

Série « Croisades Tardives », vol. 4

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

sous la direction de
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Presses universitaires du Midi
Collection « Méridiennes »
Toulouse • 2015

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

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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

The work is supported by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences – University of Debrecen « Lendület » Research Group « Hungary in Medieval Europe ».

¹ Phrases used: «*Ad exercitum regale erat iturus*», «*In nostris specialibus servitiis in confinibus regni contra Turcos*»; «*In negociis Regis contra turcos existit, secundum prorogacionem reambulationis metarum*»: *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, I-XI. [Charters of the Sigismund-age], ed. Elemér Mályusz, Iván Borsa, Norbert C. Tóth, Tibor Neumann, Budapest, 1951-2009 [hereinafter ZsO] I. Nos.

range of auxiliary evidence: rewards, installation into holdings, forfeiture, confirmations of privileges³.

The Nicopolis host was substantial, numbering between 12,000-15,000⁴. 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 contingents⁵. 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 background⁶. Armies had to be incessantly maintained along the southern fronts. Sigismund had to face a

753., 2407., 2454., 2516., 2813., 2837., 2959., 3188., 3431., 3980., 4226., 4403., 4406., 4429., 4471., 4499., 4560. 4589.; 6182. ; Iván BERTÉNYI, «A Nikápoly alá vonult sereg hátszágá» [The hinterland of the army on campaign to Nicopolis], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények*, [hereinafter HK] 111 (1998), pp. 610-617, p. 611.

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

³ ZsO. Nos. I. 2600.; 4496.; 4497.; 5302.; 6090.; *Oklevelek Temesvármegye és Temesváros történetéhez* [Charters for the history of Temes], ed. Frigyes Pesty, Tivadar Ortvay. I. 1183-1430, Pozsony [Bratislava], 1896. [hereinafter Temes], pp. 263-265; *A Magyarország és Szerbia közötti összeköttetések oklevéltára 1198-1526* [Collection of charters of the contacts with Serbia], ed. Lajos Thallóczy, Antal Áldásy (*Monumenta Hungariae Historica. Diplomataria* [=MHHD] 33), Budapest, 1907, [hereinafter Szerbia] p. 38.

⁴ Gyula RÁZSÓ, «A Zsigmond-kori Magyarország és a török veszély (1393-1437)», HK, 20 n.s. (1973), pp. 403-444, p. 417.

⁵ ZsO. I. No. 4386.

⁶ E.g. ZsO. I. Nos. 2284., 2605., 2908., 3864., 5040., Temes, pp. 277-278.

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 territories⁷. After Kosovo Polje, with the fall of Serbia, the southern borderline regions, the marches of Temes [Timiș], the counties of Keve [Kovin], Krassó [Carașova] were heavily plundered⁸. The key strongholds of Golubac and Orsova [Orșova] fell. The flourishing Szerém region [Srem or Sarmia] 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 necessary¹⁰. Up to the 1390s few, 10-12 frontier castles had been built, and only Törösvár [Bran] was organized as a semi-standing garrison. The others, Talmács [Talmaci], Haram [Hram/Nova Palanka], Keve [Kovin], Szörény [Drobeta-Turnu Severin] were protected by mobile field forces. On the Serbian frontier Debrce, Nepričava, Belastena were exchanged for a royal lordship with a baron¹¹. The king appointed captains *in custodia et conservazione* of castles and either rendered money and men to their

⁷ [János THURÓCZY] Johannes DE THURO CZ, *Chronica Hungarorum*, I. *Textus*, ed. E. Galántai, Gy. Kristó, Budapest, 1985, cap. 199, 207, pp. 208, 220.

⁸ «*Insultus Turcarum... devastaciones, spolaciones... hominum subducciones, enormia intollerabilia*». Decree of 1397: *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary. Decreta regni Medievalis Hungariae*, 1-3, eds. János M. Bak, György Bónis, James Ross Sweeney, Leslie S. Domonkos, Paul B. Harvey, Jr, (*Decreta regni mediaevalis Hungariae*, ser. 1:1-3), Salt Lake City-Los Angeles, 1989-1996. [hereinafter DRMH] II, p. 21.

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 restauratione confiniorum*»: DRMH II, p. 21.

¹¹ DL 7768., ZsO. I. No. 2421.; *Hazai okmánytár. Codex diplomaticus patrius*, I-VI, ed. Arnold Ipolyi, Imre Nagy, István Paur, Károly Ráth, Dezső Véghely, Győr-Budapest, 1865-1891, [hereinafter HO] VII, p. 428., *Documenta historiam Valachorum in Hungaria illustrantia*, ed. Antal Nagy Fekete, László Makkai, Budapest, 1941. [hereinafter DV], p. 395.

hands or entrusted them to upkeep and garrison the castles and rewarded them with estates¹², paid with sums issued from tax returns¹³. E.g. in 1398 the king paid a *salarium* of 2,000 florins for the defence of four castles for four years¹⁴. Sums were reserved from taxes for captains «*pro custodia partium inferiorum*»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, *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.

Military structure: the Angevin-age army

«The baronies are neither hereditary nor lifelong, but are given and taken back according to the ruler's will»¹⁶. In the Angevin period (1301-1387) army contingents were to be set up by the holders of *honor* dignities, temporary fiefs¹⁷. Royal counties were organized into provinces, governed from castles by warden-captains, who exercised power with their *banderium* or *vexillum*¹⁸. They were not paid but in return for mobilisation any time enjoyed the revenues that went with the district¹⁹. The *banderium* consisted the honor-holder's own retinue (of *familiars*, lesser noble retainers, allowed a share of the incomes and partly

¹² DL 24530; Szerbia, p. 40, ZsO I. No. 6049.

¹³ «*In sortem solutionis gentium... castrum conservare debet... florenos de lucri camere dare debeat*»: Szerbia, pp. 34-36.

¹⁴ «*Ratione sui salarii pro reformatione castrorum*»: ZsO. I. No. 5313.

¹⁵ ZsO. I. No. 3380.

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.

¹⁷ DRMH II., p. 22.

¹⁸ *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis*, Tom. I-XI. Vol. 1-43, ed. Georgius Fejér, Buda, 1829-1844, [hereinafter G. FEJÉR, CD], X/4, p. 219; HO II., pp. 174-175; Temes, p. 475; Frigyes PESTY, *Krassó vármegye története* [History of Krassó], II-IV, Budapest, 1882-1884. [hereinafter Krassó] III., p. 220; Temes, p. 264.

