p. 85.

\(^{147}\) Szerbia, p. 40; ZsO. I. Nos. 3844., 6049.

\(^{148}\) *Florenus de luceri camere dare debeat... pro expeditoria... reservetis*: ZsO. I. Nos. 3380.; 4779.; Szerbia, pp. 34-6; salary paid out of customs: ZsO. I. No. 5313.


only with long-term leases, but offices in the financial administration\textsuperscript{151}. In some cases the offices of mining, minting and customs chambers were concentrated in the hands of a banker as \textit{comes monetarum nostrarum}, being granted exclusive privileges\textsuperscript{152}. The Medicis gained control over the mines and minting chambers in 1393-95 since they provided credits in advance to the king\textsuperscript{153}. The copper mines were pledged to the Medicis between 1387-1391\textsuperscript{154}. From 1395, the Italians were followed by Germans in the \textit{comes monetarum} office, largely the representatives of Nuremberg bank houses\textsuperscript{155}. Mark of Nuremberg `brought the capital' of the consortium of the Flextorfer-Kegler-Kromer-Zenner banks to Sigismund's hands\textsuperscript{156}. In 1404-1405, he received authority over all the money exchanges in the country, as \textit{comes tricesistratorum ac urbarum et casionis monetarum nostrarum}\textsuperscript{157}.


\textsuperscript{157} ZsO. I. No. 6107. II/1. No. 3079.
The king increased the number of mints: Nagybánya [Baia Mare], Offenbánya [Baia de Arieş] and Nagyszeben started to issue golden florins. He sought to increase the gold production and issuance of currency but the mines’ output fell from the late Angevin age level of 3,000 kg per year to to 700 kg in the 1430s.\(^{158}\)

Monopolies were sold or leased to set up mints in cities, in return for which the king asked extra, increased extraordinary taxes. Pozsony received a licence in 1430 and contracted a chamber leasehold with the treasury\(^ {159}\). The king also gave licences to establish money exchanges in cities, for which he received rents. Pozsony was granted to exchange money in a huge territory of 8 counties and 11 cities, including two of his commercial rivals.\(^ {160}\)

**Seizure of ecclesiastical revenues and property**

Special extraordinary taxes were levied on the clergy from 1395. On certain occasions some chapters were taxed\(^ {161}\). The exacted money was directly spent to recruit mercenaries\(^ {162}\). It was enacted in 1397 that the king would seize half of all ecclesiastical revenues for the defence of the frontiers, estimated to 100,000 fl per year\(^ {163}\). In theory, it was temporary, «as long as this present war with the pagans lasts»\(^ {164}\). Yet it was kept on being seized during the whole reign, and special exactores were entrusted to collect the money directly. Beyond that, in 1398 another «annual» ecclesiastical tax was imposed and in 1405 the tithe of

---


\(^{159}\) G. FEJÉR, CD, X/7. pp. 196-200; Artur POHL, Die Grenzlandprägung, Münzprägung in Österreich und Ungarn im fünfzehnten Jahrhundert, Graz, 1972, p. 36.


\(^{161}\) ZsO. I. Nos. 4438., 5098.

\(^{162}\) «De pecunia vobis nota ad lanceas dare velitine» DL 42629.; ZsO. I. No. 4429.

\(^{163}\) DRMH II. 26.

\(^{164}\) DRH 172.
the bishopric of Zagreb was seized for stipendia. Furthermore, the bishops themselves often seized their tithes to pay their own mercenaries. There were several other ecclesiastical revenues (e.g. *ius spolii*) assigned to captains and wardens and special subsidies imposed on the clergy (e.g. a fiftieth was envisaged in 1434). A range of bishoprics were being kept vacant and governed by lay vicarii for years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARCHBISHOPRIC</th>
<th>VACANT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Esztergom</td>
<td>1405-1423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalocsa</td>
<td>1410-1415; 1419-1421; 1423-1425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zara [Zadar]</td>
<td>1398-1454</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BISHOPRIC</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nyitra [Nitra]</td>
<td>March 1392-March 1393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Szerém [Sremska Mitrovica]</td>
<td>March 1392-March 1393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vác</td>
<td>1405-1408; 1430-1437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veszprém</td>
<td>1403-1406; 1410-1417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zágráb</td>
<td>1398-1408; 1411-1421; 1427-1440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eger</td>
<td>1403-1422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia (based in Diakóvár [Đakovo])</td>
<td>1408-1410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trau [Trogir]</td>
<td>1401-1419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scardona [Skradin]</td>
<td>1388-1390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faro [Hvar]</td>
<td>1387-1454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knin</td>
<td>1405-1409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitaller Order’s priory of Aurania [Vrana]</td>
<td>1403-1437</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV: Dioceses kept in vacancy and governed by secular *gubernatores*/*vicarii*