¹⁹ 1397: DRMH II., p. 22.

paid *stipendiarii*), the nobles in the general levy and all the arms-bearing men²⁰. 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 liberties²¹. 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 contracts²³. By the late fourteenth century paid *stipendiarii* were strongly preferred in defence²⁴. In 1380 King Louis I paid English archers at Töröcsvár²⁵.

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 ac Slavoniae*, I-XVIII. Ed. Tadeus Smičiklas, Marko Kostrenčić *et al.*, Zagreb, 1904-90, XII. p. 78; «*Tam peditibus quam equitibus... transire debeas ad locum et terminum... deputandus*». DV, p. 162; *Oklevéltár a Tomaj nemzetségbeli losonczi Bánffy család történetéhez* [Charters of the Bánffy family], I-II., Ed. Elemér Varjú, Béla Iványi, Budapest, 1908-1928, I, p. 374.

²¹ *Regesta diplomatica nec non epistolaria Slavoniae*, Ed. Vincent Sedlák. I. Bratislava, 1980, p. 429.

²² DL 480000.

²³ Pál ENGEL, *The Realm of St. Stephen: A History of Medieval Hungary, 895-1526*, London-New York, 2001, p. 184; «*Armatos cum phartrariis in subsidium dederaimus et assignaveramus*»: Lajos THALLÓCZY, «Nagy Lajos és a bulgár bánság», *Századok*, 33 (1900), pp. 577-615, p. 606.

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.

²⁵ «*Gente armata brigantiis et balestrariis Anglicis custodiam castris muniendo*»: J. THURÓCZY, *Chronica Hungarorum*, cap. 168, p. 182.

away of royal domain²⁶. Sigismund was less able to enforce them to raise their banderia. The incomes of the honors were turned for the lords' private retinues²⁷. Few followers remained who would take up arms free of charge. The wardens did only go to war if they received *salarium*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 (*«pecuniam habent»*), from those receiving only the revenues of the county, *«comitatus habent»*²⁹. The retinues were in the first place filled with members of the kindred, *familiares, consanguinei, fratres* or *clientes proximi* as well as lesser noble *servitores*, though both groups served for pay or allowances³⁰, but they were differentiated from mercenaries addressed as *strenui* or *stipendiarii*, who also involved foreigners, mainly Czechs³¹. The prelates also raised *«vexillo propriis suis sumptibus»*³². The retainers were paid *pro eorum subsidio* in silver, under fixed conditions, e.g. a heavy man-at-arms served for 1

²⁶ Pál ENGEL, *Királyi hatalom és arisztokrácia viszonya a Zsigmond-korban* [Relationship of royal power and aristocracy in the age of Sigismund], Budapest, 1977.

²⁷ HO VII. p. 432. *Codex diplomaticus comitum de Blagay*, Ed. Lajos Thallóczy Lajos, Samu Barabás (MHHD, 28), Budapest, 1897, [hereinafter Blagay] p. 84; *«Cum gentibus hominibus suis»*; *«Cum gentium armigerorum/ exercituum/ militantium»*: HO VII. p. 432; *Codex diplomaticus domus senioris comitum Zichy de Zich et Vásonkeő*, I-XII. Ed. Imre Nagy, István Nagy, Dezső Véghely, Ernő Kammerer, Ferenc Döry, Pál Lukcsics, Budapest, 1871-1931, [hereinafter Zichy] I, p. 160; G. FEJÉR, CD, X/1. pp. 358-9; X/2. p. 432; X/4. p. 205; X/3. p. 156; X/4. pp. 205; 660; X/5. p. 115; X/7. pp. 192-3.

²⁸ DL 737; ZsO. I. No. 7633.

²⁹ ZsO. I. No. 2021; Szerbia, p. 29; Krassó, III. p. 216; G. FEJÉR, CD, X/1. pp. 724; 905.

³⁰ *«Cum vexillis, nobilium virorum militantium, praecipue consanguineorum ipsorum armata cohorte... proximorum et familiarum eorum»*: ZsO. I. No. 5101; G. FEJÉR, CD, X/2. pp. 438-53; *«Consanguineorum suorum et amiliarum»*, Szerbia, p. 44.

³¹ *«Strenuis militibus et suis famulis»*: Szerbia, pp. 98f.; HO VIII. p. 432; *«Plurimis fratribus proximis et egregiis militibus»*: G. FEJÉR, CD, X/2. p. 456; ZsO. I. No. 4386; *Sopron szabad királyi város története*. I/1. *Oklevelek 1162-től 1406-ig* [The history of the royal free city of Sopron], Ed. Jenő HÁZI, Sopron, 1921, [hereinafter HÁZI] I. p. 542; *«Virorum fidelium et aliarum suarum gentium militancium»*: Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus...*, XII. p. 78; DL 7309; G. FEJÉR, CD, X/3. p. 312; *«Comitiva militum tam regnicolarum quam alienigarum»*: Gusztáv WENZEL, *Stibor vajda* [Voivode Stibor], Budapest, 1874, p. 129.

³² *Zala vármegye története. Oklevéltár*, [History of Zala county. Charters], I-II. Ed. Imre Nagy, Dezső Véghely, Gyula Nagy, Budapest, 1886-1890. [hereinafter Zala] II, p. 304.

florin per week³³. In the campaigns of 1389-96 the forces were mostly made up of paid baronial contingents³⁴. 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*)³⁵. In the 1389 campaign 16 baronial *vexilla* took part, ranging from 10 to 250 lances³⁶. The warden of Szörény received three times as much salary as normal in 1395, and was rewarded with a mortgage for 2,000 florins³⁷. Imre Marcali fought with 140 lances *in propriis sumptibus et expensis*³⁸, 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 *iuuamina et subsidia pro defensione regni*³⁹. The growth of mercenaries is proved by the increase of the personal names *«stipendiarius»* (*zsoldos*) in Hungarian⁴⁰. In the early 1390s the private banderia were directly hired by the treasury and allocated pay from the ordinary revenues, first from tax returns,

³³ Gyula RÁZSÓ, «A zsoldosság gazdasági és társadalmi előfeltételei és típusai Magyarországon a XIV-XV. században», HK, 9 n.s. (1962), pp. 160-217, p. 187.

³⁴ ZsO. I. Nos. 2408; 2461.

³⁵ *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, Ed. Franz Zimmermann, Carl Werner, Georg Müller, Gustav Gündisch, Gernot Nussbacher, Konrad G. Gündisch, I-VII., Hermannstadt, [Sibiu]-Cologne, 1892-1991, [hereinafter Z-W.] III. p. 149; DL 62757; ZsO. No. I. 3913; «*Salario decem lancearum*»: Zichy, VIII. p. 178.

³⁶ ZsO. I. No. 5101; HÁZI, I. p. 542; Pál ENGEL, «A török-magyar háborúk első éve, 1389-1392», HK, 111 (1998), pp. 561-577, p. 571.

³⁷ «*In propriis suis sumptibus et expensis*»: ZsO. I. No. 1148; Bánffy, I. p. 420; Temes, p. 181; «*Nos opportuit trina vice stipendia dare, antequam potuissemus omnem exercitum congregare... cum suis hominibus armigeris perierunt*»: DL 42705; ZsO. I. No. 5769; Following donations: ZsO. I. Nos. 1714-5, 1758.

³⁸ *A Héderváry család oklevéltára*, I-II. Ed. Béla Radvánszky, Levente Závodszy, Budapest, 1909-1922, [hereinafter Héderváry] I, pp. 171-73.

³⁹ «*Contra paganos... his regnis nocere volentes, pro tuitione eorundem... iuuamine tamen et subsidio Domini nostri regis... pro tuitione regnorum deputabitur, et iuuamina et subsidia ipsi deputando, ab tuitionem regnorum praebenda et assignanda*»: DL 9470, ZsO. II/2. No. 6471; G. FEJÉR, CD, X/4. pp. 690-1.

⁴⁰ DL 87671; ZsO. II/1. No. 385; Gyula Rázsó, «*Military Reforms in the Fifteenth Century*», in *A Millennium of Hungarian Military History*, Ed. Béla K. Király and László Veszprémy, New York, 2002 (East European Monographs, 621; Atlantic Studies on Society in Change, 114.), pp. 54-83, p. 54.

then from alternative sources⁴¹. In 1395 the chapter of Lelesz [Leles] was ordered to hand money over to a captain⁴². Or, wages *in sortem solutionis gentium* were to be reserved *de pecunia lucri camere* by the captains themselves⁴³. Additional sums were issued when needed through pay-roll masters⁴⁴. Some armies had their own masters who had «*pecunia ratione expeditionis exercitus*» at their disposal⁴⁵. He was commissioned to supervise the army, oversee the equipment minutely, the proportion of knights and archers, etc⁴⁶. Or, the king commissioned entrepreneur captains, mostly the dignitary holders to raise a retinue, but they received pay afterwards⁴⁷. The king directly employed foreign mercenaries (Poles, Czechs and Germans) on a long term, e.g. with John, Duke of Mazovia for a year⁴⁸. The average banderia totalled in the range of 75-120 professionals⁴⁹. Some included infantrymen⁵⁰. Banderia were frequently paid in salt, allocated from royal mines⁵¹. The chancery did spell out «the soldiers' salt»⁵².

⁴¹ «*Pro expeditione nostra exercituali... de presenti instauranda duo milia florenos... debeatis... retenturi*»: Zichy, IV, p. 342.

⁴² «*De pecunia presentis taxe pro expeditione nostras*»: ZsO. I. No. 3959.

⁴³ Zichy, VI. p. 547; VIII. pp. 372, 376-77; 397.

⁴⁴ ZsO. I. No. 687, Zichy, IV. p. 365.

⁴⁵ P. ENGEL, *Realm...*, pp. 183-5; ZsO. I. Nos. 3913. 5529; DL 62757, Z-W. III. p. 149.

⁴⁶ To examine whether the army «*duos bonos archerarios seu faretrarios habeant*». ZsO. I. No. 3913; DL 62757. Z-W, III. p. 149.

⁴⁷ ZsO. II/1. 2598; ZsO. I. Nos. 3380; 4449; Szerbia, pp. 34-6.

⁴⁸ «*Obligato... duo milia cum quadringentis florenorum omni anno deuoluto, ... salario... cum praedictis XXX. hastis seruire... debet 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 Marmáției], 1900, p. 128.

⁴⁹ DL 13088, ZsO. I. No. 3913; DL 62757, Z-W, III. p. 149.

⁵⁰ HO II. p. 233.

⁵¹ «*Pro salariis... dispositis... sales ad mille florenos... dare velitis et debeatis*»: DL 53205; Temes, p. 330; ZsO. I. No. 2379; «*Cum salibus nostris... satisfactionem impendere et realiter expedire debeatis*»: Zichy, VIII, p. 178.

⁵² «*Sale date exercituantibus, eorum venditur*»: DRMH II. 58-9.

The troops *sub vexillo regio* were organized through household knights⁵³. In the 1389-1390 campaigns the bulk of them served⁵⁴. Most of them however did not have an own banderium⁵⁵, 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 donations⁵⁶.

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»⁵⁷. «Our strength and that of all of our gentlemen of the realm appear to have declined»⁵⁸. However, as the threat intensified, he was bound to rely on even the inefficient noble soldiers, and summon them first in 1392⁵⁹, then in 1394, 1395, 1396, 1398, 1399 and 1400⁶⁰. In fact, he occasionally summoned the levies of certain, mostly borderline counties⁶¹. He was bound to demand the

⁵³ Royal household led by a captain in chief: «*Vexillum cum exercitu fidelis nostri Stiborii ducentos: A Nagymihályi és Sztárai gróf Sztáray család oklevéltára*, [Charters of the Sztáray family] Ed. Gyula Nagy, Budapest, 1887-89, II, p. 201.

⁵⁴ ZsO. I. Nos. 1271., 1280., HÁZI, I. p. 542.; ZsO. I. Nos. 1673.; 1780.; 1779. Szerbia, p. 26.

⁵⁵ A few of them, like Peter Perényi, had a retinue: Szerbia, p. 40; Zso. I. No. 6049.

⁵⁶ «*Milites, et aulae nostrae familiares ad stipendium nostrae pro ciuitatis conseruatione et partium nostrarum defensionem*»: G. FEJÉR, CD, X/7. pp. 192-3; Donations: ZsO. I. Nos. 1280.; 1673.; *A kőrösszegi és adorjáni gróf Csáky család története* [The history of the Csáky family], Ed. László Bártfai Szabó, Budapest, 1919. I. p. 166; ZsO. I. Nos. 2284.; 2309-10.; 2312.; 2451. 2596.; G. FEJÉR, CD, X/1. pp. 682, 687, Z-W., III. p. 37; Szerbia, p. 32.