---

166 G. Fejér, CD, X/7. p. 815.
167 J. Deér, «Zsigmond...», p. 175; Bártfa szabad királyi város levéltára, No. 267.
Chamber’s profit: debasement of the coinage

The crown had recourse to devaluation almost continually. In 1387 Sigismund issued a «denar with the small cross», of an average weight 0.42 g, which soon failed\(^{169}\). 1 golden florin was equivalent to 240 silver denars in 1387 and 300 in 1390. There was an Angevin silver penny in circulation that kept its value on a stable level\(^{170}\). However, the crown asked taxes in the «pure and genuine» Angevin money and not the devaluated one\(^{171}\). The king consciously kept the old Angevin money in circulation, called bardus (battle-axe) by the attribute of St. Ladislaus, whose figure was minted on the verso\(^{172}\). This was addressed as «pura et vera pecunia, bonorum denariorum»\(^{173}\), as opposed to ac praesens moneta utilis nove nostra\(^{174}\). People trusted it more, 400 of it were worth a mark, it had a greater fineness and silver content (666 – 875‰)\(^{175}\).

In 1390, the king, while leaving the circulation of the old money, issued a new «denar with the long cross», weighing 0.52 g, 100 of which being worth 1 florin\(^{176}\). For a few years this seemed to have stabilized, and there was only 30% debasement, but after 1403 it was debased by 60, then by the 1420s by 300%\(^{177}\). But after 1403, the king asked the tax in the 1390s denar and not in the newer devaluated ones\(^{178}\). But even the new denar’s fineness (593‰) did not reach in practice the officially fixed level of 800‰\(^{179}\). Its net weight was only 0.4 g, i.e.

---


\(^{171}\) *ZsO. I. Nos. 393., 990.*

\(^{172}\) *ZsO. I. Nos. 2182., 3984., 4325., 4521.*

\(^{173}\) 1389: *ZsO. I. No. 1015.*

\(^{174}\) 1390: *ZsO. I. No. 1756.*


less than half being not silver. The king manipulated with the currency, regularly debased and withdrew money, that is why the old *hardus* was used in transactions, and in counting the value of the florin, even by the king\textsuperscript{180}.

Debasement was applied to a greater extent in the smaller currency, the *parvus*, of an average weight of 0.32 g, minted with a consciously increased nominal value\textsuperscript{181}. It had a small silver content, 353‰ and the copper content was greater thus was popularly called «*commnis moneta de cupro*»\textsuperscript{182}. It got devaluated immediately and withdrawn but re-issued with a high nominal value, maintaining a constant profit. The *ducat* was minted on a low silver level, 187.5‰, average weight 0.225-0.25 g\textsuperscript{183}. In three years it also fell drastically by 60% and was withdrawn\textsuperscript{184}, and the *quarting* was issued, with a low silver content, of 125‰\textsuperscript{185}. The king also manipulated with this, its nominal value fell in three years 250% and its market value by 2,000%. It contained almost nothing but copper\textsuperscript{186}.

A great variety of forced loans and *contributiones* were also exacted. Armies were billeted in cities in exchange for their future taxes\textsuperscript{187}. Kassa was ordered «to supply anything the armies might need»\textsuperscript{188}. Barons were authorized to seize the taxes in advance\textsuperscript{189}. Army leaders were authorized to seize provisions in cities, e.g. fish\textsuperscript{190}. The privilege of *ius gladii* as well as market licenses were granted for cities and nobles in exchange for troops\textsuperscript{191}.

\textsuperscript{184} 1430: DRH I. p. 253-56.; A. Pohl, *Die Grenzlandprägung...*, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{187} ZsO. I. No. 5139.; Hazi, I/2. p. 13.
\textsuperscript{188} C. Tóth, «Az 1395. év», p. 465.; ZsO. III. No. 57.
\textsuperscript{189} ZsO. II. Nos. 8002., 8007., III. 86.; Zichy, IX. p. 60.
\textsuperscript{190} ZsO. III. Nos. 205.; 272., 332.; 333.
The lessons of Nicopolis

At the Diet Timișoara, in 1397, the king issued a decree that made a complete change in the military institutions. He reorganised the general levy, suspending ancient privileges. The barons were to rise with all of their *banderia, more exercituantium*, whether they had a *honori* office or not, whenever and wherever the king required. The lesser nobles had to fight in the county *banderia*.