⁵⁷ «*Aut paupertate aut senio aut alia impotentia constricti potius baculis, quam armis fulciti verius mendicanti, ... pro defensione... non essent inermes, sed haberent saltem arcus et alia arma... ad offensam hostium se exponere possint*»: *Decreta Regni Hungariae 1301-1457. Gesetze und Verordnungen Ungarns*, I. 1301-1457. Ed. Franciscus Döry, Georgius Bónis, Vera Bácskai, Budapest, 1976 [hereinafter DRH], p. 408.

⁵⁸ DRMH II. p. 21.

⁵⁹ Szerbia, p. 31; ZsO. I. No. 2516.

⁶⁰ ZsO. Nos. I. 4187., 4511., 5568.; 5583., 5794., 5833.; Temes, p. 266.

⁶¹ 1386: Krassó, III. p. 160; 1395: DL 9109.; Szerbia, p. 88.

nobles to do their obligation beyond the borders «*tempore maxime necessitatis*»⁶². He ordered all *exercitiales* to rise fully equipped on pain of forfeiture of their properties⁶³. Heavy fines were imposed against the disobedient⁶⁴. Yet he could not in fact hope to have large number of nobles enrolling for service⁶⁵. In 1397, it was decreed that an exemption was possible to be purchased, though it did not succeed⁶⁶. It was not until 1411 that the punishments against insumision were in fact severely enforced⁶⁷. The king often pardoned criminals sentenced to death on condition of fighting «*cum propriis suis sumptibus et expensis*»⁶⁸. He also sentenced those who clandestinely left the army to the loss of nobility⁶⁹. 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 rewarded⁷⁰. However, if it was possible, the king kept the levy only in reserve⁷¹. 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.

⁶³ ZsO. I. Nos. 3089., 3189., 3300., 3472, 3474, 3514, 3613, II/2. No. 8028.

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 faciemus 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.

⁶⁷ Only in one county: József DEÉR, «Zsigmond király honvédelmi politikája», in IDEM, *Királyság és nemzet*. I-II. Máriabesnyő, 2005, p. 128.

⁶⁸ ZsO. I. No. 3379.; ZsO. II/2. Nos. 6924.; 6941., 7146., 7402.; DL 43757.; DL 43813.; Szerbia, p. 51.

⁶⁹ ZsO. I. Nos. 2543., 2560., 4511., 4530., 5568., 6134., 5593.; Zichy, VI. p. 139.

⁷⁰ DL 96761., ZsO. II/2. No. 5706.

⁷¹ Szerbia, p. 42; Temes, pp. 286-7.

but more regularly the wardens of the marches gained captaincy⁷². 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 border⁷³. 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 [Szeklers, *comes Siculorum*] led assaults and took part in royal campaigns⁷⁴. Most of the banderia were paid⁷⁵. In 1392, Sigismund exacted the levy, mobilized 12 banderia and forced the main body of the sultan withdraw⁷⁶. 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.

Sept-Nov 1389	Sigismund captured Čestin and Borač, Serbia ⁷⁷
May/June-July 1390	Wardens of Macsó and Temes repulsed attacks near Marót [Morović] and Vitovnica, Serbia ⁷⁸
Sept-Nov 1390	Sigismund's campaign to Ostrovica, Serbia ⁷⁹
Dec 1390-Jan 1391	Sigismund's attempt to recapture Golubac, Serbia ⁸⁰
1390	Turkish assault into Szerém; battle at Nagyolaszi ⁸¹

⁷² P. ENGEL, «A török-magyar...», p. 562; ZsO. I. Nos. 1148., 1191., 1193., Szerbia, p. 24; DV, p. 394; Temes, p. 181; HÁZI, I. p. 542.

⁷³ ZsO. I. No. 1626.; DV, p. 394; Szerbia, p. 26.

⁷⁴ DV, pp. 394-97; Bánffy, I. 431; ZsO. I. Nos. 1674., 1714-5., 1755., 1758., 6049.; Szerbia, p. 40.

⁷⁵ ZsO. I. No. 1148.; Bánffy I, p. 420; Temes, p. 181.

⁷⁶ P. ENGEL, «A török-magyar...», p. 574.

⁷⁷ DL 7535.; ZsO. I. No. 1275.; Temes, p. 181; Szerbia, p. 25; DV, p. 394.

⁷⁸ DV, pp. 394-97; Bánffy, I, p. 431.

⁷⁹ *Magyarország történelmi kronológiája* [Historical Chronology of Hungary], I-IV, Ed. Kálmán Benda, László Solymosi, Budapest, 1983 [hereinafter MTK] I, p. 231.

⁸⁰ 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 Érsomlyó/Versec ⁸⁴
Jan-Feb 1392	Warden of Szörény 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 Macsó 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 Parța and Șag, 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

⁸¹ *Gyula város oklevéltára 1313-1800*, [Charters of the town of Gyula] Ed. Endre Veress, Budapest, 1938, p. 4.

⁸² P. ENGEL, «A török-magyar...», p. 571.

⁸³ ZsO. I. Nos. 2253., 2605.; Szerbia, p. 34.

⁸⁴ P. ENGEL, «A török-magyar...», p. 574.

⁸⁵ ZsO. I. Nos. 2529., 2543.; 2544., G. FEJÉR, CD, X/2. p. 419.

⁸⁶ MTK, I. 232.

⁸⁷ Zso. I. No. 5101.; G. FEJÉR, CD, X/2. pp. 438-53.

⁸⁸ ZsO. I. No. 3823., Csáky, I. 171., Szerbia, p. 38.

⁸⁹ Temes, pp. 250-2.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Temes, p. 265.

⁹² *Ibid.*

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.

Tax of peasant households (400,000 portae rendering 1/5 of 1 fl.)	80,000
Royal salt monopoly/mining and commerce of salt	100,000
Monopoly of gold and silver	60,000
Customs (imposed on domestic and foreign trade, <i>tricesima</i> , thirtieth)	20,000
Tax of Slavonian peasants (<i>marturina</i> , originally in marten fur)	8,000
Fiftieth tax of Romanians in Transylvania (<i>quingagesima</i>)	2,000
Taxes of privileged Cumans and Iasians	10,000
Taxes of Saxon cities	14,000
Ordinary tax (<i>census</i> , a fixed sum) of royal cities	16,000
Tax of Jews	4,000
Total	314,000 florins

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 wages⁹⁴. 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

⁹⁴ Norbert C. TÓTH, «Az 1395. évi lengyel betörés. A lengyel-magyar kapcsolatok egy epizódja» [The 1395 Polish invasion. An episode of Polish-Hungarian relations], in *Honoris causa. Tanulmányok Engel Pál tiszteletére* (Analecta Medievalia, 3) Ed. Tibor Neumann, György Rácz, Budapest-Piliscsaba, 2009, pp. 447-86.

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)⁹⁵. 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]⁹⁶. 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 each⁹⁷. 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.⁹⁸. 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 stipendiarii*»⁹⁹. In 1323, it was 1/8 of a mark (250 g silver) per peasant holding¹⁰⁰; then in 1332 was raised 8 times higher¹⁰¹. 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.

⁹⁵ C. TÓTH, «Az 1395. évi...», p. 467.

⁹⁶ «*Exercituati... sunt soluti ad duos menses cum draperya et pannis ad I lanceam per mensem X florenos novos solvendo [...] Stephanus de Rozgon ad lanceas XL ad II menses debet habere florenos CCC per centum denarios*». *Ibid.*, pp. 480-84.

⁹⁷ P. ENGEL, «Adatok...», p. 80; J. DEÉR, «Zsigmond...», p. 168; Héderváry, I. p. 171; 7 in 1417: DL 10596., ZsO. VI. p. 711, DL 34067.

⁹⁸ In 1429 the costs of 12 castles ran to over 100,000 fl a year, a third of all revenues.

⁹⁹ DL 100046.; G. FEJÉR, CD, IX/1. pp. 109-11; 767.

¹⁰⁰ P. ENGEL, *Realm...*, p. 185.

¹⁰¹ «*Hominibus exercituantibus stipendia commode largiri possint*»: *Codex diplomaticus Hungaricus Andegavensis. Anjoukori Okmánytár*, I-VII, Ed. Imre Nagy, Gyula Tasnádi Nagy, Budapest, 1878-1920, II, p. 593.

<i>Taxa extraordinaria/ collecta</i> (levied in 10 years) (e.g. in 1394 400.000 households paid ½ florin)	200,000 fl per year
Donations of royal domain	
Mortgage of royal domain (about 1,227,000 fl in 50 years)	24,540 fl
Loans from barons (about 700,000 fl in 50 years)	15,400 fl
Pledge of revenues <i>ius regale</i> , mines, mints, salt, customs, dues, tolls	e.g. gold mints - 8,000
Sale of privileges for royal cities: mints, money exchanges	
Seizure of half the incomes of ecclesiastical benefices from 1397	100,000 fl
Special subsidies paid by the clergy	
<i>Lucrum camerae</i> /debasement of the coinage	
Forced loans, <i>contributiones</i> , occasional sums from royal cities	30,000 fl
Sale of tax exemption and immunities	
Sale of <i>ius gladii</i>	
Pardon for criminals	
<i>Estimated total on average per year</i>	160-180,000 fl

Table III: Extraordinary revenues¹⁰²

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 low¹⁰³. 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 townsmen¹⁰⁴. The sheriffs were ordered to put the collected money at the

¹⁰² Estimates and approximate amounts.

¹⁰³ The purpose of wages pronounced: «*Ut hominibus exercitantibus stipendia commode elargiri possint*»: ZsO. I. No. 4324.

¹⁰⁴ ZsO. I. Nos. 307., 312.; Elemér MÁLYUSZ, *Zsigmond király uralma Magyarországon* [Sigismund's rule in Hungary], Budapest, 1984. 56ff, 65.

disposal of captains¹⁰⁵. This was much heavier than the tithe or the 10% seigneurial rent¹⁰⁶. It was promised to be one-time but was followed in 1394 another one of half florin per *porta*, i.e. three times as much as the annual royal tax¹⁰⁷. It was repeated in 1395¹⁰⁸ but became more regular after Nicopolis (in 1397, 1399, 1415, 1416, 1417, 1432 and 1434)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 reign¹¹⁰. Sigismund also ordered the conscription of peasant families¹¹¹.

Special extraordinary taxes were levied on cities from 1395¹¹². Sopron and Pozsony were imposed 2,000 florins each while their annual tax was 400¹¹³. Sopron paid 800-1000 florins per year, double its normal tax, «*per occasione stipendiorum*». The cities were even asked to pay extra amounts¹¹⁴. On average, they had to pay an equivalent of their normal taxes. They were occasionally to hand over money «*ratione stipendiariorum*» to captains¹¹⁵. Kassa was to give about 6-800 fl¹¹⁶. Eperjes [Prešov] was to pay 400 florins¹¹⁷, Kolozsvár [Cluj] 200,

¹⁰⁵ «*Duo milia florenos de collecta septimam partem rerum popularium... ad rationem facta solutione in expeditionem... retentur*». ZsO. I. No. 314., Zichy, IV. p. 342; ZsO. I. Nos. 315., 316., 321., 331.; Zichy, IV. pp. 343, 345.

¹⁰⁶ MÁLYUSZ, *Zsigmond...*, p. 30; Partial taxes in certain counties: Zso I. 929., Szerbia, p. 22.

¹⁰⁷ G. FEJÉR, CD, X/2. p. 256; ZsO. I. Nos. 3366., 3438., 3497., 4121.

¹⁰⁸ ZsO. I. No. 4324.; MÁLYUSZ, *Zsigmond...*, p. 114ff.

¹⁰⁹ DRH, I. p. 162.; Pál ENGEL, «Magyarország és a török veszély Zsigmond korában (1387-1437)», *Századok*, 128 (1994), pp. 273-287, p. 275.

¹¹⁰ ZsO. I. No. 5683. Elemér MÁLYUSZ, «Les débuts de taxe par les ordres dans la Hongrie féodale», in *Nouvelles Études Historiques publiées à l'Occasion du XII^e Congrès International des Sciences Historiques par la Commission Nationale des Historiens Hongrois*, I, Budapest, 1965, pp. 55-82, p. 56. ff.

¹¹¹ ZsO. I. Nos. 2202., 2209., 5683.

¹¹² G. FEJÉR, CD, X/7. p. 754.

¹¹³ ZsO. I. Nos. 3971.; 3976.; HÁZI, I/1. p. 246.

¹¹⁴ HÁZI, I/1. pp. 253-4.

¹¹⁵ DF 270127., ZsO. I. Nos. 3219., 3235.

¹¹⁶ ZsO. I. Nos. 536., 572.; 2742.; G. FEJÉR, CD, X/7. p. 200.

¹¹⁷ G. FEJÉR, CD, X/4. p. 377.

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 castris*», 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 Szörény 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

¹¹⁸ *Bártfa szabad királyi város levéltára, 1319-1501*, [The Archives of Bardejov] Ed. Béla Iványi. I. Budapest, 1910, No. 162.

¹¹⁹ ZsO. I. No. 4795.