The reluctant would be liable to heavy fines. A new quota system of recruitment (*militia portalis*) was introduced: each landowner was to equip and lead to war one archer (*pharetrarius equestris*) from every 20 tenant peasant holdings. This was not an absolutely peasant army, the archers could have been raised from paid professional retainers, the number was just calculated by the tenants. Lesser nobles raised only peasant soldiers. The troops had to be supplied by the king. The obligation was reduced in 1435 to raise 3 archers upon 100 holdings.

Although historiography has for long maintained that it was an existing institution, there is no unequivocal evidence. There are very few references for a levy of one-twentieth of the villeins. It is a few times that it was partly applied, and not in the whole country, but in Transylvania. Occasionally abbots, chapters were to raise soldiers «*secundum connumerationem jobagionum*» and peasants of some counties were summoned. There were peasants fighting in the royal armies.

---

193 DRMH II. p. 22.
195 Z.-W., III. p. 651.
198 ZsO. I. No. 1176.; DL 43449: «Viginti jobagiones ad exercitum... non debatis»: DL 43449.
included paid peasants\textsuperscript{199}. Nevertheless, the \textit{portalis} army proved to be too cumbersome and disorganized to resist a major attack. Although efforts were made to revive it, the realm still relied on magnate \textit{banderia}, paid by properties and mortgages. Sigismund elaborated military regulations in 1415-1417 and 1432-1433, part of which were enacted in 1435. He established frontier districts (\textit{confinia}), for the defence of which allotted fixed payments and assigned baronial \textit{banderia} and levies of adjacent counties\textsuperscript{200}.

\textsuperscript{199} C. Tóth, «Az 1395. évi...», p. 473; P. Engel, «Adatok...», p. 81.

Table des matières

Daniel Baloup, Manuel Sánchez Martínez
Introduction ..................................................................................................................................... 7

Pascal Montaubin
Le rôle du cardinal- légat Jean Cholet dans la croisade d’Aragon (1285) ......................... 11

Amandine Le Roux
Le recouvrement de la décime par les collecteurs pontificaux de 1316 à 1503
(royaume de France et Provence) .......................................................................................... 55

Jordi Morelló Baget
La contribución del clero de la Corona de Aragón a la Guerra del Estrecho
(década de 1340) y sus consecuencias fiscales ....................................................................... 81

Maria Teresa Ferrer i Mallol
La guerra marítima contra l’Islam a la Corona catalanoaragonesa en el segle XIV.
Els armaments no reials ........................................................................................................ 117

Attila Barany
King Sigismund of Luxemburg and the preparations for the Hungarian crusading
host of Nicopolis (1389-1396) ................................................................................................ 153

Sophie Salviati
Batailles commerciales et stratégies financières : l’engagement des premiers
Médecis dans la lutte contre les Infidèles au XVe siècle ....................................................... 179

Pavel Soukup
Preaching the Cross against the Hussites, 1420-1431 .......................................................... 195

Jorge Sáiz Serrano
Las expediciones norteafricanas de Alfonso el Magnánimo (1424-1433):
financiación y organización militar ..................................................................................... 213
Maria Elisa Soldani
Combattre sur la frontière de la Méditerranée orientale. Économie de guerre, interculturalité, commerce et finances à Rhodes...............................257

Norman Housley
Robur imperii: Mobilizing Imperial Resources for the Crusade against the Turks, 1453-1505.................................................................287

Alexandru Simon
How to Finance a Greek Rite Athlete: Venice, Rome and Stephen III of Moldavia ..........................................................................................307

Franck Viltart
Itinéraires, transport et logement des armées dans les projets de croisade de Philippe le Bon (1454-1464).................................................................331

Juan Luis Carriazo Rubio
Todo lo necesario para ir a su misma Berbería. Logística y financiación de una expedición señorial contra la costa norteafricana a comienzos del siglo XVI.........351

Emmanuelle Pujeau
Financement et logistique de la croisade au début XVIe siècle : de la collecte de François Ier (1517) à la campagne de la Préveza (1538) .........................................381

Matteo Provasi
Alfonso II d’Este alla campagna in Ungheria (1566). Spese di guerra, spese di rappresentan .................................................................405

Michel Balard
Conclusions..........................................................................................433