¹²⁰ ZsO. I. Nos. 1621., 2108.

¹²¹ ZsO. I. No. 1477.

¹²² ZsO. I. No. 938.

¹²³ HÁZI, I/1. pp. 254-5; G. FEJÉR, CD, X/4. p. 608; ZsO. I. No. 5593.

¹²⁴ HÁZI, I/3. p. 13; I/2. pp. 306, 311.

¹²⁵ DF 248569., ZsO. I. Nos. 2882., 3423.; G. FEJÉR, CD, X/2. p. 181; X/7. p. 640.

¹²⁶ DL 7535., DL 62537., ZsO. I. No. 187., 1275.

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... urburis*»: ZsO. I. Nos. 1626., 2121.; DV, p. 394; Szerbia, p. 26.

¹²⁸ DL 7535., ZsO. I. No. 1275., 1674., 1755., 1758., 2605.; Temes, p. 181; Szerbia, p. 25, 29, 34; G. FEJÉR, CD, X/1. p. 610; Krassó, III. p. 209.

¹²⁹ ZsO. I. No. 2242.; 2257., HO VII. p. 436.

wardens resigned from offices¹³⁰. 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 barons¹³¹.

The crown took substantial loans, especially «*ad expeditionem contra... Turcorum*»¹³², and «*pro salario*», or «*pro tuitione confiniorum ab insultibus Turcorum fienda*»¹³³, as well as «*pro defensione confiniorum regni*»¹³⁴ and «*pro conservatione castrorum*», «*pro tuitione castrum in confinibus*»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 allotted¹³⁶. 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 costs¹³⁷.

As surety, the king mortgaged entire lordships, totalling for 500,000 fl. during his reign, often for unlimited time¹³⁸. He mortgaged whole principalities: Brandenburg for 565,000 fl and Neumark for 63,200 fl¹³⁹ as well as 15 cities

¹³⁰ ZsO. I. Nos. 2563., 2634.; Krassó, III. p. 222; Szerbia, p. 32.

¹³¹ ZsO. I. Nos. 2596., 2500., 2504., 2501., 2543., 2546., 2547., 2560., 2563., 4653.; 4656.; Szerbia, p. 43.

¹³² DL 33411., DL 34113., ZsO. I. No. 4169., IX. No. 770.

¹³³ ZsO. I. No. 505.; G. FEJÉR, CD, X/2. p. 547, X/4. p. 223, X/6. p. 803; *Codex diplomaticus sacri Romani imperii comitum familiae Teleki de Szék*, I-II. Ed. Samu Barabás, Budapest, 1895, I. p. 252.

¹³⁴ J. DEÉR, «Zsigmond...», p. 179; G. FEJÉR, CD, X/6. p. 802; DL 33411., DL 33412.

¹³⁵ DL 33980., ZsO. I. No. 5551.

¹³⁶ DL 7772., DL 113000., DL 42838; DL 34052.; ZsO. I. No. 2427., II. Nos. 731., 1004., *Codex diplomaticus comitum de Frangepanibus*, I-II. Ed. Lajos Thallóczy, Samu Barabás (MHHD, 25), Budapest, 1910-1913, I. p. 131; G. FEJÉR, CD, X/2. p. 767; X/5. p. 413., X/7. p. 630, X/6. p. 924.

¹³⁷ J. DEÉR, «Zsigmond...», p. 202.

¹³⁸ DL 8050., 34040.; Temes, p. 252; DL 7892., ZsO. I. No. 3926., 3073., 3674., 4491., G. WENZEL, *Stíbor...*, p. 69.

¹³⁹ ZsO. II/1. Nos. 1796.; 1942.

and 1 lordship for 100,000 fl to Poland¹⁴⁰. The sureties were soon to be donated away as perpetual heredity as the crown not being able to redeem them¹⁴¹. Later on, he pledged castles for almost each campaign¹⁴². The crown being in arrears with stipendia mortgaged castles to the castellans themselves¹⁴³. The dignitary holders were to be paid with properties: the voivod of Transylvania received 8 castle lordships in 1398¹⁴⁴. The Palatine was granted Liptó county in 1406 for war expenses¹⁴⁵. Properties were even donated away in advance in return for future service¹⁴⁶. The crown did even sell estates for cash and granted royal domain towns to war leaders¹⁴⁷.

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 armies¹⁴⁸. 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 advance¹⁴⁹. Occasionally whole gold mints were leased, e.g. Buda in 1402 e.g. for 8,000 florins¹⁵⁰. 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.

¹⁴² DL 7389., DL 7519., DL 7766., DL 7772.; DL 33285., DL 42838., DL 100278.; ZsO. I. Nos. 521., 1125., 2422., 2427., 4729., 5688.; II/1. No. 731.; G. FEJÉR, CD, X/2. p. 54. X/4. p. 223, X/6. p. 924., ZsO.; mortgage for a siege: DL 33412.

¹⁴³ DL 34067., Blagay, pp. 310-11; ZsO. I. No. 5627.

¹⁴⁴ DL 8295., ZsO. I. No. 5162., G. WENZEL, *Sibor...*, pp. 103-7.

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 «*Florenos de lucrí camere dare debeatis... pro expeditoria... reservetis*»: ZsO. I. Nos. 3380.; 4779.; Szerbia, pp. 34-6; salary paid out of customs: ZsO. I. No. 5313.

¹⁴⁹ Márton GYÖNGYÖSSY, *Florenus Hungarialis. Arany pénzverés a középkori Magyarországon* [Gold coinage in medieval Hungary], Budapest, 2008, p. 130.

¹⁵⁰ G. FEJÉR, CD, X/4. pp. 152-55; X/3. Suppl. pp. 77-80.

only with long-term leases, but offices in the financial administration¹⁵¹. In some cases the offices of mining, minting and customs chambers were concentrated in the hands of a banker as *comes monetarum nostrarum*, being granted exclusive privileges¹⁵². The Medicis gained control over the mines and minting chambers in 1393-95 since they provided credits in advance to the king¹⁵³. The copper mines were pledged to the Medicis between 1387-1391¹⁵⁴. From 1395, the Italians were followed by Germans in the *comes monetarum* office, largely the representatives of Nuremberg bank houses¹⁵⁵. Mark of Nuremberg «brought the capital» of the consortium of the Flextorfer-Kegler-Kromer-Zenner banks to Sigismund's hands¹⁵⁶. In 1404-1405, he received authority over all the money exchanges in the country, as *comes tricesimatorum ac urburarum et cusionis monetarum nostrarum*¹⁵⁷.

¹⁵¹ Artur POHL, *Münzzeichen und Meisterzeichen auf ungarischen Münzen des Mittelalters: 1300-1540*, Graz, 1982, p. 75; Elemér MÁLYUSZ, «Der ungarische Goldgulden in Mitteleuropa zu Beginn des 15. Jahrhunderts», in *Études historiques hongroises*, II, Budapest, 1985, pp. 21-35.

¹⁵² ZsO. I. Nos. 8., 87., 2710., 4234.; Csaba Tóth, «Die ungarische Münzprägung unter Sigismund von Luxemburg», in *Sigismundus rex et imperator – Kunst und Kultur zur Zeit Sigismunds von Luxemburg, 1387-1437*, Ed. Imre Takács, Mainz, 2006. pp. 170-72, p. 170; Lajos HUSZÁR, «A középkori magyar pénztörténet okleveles forrásai II.» [Charter evidence of medieval monetary history], *Numizmatikai Közlöny*, [hereinafter NK] 74-75 (1975-76), pp. 37-49, p. 38; István HERMANN, *Finanzadministration in der zweiten Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts in Ungarn*, Budapest, 1984, pp. 23-24.

¹⁵³ ZsO. I. Nos. 3971., 3976.; Sigismund relied on Onofrio Bardi of Florence. Károly HORVÁTH-Lajos HUSZÁR, «Kamaragrófok a középkorban» [Chamber sheriffs in the Middle Ages], NK, 54-55 (1955-56), pp. 21-33, p. 27; Márton GYÖNGYÖSSY, «Zsigmond király aranypénzverésének első korszaka» [The first period of the gold coinage of Sigismund], in «Es tu scholaris». *Ünnepi tanulmányok Kubinyi András 75. születésnapjára*, Ed. Beatrix F. Romhányi, András Grynaeus, Károly Magyar, András Végh, Budapest, 2004, pp. 103-114, p. 106.

¹⁵⁴ Wolfgang von STROMER, «Die ausländischen Kammergrafen der Stephanskronen – unter den Königen aus den Häusern Anjou, Luxemburg und Habsburg – Exponenten des Großkapitals», *Hamburger Beiträge zur Numismatik*, 27-29 (1973-75), pp. 85-106, pp. 88-9.

¹⁵⁵ A. POHL, *Münzzeichen...*, p. 78-9; Tabellen: Nos. 117-24., 118-3., 119-32., 119-52., 119-54-55-56., 119-68., 119-86.

¹⁵⁶ A. POHL, *Münzzeichen...*, p. 23; András KUBINYI, «A középkori körmöcbányai pénzverés és történeti jelentősége» [The Körmöcbánya minting and its medieval significance], in *Emlékezés a 650 éves Körmöcbányára*, Budapest, 1978, pp. 19-21.

¹⁵⁷ ZsO. I. No. 6107. II/1. No. 3079.

The king increased the number of mints: Nagybánya [Baia Mare], Offenbánya [Baia de Arieş] and Nagyszében 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 1430s¹⁵⁸.

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 treasury¹⁵⁹. 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 rivals¹⁶⁰.

Seizure of ecclesiastical revenues and property

Special extraordinary taxes were levied on the clergy from 1395. On certain occasions some chapters were taxed¹⁶¹. The exacted money was directly spent to recruit mercenaries¹⁶². 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 year¹⁶³. 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

¹⁵⁸ István DRASKÓCZY, «Kamarai jövedelem és urbura a 15. század első felében» [Chamber and mining revenues in the first half of the 15th c.], in János Buza (ed.), *Gazdaságtörténet – könyvtártörténet. Emlékkönyv Berlász Jenő 90. születésnapjára*, Budapest, 2001, pp. 147-66, pp. 162-3.

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.

¹⁶⁰ DRH, I. p. 208; G. FEJÉR, CD, X/7. pp. 196-200; 206-7; Artur POHL, «Die Münzstätte Preßburg im Mittelalter», *Südost-Forschungen*, 24 (1965), pp. 81-102.

¹⁶¹ ZsO. I. Nos. 4438., 5098.

¹⁶² «*De pecunia vobis nota ad lanceas dare velitis*»: DL 42629.; ZsO. I. No. 4429.

¹⁶³ DRMH II. 26.

¹⁶⁴ DRH 172.

the bishopric of Zagreb was seized for *stipendia*¹⁶⁵. Furthermore, the bishops themselves often seized their tithes to pay their own mercenaries¹⁶⁶. There were several other ecclesiastical revenues (e.g. *ius spoli*) assigned to captains and wardens and special subsidies imposed on the clergy (e.g. a fiftieth was envisaged in 1434)¹⁶⁷. A range of bishoprics were being kept vacant and governed by lay *vicarii* for years.

ARCHBISHOPRIC	VACANT
Esztergom	1405-1423
Kalocsa	1410-1415; 1419-1421; 1423-1425
Zara [Zadar]	1398-1454
BISHOPRIC	
Nyitra [Nitra]	March 1392-March 1393
Szerém [Sremska Mitrovica]	March 1392-March 1393
Vác	1405-1408; 1430-1437
Veszprém	1403-1406; 1410-1417
Zágráb	1398-1408; 1411-1421; 1427-1440
Eger	1403-1422
Bosnia (based in Diakóvár [Đakovo])	1408-1410
Trau [Trogir]	1401-1419
Scardona [Skradin]	1388-1390
Faro [Hvar]	1387-1454
Knin	1405-1409
Hospitaller Order's priory of Aurania [Vrana]	1403-1437

Table IV: Dioceses kept in vacancy and governed by secular *gubernatores/vicarii*¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ «*Taxa regalis anni presentis de ecclesiis*»: ZsO. I. No. 5487.; G. FEJÉR, CD, X/4. 445.

¹⁶⁶ G. FEJÉR, CD, X/7. p. 815.

¹⁶⁷ J. DEÉR, «Zsigmond...», p. 175; *Bártfa szabad királyi város levéltára*, No. 267.

¹⁶⁸ Based on: Pál ENGEL, *Magyarország világi archontológiája, 1301-1457* [Lay archontology of Hungary] I-II, Budapest, 1996.

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 failed¹⁶⁹. 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 level¹⁷⁰. However, the crown asked taxes in the «pure and genuine» Angevin money and not the devaluated one¹⁷¹. 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 verso¹⁷². 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 florin¹⁷⁶. 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 ones¹⁷⁸. 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.

¹⁶⁹ *Corpus Nummorum Hungariae*. Ed. László RÉTHY, Budapest, 1899-1907, [hereinafter CNH] II. No. 120; Lajos HUSZÁR, *Münzkatalog Ungarn von 1000 bis Heute*, Budapest, 1979, No. 575.

¹⁷⁰ Pál ENGEL, «A 14. századi magyar pénztörténet néhány kérdése» [Somme issues of 14th-c. monetary history], *Századok*, 124 (1990), pp. 25-93, pp. 67-8.

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.

¹⁷⁵ Csaba TÓTH, «Bardus vagy szerecsendénár?» [Bardus or Saraceno-denar], in *Pénztörténet – gazdaságtörténet. Tanulmányok Buzsá János 70. születésnapjára*, Ed. József Bessenyei, István Draskóczy, Budapest-Miskolc, 2009, pp. 336-51, pp. 338-39.

¹⁷⁶ CNH, No. II. 121.; HUSZÁR, *Münzkatalog*..., No. 576.; POHL, *Die Grenzlandprägung*..., p. 25.

¹⁷⁷ M. GYÖNGYÖSSY, *Monetáris*..., p. 19.

¹⁷⁸ G. FEJÉR, CD, X/4. p. 608; P. ENGEL, «A 14. századi...», p. 67.

¹⁷⁹ M. GYÖNGYÖSSY, *Pénzgazdálkodás és monetáris politika a késő középkori Magyarországon* [Monetary economy and policy in later medieval Hungary], Budapest, 2003.

less than half being not silver. The king manipulated with the currency, regularly debased and withdrew money, that is why the old *bardus* was used in transactions, and in counting the value of the florin, even by the king¹⁸⁰.

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 value¹⁸¹. It had a small silver content, 353‰ and the copper content was greater thus was popularly called «*communis moneta de cupro*»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 g¹⁸³. In three years it also fell drastically by 60% and was withdrawn¹⁸⁴, and the *quarting* was issued, with a low silver content, of 125‰.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 copper¹⁸⁶.

A great variety of forced loans and *contributiones* were also exacted. Armies were billeted in cities in exchange for their future taxes¹⁸⁷. Kassa was ordered «to supply anything the armies might need»¹⁸⁸. Barons were authorized to seize the taxes in advance¹⁸⁹. Army leaders were authorized to seize provisions in cities, e.g. fish¹⁹⁰. The privilege of *ius gladii* as well as market licenses were granted for cities and nobles in exchange for troops¹⁹¹.

¹⁸⁰ ZsO. I. Nos. 1644., 2827., 2990., 3156., 3310.; 3401.; 4726.; 4992.; 5239.; 5403., 5666.; II/1-2. Nos. 2123.; 3575.; 4828.; 4866.; 6620.

¹⁸¹ CNH, II. No. 125.; A. POHL, *Die Grenzlandprägung...*, Tafel VI. 86; L. HUSZÁR, *Münzkatalog...*, 583.

¹⁸² DRH I. p. 403; M. GYÖNGYÖSSY, *Monetáris...*, p. 19.

¹⁸³ CNH, II. No. 128.; A. POHL, *Die Grenzlandprägung...*, p. 27; L. HUSZÁR, *Münzkatalog...*, p. 585.

¹⁸⁴ 1430; DRH I. p. 253-56.; A. POHL, *Die Grenzlandprägung...*, p. 27.

¹⁸⁵ CNH, II. 129; L. HUSZÁR, *Münzkatalog...*, p. 586; POHL, *Die Grenzlandprägung...*, p. 27.

¹⁸⁶ A. POHL, *Münzzeichen...*, pp. 24, 52; DRASKÓCZY, «Kamarai jövedelem...», p. 157.

¹⁸⁷ ZsO. I. No. 5139.; HÁZI, I/2. p. 13.

¹⁸⁸ C. TÓTH, «Az 1395. évi», p. 465; ZsO. III. No. 57.

¹⁸⁹ ZsO. II. Nos. 8002., 8007., III. 86, Zichy, IX. p. 60.

¹⁹⁰ ZsO. III. Nos. 205.; 272., 332.; 333.

¹⁹¹ ZsO. I. No. 1425., 2600., 4096.; G. FEJÉR, CD, X/2. p. 455; Csáky, I. p. 163; Szerbia, p. 24.

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 privileges¹⁹². The barons were to rise with all of their *banderia, more exercituantium*, whether they had a *honor* office or not, whenever and wherever the king required. The lesser nobles had to fight in the county *banderia*¹⁹³. 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 equestri*) 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 villeins¹⁹⁴. It is a few times that it was partly applied, and not in the whole country, but in Transylvania¹⁹⁵. Occasionally abbots, chapters were to raise soldiers «*secundum connumerationem jobagionum*»¹⁹⁶, and peasants of some counties were summoned¹⁹⁷. There were peasants fighting in the royal armies¹⁹⁸. Some recent opinions hold that the county levy

¹⁹² Joseph HELD, «Military Reform in Early Fifteenth Century Hungary», *East European Quarterly*, 11 (1977), pp. 129-139.

¹⁹³ DRMH II. p. 22.

¹⁹⁴ «*De singulis viginti jobagionibus unum pharetrarium...*»: DL 8384.; Zichy, VIII. p. 482, 1398: ZsO. I. No. 5583., Temes, pp. 281-83. «*Cum vicesima parte vniuersorum Jobagionum*»: András BOROSY, *A telekkatonaság és a parasztság szerepe a magyar hadszervezetben* [The role of the militia portalis and peasantry in Hungarian military system], Budapest, 1971, p. 30.

¹⁹⁵ Z-W., III. p. 651.

¹⁹⁶ A. BOROSY, *A telekkatonaság...*, p. 19.

¹⁹⁷ Imre NAGY, *Sopron vármegye története. I. Oklevéltár*, [History of Sopron county. Charters] Sopron, 1899, p. 386.

¹⁹⁸ ZsO. I. No. 1176.; DL 43449: «*Viginti jobagiones ad exercitum... non debeat*»: DL 43449.

included paid peasants¹⁹⁹. Nevertheless, the *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 *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 (*confinia*), for the defence of which allotted fixed payments and assigned baronial *banderia* and levies of adjacent counties²⁰⁰.

¹⁹⁹ C. TÓTH, «Az 1395. évi...», p. 473; P. ENGEL, «Adatok...», p. 81.

²⁰⁰ «*Dispositio contra Turco: A parte Dalmatiae seu maris et Croacie Banus Croatie – banderium [...] Joannes banus de Maroth – equites M [...] Episcopus Quinqueecclesiensis – banderium*», DRMH, p. 141; DRH pp. 397-429.

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